

## Rising above the Alaskan wilderness



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Starting with desktops, Usibelli Coal Mine is putting its technology resources in the cloud.

While the remote, mountainous Alaska Range is the perfect location for coal mining, it is not ideal for running a data center. Power outages are common. The weather is as unpredictable as a wandering moose. And dirt is absolutely everywhere.

“It’s not a great environment for technology, that’s for sure,” chuckles Bruce Dunkle, IT Manager for Usibelli Coal Mine, which is located near the isolated town of Healy, Alaska.

And yet, Dunkle is responsible for keeping nearly 100 workstations running in five far-flung sites. To improve business continuity and reduce technology maintenance headaches, he decided to put the company’s desktops in the cloud.

“There aren’t a lot of cloud providers in Alaska,” Dunkle explains, “so we had to look for help in the lower 48.”

He eventually found Quest, a technology management company recently named to CRN’s Managed Service Provider 500 list. The two companies conducted a Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS) pilot project, but the distance between Quest’s Sacramento data center and Usibelli’s Alaska operations resulted in latency and performance issues.

“It was too slow, and some of our database applications wouldn’t even run,” Dunkle laments. “I asked if we could put the DaaS host appliance in our rack in Healy, and to my surprise, Quest agreed to it. It works like a charm.”

### THE FIRST STEP OF A LARGER TRANSITION

Usibelli now has an on-premise DaaS solution that is remotely managed by Quest and accessed through the Cisco Powered™ Quest cloud. While it doesn’t solve every IT challenge—the servers are still susceptible to power outages and exposed to grime—the managed service is the first step toward a larger transition to the cloud.

“We’re such a small operation. Why do we need a server room? Why do we need an IT guy?” Dunkle opines. “I want to put everything in the cloud and make it all subscription based.”

Email is the biggest hurdle, he adds, with more data than all of Usibelli’s systems combined, including payroll, customer billing, and computer automated design applications. If pushing desktops to the cloud is the first step for Usibelli, email

servers will be the second, with other applications and data to follow.

“If I can offload email and backup to the cloud, it will free up a significant amount of storage and time,” Dunkle says, “and I can work on stuff that has a greater impact to the business.”

### GET A COMPLIMENTARY, TWO-WEEK DAAS TRIAL

Ready to explore Desktop as a Service (DaaS)? Evaluate the overall performance of a cloud-hosted desktop, compliments of Quest. You can use your own endpoint devices (iPad, MAC, PC) from any location to connect to the desktop and test different protocols, browsers, and more. Call toll free: 800-326-4220. Or, [click here](#) to get started today.



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