



TechSystems USA and Uplevel Keep Clinton Christian Academy Students Secure Online At Home

Like other industries, moving education online has forever changed learning, making it possible for teachers and students alike to take part from home—or virtually anywhere. And like other industries, digitalization created new challenges for IT departments, particularly around cybersecurity.

One of Jackson, Mississippi's premier Managed IT providers, TechSystems USA, used Uplevel's infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) to keep students safe online and while learning at home. One longstanding client of the managed service provider (MSP), the Clinton Christian Academy K-12, recently sought to provision different levels of access for students, teachers, administrators, and other users.

But, the TechSystems USA team quickly discovered the school's existing network firewalls lacked the intelligence needed to segregate traffic on different virtual local area networks, known as VLANs. "About 98% of the academy's traffic is Wi-Fi and we had to find a way to segregate out traffic so that one group (SSID) could get content filtering while the others were exempt," owner Nick Athanassov explains.

Doing this type of traffic segregation required content filtering to screen and manage access to specific sites, applications, and privileged resources. Adding this function to its network and cybersecurity capabilities would equip the school's IT administrators to block access by students and other users to inappropriate or harmful content as they work online or connect remotely from home.

To accommodate remote learning, the school had upgraded from Ubiquiti routers to the Cisco solution a few years prior but its existing network could not meet the current objective. "The existing Cisco switches didn't have content filtering so we would have had to add a completely different service," Athanassov recalls. "Fortunately the Uplevel solution delivered important added benefits that allowed us to accomplish this at roughly the same cost."

To deliver the functionality Clinton Christian Academy wanted, Uplevel had to do a special firmware upgrade to add content filtering to its firewall capabilities. "Uplevel went completely over and above our expectations to come up with a firewall solution for this deployment," says Athanassov. "We were still able to roll everything out within a few weeks since Uplevel is so much easier to configure and to monitor and use."



Shared focus on user experience

TechSystems USA aims to function as an extension of its clients' own IT teams helping them to grow their businesses. Uplevel works with MSPs in much the same way. The company offers affordable monthly subscriptions that equip partners to deliver world-class managed services without customers having to purchase and be locked into network equipment. These solutions combine fast, secure Internet connectivity, Wi-Fi, remote access, and enterprise-class cybersecurity.

"We were at somewhat of a crossroads before we started using Uplevel," Athanassov recalls. "We were installing several solutions but were looking for one that was ideal for SMBs—easy to configure so you didn't need an advanced degree in order to monitor and support it. Uplevel has been that solution."

Managed remotely via the cloud, the Uplevel solution offers TechSystems USA and Clinton Christian Academy powerful operational advantages over previous solutions. "The Uplevel box is self-healing," Athanassov says. "Otherwise, if the school suffered a power issue or some other interruption, we would likely need to make a trip onsite which could take longer to get things back up. We have a number of customers using Uplevel and the self-healing capabilities make them all very resilient."

When surprises do occur, the MSP and IaaS provider team to resolve issues quickly. "The support we receive from the Uplevel team has been the best," Athanassov adds. "They never mind going the extra mile for a customer; they'll stick with it until an issue gets resolved, even when the problem doesn't involve their solution."

With the local school achieving secure, reliable access for 300+ users, TechSystems looks forward to serving new customers with Uplevel and upgrading other existing clients. And while Uplevel updates equipment periodically at no extra cost, Athanassov notes, "So far none of our customers have replaced their existing equipment. Once we put it in an Uplevel gateway, it's in there!"





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