



Digital Convenience vs. Environmental impacts

When you think of data centers, you probably think of all bad things. You hear a lot of debate about how these data centers are terrible for the environment and they are only placed in rural areas. You may also hear about how these data centers are not that bad for the environment and “data centers have nothing to do with me”. Data centers are defined as “Facilities that provide critical infrastructures that power modern digital services” (NLC) . In simple words, a data center is defined as a specialized facility that contains computer systems and infrastructure designed to store, manage, and distribute digital data that supports modern technology and online services. People are quick to judge without doing any research due to the controversy, but how do they really help and harm the environment?

Data centers are the most recent talk of everyone due to the increase of artificial intelligence use. With AI being a controversial topic, people think that all data centers are bad, when they can actually help an economy. Data centers can help with tax revenue and better technology with advancing jobs. On the other hand, they can harm the environment. With them using water to cool down the insides of the machines and using farm land, there is very little middle ground on this topic. In Fort Wayne, Indiana the plan is to have a Google data center come and take up 722 acres of land, what are the upsides and downsides? How can this really be beneficial to the citizens around?

The two billion dollar data center coming to Fort Wayne will be placed near Adams Center and Paulding Roads. Google is the main developer but they are also in partnership with Indiana Michigan Power. According to Wane 15, there is an agreement between these two companies stating that they would “shift its usage from non-urgent tasks in times of high energy demand to assist I&M in keeping costs down for its customers”. Google has also stated for this

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project that 'The release also says the construction of the data center has led to Google offering to assist in local infrastructure projects, as well as restoring a portion of the wetlands which the facility was built' (Wane 15). We see Google trying to help and make agreements with people, why do we think this facility is so bad?

The Google plant can cause many damages, some even irreversible. Some of the main concerns from the community are irreversible wetland destruction, potential air pollution and even the use of one hundred and forty backup diesel generators. According to Google, they plan to create mitigation wetlands, but biologists are concerned it is not as sustainable as a proper ecosystem. Google has also been known to dodge questions with these problems, such as air pollution and redirect questions. But, as these data centers are becoming more prominent, are the risks getting bigger while the impact of these data centers getting smaller?

With these points being said, there is always going to be good and bad with these situations. But, all devices need data centers to run. With Google going more AI focused and water sources becoming a problem, will these data centers need to stop? What would citizens do if these data centers stopped running?