A photograph of a modern office desk. In the foreground, a white ceramic coffee cup sits on a light-colored wooden coaster. To the right, a silver laptop is open, with a black pen resting on the desk behind it. A small potted plant with green grass-like leaves is visible on the far right. The background is a blurred office interior with a window and a white chair.

## DANTECH MAKES SITUS ERGONOMICS COMFORTABLE WITH REMOTE ACCESS – WITHOUT BUYING WINDOWS SERVER

Making employees feel safe and comfortable enhances productivity, whether they work onsite or off. To this end, Situs Ergonomics furnishes brilliantly engineered chairs and office solutions to Alaska businesses, while DanTech Services protects their networked data.

Rather than employ its own information technology (IT) team, Anchorage-based Situs Ergonomics trusts DanTech, a well-respected managed service provider (MSP) serving small-to-medium businesses (SMBs) for more than 15 years, to run its network. DanTech implements and manages day-to-day IT systems remotely, helping companies across Alaska improve uptime and performance while lowering cost and complexity.

One challenge currently impacting Situs Ergonomics and other clients involves maintaining cybersecurity and compliance as older Windows-based systems reach end of life (EOL). “Situs Ergonomics was using Windows Small Business Server 2011 which recently reached end of support,” says Mike Vickers, Service Support Manager at DanTech. “We needed a new way of maintaining logins and shared access cost-effectively while allowing users to access the system remotely.”

Windows Small Business Server 2011 and the also-popular Windows Server 2008 platforms include Microsoft’s Active Directory domain management services for the administration of user logins and passwords as well as shared drives. With these servers no longer being supported, Dantech is helping clients migrate to more secure alternatives.

One standard option is to deploy newer Microsoft solutions such as Windows Server 2016 or 2019. Doing so proves cost-prohibitive for many as purchasing new hardware, acquiring new licenses, and paying annual maintenance fees could cost \$11,000, not including the cost of installation, support, and Office 365 (another \$2,000 or more).

A Windows upgrade would also require DanTech to spend considerable time onsite installing and configuring the new server, installing agents, and defining access policies before being able to manage everything remotely. Instead, the MSP recommended a simpler, more integrated and less costly approach: Uplevel.

## UPLEVELING SECURITY & REMOTE MANAGEMENT

The situation at Situs Ergonomics provided a great opportunity to install Uplevel,” says Vickers. “We had performed several Uplevel installations by then and had always had a great experience.”

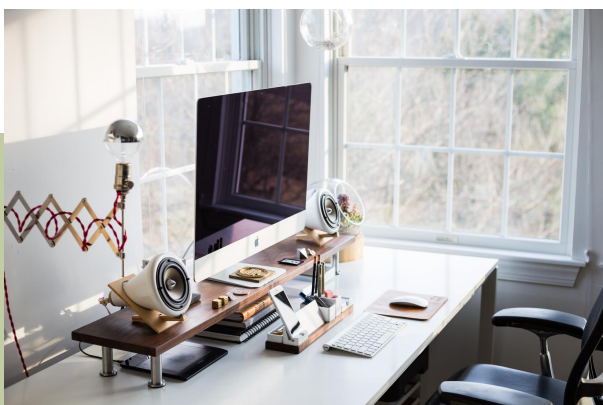
The Uplevel solution features an enterprise-class network gateway with firewall, storage, SD-WAN, and domain management capabilities built in. All services can be managed in real time by MSPs via the cloud. Service is provided on a pure-subscription basis so MSP partners and their customers never incur capital costs to purchase or stock equipment.

DanTech believed Uplevel’s domain management services would fit the bill at Situs Ergonomics and other SMBs faced with upgrading their network security. “Migrating to Uplevel addressed the customer’s full Active Directory needs,” Vickers says, “without them having to go the route of buying a separate switch, firewall and Windows server—at a fraction of the cost of buying all three.”

Installation of the new solution proved fast and simple. “For implementation and configuration of user groups, Uplevel beats Windows servers hands-down,” Vickers says. “Their approach takes away the time needed to build servers, set up operating systems, format hard drives, install overwrites—all the things you have to do before getting to the point that you start out at with Uplevel.”

DanTech estimates that, with Windows, it might take somewhere between ninety minutes and two hours to set up a server for just five to ten users. “With Uplevel we set up a whole system in about 20 minutes,” Vickers reports. “We just set up the domains and user groups and linked them to shares on user machines, just like you would normally do in Active Directory. It was so simple we haven’t had to do anything with it since.”

DanTech believes many SMBs now require similar upgrades to ensure security and compliance. “A large number of our customers are in this same boat with their Windows servers and can benefit from moving to Uplevel,” Vickers says. “It’s an incredible solution, simple to install and it works; that’s the main thing. Uplevel does the job and it’s easy to put in place with no significant issues.”



## ONE BOX, “ZERO CALLS” FROM CUSTOMERS

Uplevel’s Unbox gateways combine Ethernet switching, virtual private network (VPN), SD-WAN, Wi-Fi, storage and firewall capabilities in one easy-to-install device managed via the cloud. “We are our customers’ IT shop,” says Vickers. “We rely heavily on remote management to be able to configure and maintain technology without having to go onsite. The Uplevel gateway provides much more functionality than we would expect for what it costs and keeps customers from having to buy multiple standalone devices.”

Along with cost savings, MSPs and SMBs using Uplevel benefit from streamlined installation and management efforts. “The setup time is very short and we’ve had no significant issues,” Vickers says. “We put the system in at Situs Ergonomics months ago and have not had a call from the customer since. With the previous solution we would have had at least 10 to 15 calls in that same timeframe.”

When DanTech did call with questions, the Uplevel support team responded quickly to provide the answers. “What we can do for a company with Uplevel is very robust, management is absolutely simple, and the support has been great,” Vickers concludes. “I would recommend it to any small business; we’ll continue to point customers in this direction.”

**“FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONFIGURATION OF USER GROUPS, UPLEVEL BEATS WINDOWS SERVERS HANDS DOWN.”**



**“THEIR APPROACH TAKES AWAY THE TIME NEEDED TO BUILD SERVERS, SET UP OPERATING SYSTEMS, FORMAT HARD DRIVES, INSTALL OVERWRITES—ALL THE THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO BEFORE GETTING TO THE POINT THAT YOU START OUT AT WITH UPLEVEL.”**

**-MIKE VICKERS  
SERVICE SUPPORT MANAGER AT  
DANTECH**