



# The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

## Final Copy of Case Study

**LOCATION:**  
*Northbrook, IL, US*

**ORGANIZATION:**  
Allstate Insurance Company

**YEAR:**  
*2011*

**ORGANIZATION URL:**  
<http://www.allstate.com>

**STATUS:**  
*Laureate*

**PROJECT NAME:**  
Allstate's Emerald City

**CATEGORY:**  
*Environment*

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Allstate is committed to developing and using new technology that conserves energy, reduces carbon emissions and aligns with our company's stance on environmental responsibility. The development of a new green data center stemmed from our priority to ensure high availability of critical technology systems for our customers. Allstate has an enormous responsibility and commitment to protect and secure customers' information in the most robust computing environments possible. Allstate stores an extraordinary amount of data in our data centers – 3 billion files and documents in fact! If you were to print and store all of that data, you would need nearly 5 trillion sheets of paper, 53 million file cabinets and 130 million square feet of storage space. As a result, the company knew it had to get creative about reaching for new heights when making decisions around data storage moving forward. The creation of a green data center has taken the sophistication and efficiency of virtual storage to a new level by implementing exceptional energy-efficient components. Completed in 2009, Allstate's new data center, located in Rochelle, IL, is now LEED Gold certified, confirming that it is a state-of-the-art data center. The construction of this energy efficient data center was designed with deliberate focus around addressing energy reduction across every square inch of the building. The roof is designed to reflect the sun's rays to reduce energy needed for cooling the data center. The windows of the data center have light and occupancy sensors that automatically adjust the lighting levels in the building. The building components contain a minimum of 20 percent recycled content and low toxicity. The site is also designed to infiltrate storm water directly into the aquifer rather than into the municipal storm sewer. There are 18 water source heat pumps that recover heat generated by the computer equipment in order to heat non-raised floor areas throughout the building. Even the bathrooms are designed to conserve energy through the use of alternative dual flushing systems. Energy efficiency was also a priority in hardware purchasing decisions. Allstate's monitoring systems are fully integrated and designed to record and track all power and mechanical equipment to allow for optimization of energy usage and consumption. Allstate is always looking for opportunities to reduce energy



through replacement of older, less efficient hardware with new eco-friendly hardware. In addition, server virtualization has enabled Allstate to reduce energy consumption by 70 percent. Employees across the company are thrilled with the benefits that the new green data center provides. With continuous development of energy-efficient technologies such as the data center, Allstate feels confident that we can make a difference in further protecting the environment.

## **SOCIETAL BENEFITS**

Building Allstate's new state-of-the-art green data center not only saves energy and reduces our carbon footprint; it also protects sensitive company data and personal information in a secure space so that customers feel safe.

## **PROJECT BENEFIT EXAMPLE**

The data center initiative has directly benefited the company by providing an enhanced, energy-efficient and cost-effective way to store data. "The data center strategy has been foundational in our ability to provide high application availability and performance for our customers and the people within the company who serve them," says Allstate's project manager of the data center initiative. The data center project has been astronomically beneficial to Allstate by promoting green initiatives in other areas of the company. We were able to take what we learned from building the green data center and apply it to other, older buildings around Allstate campuses – making them more energy-efficient, refreshed and eco-friendly. Allstate also places high importance on expanding green-IT initiatives by offering employees the ability to work from home by providing them with access to VoIP soft-phone technology, teleconferencing and video conferencing capabilities which permits your "office" to be just about anywhere. This technology is also used by employees communicating between Allstate offices on opposite sides of the ocean – which allows for meetings to take place as if you are in the very same room instead of flying vast distances to meet in person. Creating a green campus for our employees and setting a green mindset is extremely important too. While at the office and traveling between buildings for meetings, employees are encouraged to ride the bicycles that have been placed throughout campus to offer alternative transportation options. In addition, on-site availability of a fitness center, daycare, bank, photo-finishing center, dry-cleaning drop-off, oil changes, convenience stores and salons allow employees to make better use of their time while reducing their carbon footprint. At Allstate we strive to educate employees and encourage them to learn about energy conservation by building best practices into Allstate's planning and processes enterprise-wide. We have found that employees are making a conscious effort to live into environmental responsibility and can truly see the benefits and importance of those efforts.

## **IS THIS PROJECT AN INNOVATION, BEST PRACTICE?** Yes