

CASE STUDY



» *University of Alaska Southeast* «

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Mark Thompson, IT Infrastructure Manager, UAS

The Customer

The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) is a public, four year institution with campuses in Sitka, Ketchikan and Alaska’s capital city, Juneau.

UAS is made up of four schools: Arts, Sciences, Education, Management, and Career Education. UAS offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campus or via e-Learning.

The University thrives on the cultural diversity of its students and offers programs that focus on Southeast Alaska Native heritage, culture, and language. Located in a national forest on the edge of an ice field and along a scenic archipelago, this part of the world has some of the most exciting and extreme outdoor recreation anywhere including kayaking, backpacking, climbing and skiing.

The Challenge

The combination of three separate campuses and the lack of a connected road system in Southeast Alaska presents a unique challenge to the UAS IT department.

“Our existing academic computer environment comprised of computer classrooms, stationary labs and mobile labs required intensive management,” said IT Infrastructure Manager, Mark Thompson.

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“We were looking for a solution that would reduce management requirements and possibly provide us with more flexibility for future endeavors. Our previous solution involved imaging hundreds of computers on a biannual basis. The imaging process often required us to personally visit each computer system. This process had become cumbersome and tied up staff resources that we wanted to use more efficiently.”

The idea was to establish their VDI on the condition that the existing hardware could be used for this initiative as the acquisition of new hardware was not possible. Additionally, the UAS IT team had already established their VMware server infrastructure, and wanted to utilize it as the foundation for their VDI initiative. UAS was also interested in providing centralized VDI management and Wi-Fi support for its numerous mobile labs.

“Thanks to Stratodesk we now have a more reliable and consistent academic VDI computing environment,” said Thompson.

The Stratodesk Solution

The decision to use NoTouch Desktop from Stratodesk was easy. “We chose Stratodesk because it was the only solution that met our needs. We did not find any other product that offers the breadth of features and ease of use that Stratodesk NoTouch Desktop product offers,” said Thompson.

UAS’s existing hardware was easy to embed in their VDI infrastructure. The central administration tool, NoTouch Center, makes it easy to manage all devices. It is a feature rich, web-based management console, which provides client configuration attributes, automated client updates, asset management and client security features.

The NoTouch Desktop solution also provides support via Wi-Fi for UAS mobile labs, which seemed impossible compared to all the other solutions considered or tested. NoTouch OS is very small in size which makes deployment and updates exceptionally easy. NoTouch Desktop is very secure, and can be preconfigured prior to mass deployment. In terms of technical support, Thompson states: “Stratodesk’s technical support has always been exemplary. They have gone above and beyond to work on the technical issues we have raised and the solutions we have offered.”



Summary and Future Plans

“We are very satisfied with NoTouch Desktop and our working relationship with Stratodesk. Stratodesk enhances our ability to provide VDI infrastructure to our students. It saves our staff time by being an integral part of our VDI solution, thus removing the need to image hundreds of computers every semester.”

“We now have a more reliable and consistent academic computing environment. Computer down time is almost non-existent with the exception of hardware or network issues.”

“Our IT staff has more time to devote to other projects. We no longer have to periodically visit each computer system after the initial client install. The hours spent imaging computers is a thing of the past. Client management now occurs from the NTC server, which greatly improves staff efficiency,” added Thompson.

“We gratefully acknowledge Stratodesk’s technical support. It has always been exemplary. They have gone above and beyond to work on the technical issues we have raised and the solutions we have offered,” said Thompson.