7 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING A DATA CENTER PROVIDER IN CHICAGO
Chicago is the biggest connectivity hub in the Midwest. Its vast array of carriers, excellent fiber availability and robust internet exchanges have contributed to this. The major draw for large enterprise companies—especially financial content, media and cloud—is the ability to increase connectivity and to reduce latency. In the crowded market of data center providers, selecting the right provider can be tough.

You need to find a data solution provider who can meet your current data needs and who can grow with you to accommodate any future needs and industry advances. This white paper provides an in-depth look at key considerations to keep in mind when selecting a data center provider in Chicago. From connectivity to compliance to customer service, these 7 key considerations offer a checklist for evaluating potential data center providers.

**Availability & Scalability**

Data center space in Chicago is currently in high demand, mostly driven by the rise in e-commerce and retail industries, and many data providers no longer have the space to expand their data centers in downtown Chicago. Before you select a data center provider, be sure to inquire about how much availability they have and what their plans are for future growth.

Scalability is key when it comes to finding the right data center provider. When reviewing data centers, look for facilities which can meet your current and future data needs. As your business grows, you want a data center to grow with you. As we’ve seen over the past five years, the demand for more services and goods online has meant an enormous increase in data throughput, and this is only expected to increase in the coming years. What is your current data demand by your consumers or interest groups, and how might that increase in the future? When looking for a data center partner, focus on providers who have scalable resources and services, such as colocation, disaster recovery and managed services.
Connectivity & Location

There’s no getting around it, even in this age of technology, the closer you are to your data, the easier it is to access it. That’s why this is number one on our list. This is beneficial for two main reasons.

■ When you are physically closer to your data, your end-to-end response times will be quicker. Even at the millisecond level, this can impact your business, especially in the financial services industry.

■ Being close to your data center also means you can oversee upgrades and repairs more easily. Once things are up and running smoothly, you might not need to visit your data center often. However, if the need arises, it’s handy to be located conveniently nearby so that visiting your data center becomes possible within a normal workday. If your business is in downtown Chicago, you don’t want to waste a day commuting out to the suburbs every time you need to access your data center. Chicago is also notorious for lack of parking downtown, so be sure to look at whether your data center provides free and convenient parking.

Flexibility and Customization

Your business is unique and it deserves a custom solution to meet your individual data needs. Today’s consumers of data—whether they be medical patients, online shoppers or daytime stock traders—expect immediate access and personalized service. This means your IT solution needs to be as flexible and customizable as possible—off the rack isn’t cutting it anymore.

First, consider what you need from your data center provider. It may be a secure environment for dev/test, redundancy for disaster preparedness, or to meet certain industry compliance standards. You want to partner with a data center provider who can offer you the ability to customize your data center environment as well as add on key supporting services, such as managed storage and backup. Whatever you decide, keep in mind that data solution needs are growing in complexity. Find a data center provider who is on the cutting edge and ready to think creatively to help you solve your IT needs.

Security & Compliance

Considering the number of high profile data breaches in the last few years, it’s no wonder many businesses are concerned with data security. Ask potential data center providers what penetration and intrusion testing and protocols are in place. When it comes to security, consider how the data center provider handles not just logical security but also physical security. Do they have a perimeter fence? How many points of entry are there? Do they use 2-factor biometric authentication? How many security guards do they employ?

Compliance will be another important point to take into consideration. Look to see if they have compliance standards for SOX, PCI-DSS, HIPAA, FedRAMP, etc. When it comes to compliance, think of it not as just a checklist to go through but as a means to test how serious your data center provider is about compliance. Do they have a team and resources dedicated to compliance solutions? Are they outsourcing their compliance to another company? It’s important to have
confidence in your data center provider. At the end of the day, you want to know that they are doing everything possible to ensure that your data is safe and compliant.

**Efficiency of Design & Sustainability**

When it comes to evaluating data center providers, cost is forefront in the minds of most IT decision makers. You need to weigh everything that will affect your bottom line, such as taxes, utilities and energy costs. All of these can have a major impact on where you house your data. Look for providers that are constantly leveraging innovative efficient design and building methodologies, as these can help save you money in the long run.

According to JLL, the power cost in Chicago is 27% lower than the national average. In addition to those savings, Chicago data centers benefit from over 7,000 free cooling hours annually; this equates to 80% of the year having power conservation capabilities. Make sure your data center provider is making use of these and other capabilities.

Efficiency of design and sustainability show that a data center provider is innovative, and when it comes to your data solutions, you want a provider who is on the cutting edge of evolving technologies.

**Comprehensive Solutions**

Most businesses and organizations need several integrated IT solutions coexisting in order to run well. This is where colocation and cloud solutions come into play. Not only do you need a state-of-the-art data center, you also need redundant infrastructure and highly scalable, secure and compliant IaaS and DRaaS solutions.

Many businesses in the Chicago market, and around the world, are transitioning to a hybrid IT model. The problem is that as companies investigate cloud providers, they feel boxed in with features and proprietary software that make integration to other environments extremely challenging. Look for a data center provider who can step outside the box by delivering seamless hybrid cloud solutions. The goal is to find proven, best-of-breed platform technologies that combine the rapid availability and elasticity of compute resources with the security and control necessary to support mission critical applications and workloads.

Don’t forget about disaster recovery solutions. According to the Uptime Institute, the Chicago area has a low to moderate risk factor for potential severe weather, including tornadoes, or seismic activity, such as earthquakes. This makes it a prime location, compared to other major U.S. cities, for your disaster recovery data backup. Whether this is your first data center or you’re looking for redundancy, it’s crucial to consider eventualities like how prepared your center is for a natural disaster, or how quickly you can be up and running again after a data breach.

**Customer Service**

Many people tend to think of good customer service as just a nice bonus when it comes to their data center provider, but in fact, it is one of the most important considerations you should make. Nowadays, your data solutions can make or break your business and you can’t afford to place those solutions in the hands of people who aren’t as fully committed to your success as you are.
Evaluating a potential data center provider’s customer service can be tricky, but here are a few ways to determine how they stack up against the competition.

- Check to see how they measure their success. Hint: a high Net Promoter Score is a great way to measure customer service as it's an industry wide metric that measures the satisfaction level of current customers.

- Ask the data center provider to if they have onsite personnel or if they outsource to another location—onsite personnel is preferred.

- Request testimonials and references from current customers.

Now, you have a good framework on which to evaluate data center providers in Chicago. Whether it's custom data solutions or non-data considerations such as convenience of accessing the data center and parking, these seven areas provide a basis from which to select a data center provider who can meet your current data needs and anticipate future needs, such as QTS.

Chicago is known for innovation. From the first mail order business in the U.S., to the debut of the world's first Ferris wheel, to QTS' custom data solutions, the Windy City will always be home to world-class services. For businesses located in Chicago, it makes sense to look nearby for data solutions. For agencies and organizations looking to colocate, the Chicago area is prime real estate away from hurricanes and other large-scale natural disasters.

With the opening of QTS' new mega data center in Chicago's central business district, we are now bringing our world-class IT solutions to the heart of Chicago. More than 290,000 businesses operate in Chicago, and our data center is poised to provide convenience and world-class performance. Located in the iconic Chicago Sun-Time building, QTS is the only fully-integrated data center, managed hosting and cloud services company that relies on people first to provide advice, technology and infrastructure for IT decision makers in complex, high pressure environments who need help managing and protecting critical data during a time of unprecedented change.

QTS is known for world-class data centers and innovative products that have been designed to meet the changing needs of our customers. But when you ask our customers about QTS, they don't talk about our facilities. They talk about our people, our company culture, and the investment that QTS has made in supplying a people-powered level of attentive, consultative service unmatched in the data center industry. Our Chicago engineers and technical staff continuously cross-train to be familiar with all technology and infrastructure that supports customer environments.

Data center space is available starting in July 2016. For more information, visit http://www.qtsdatacenters.com/data-centers/chicago.

Resources:

QTS Chicago is a carrier-neutral facility
- Direct access to 350 E. Cermak and Chicago Mercantile Exchange
- Free Parking
- In-building access to multiple providers; such as AT&T, Verizon, Zayo and FiberLight.
- Access to all local carrier hotels and long haul POPs

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<th>LOW LATENCY</th>
<th>REDUNDANCY</th>
<th>HIGH CONNECTIVITY</th>
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<td>■ Experts at all levels: QTS people are team-oriented, resourceful professionals who have the proper background and training to get the job done.</td>
<td>■ Always training: Our engineers and technical staff continuously cross-train to be familiar with all technology and infrastructure that supports customer environments.</td>
<td>■ Ready to assist: Our sales engineers and implementation team understand the importance of a well-designed migration or implementation that fits your timeline.</td>
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<td>■ Never Outsourced: Our Data Center Operations and Operations Service Center teams are seasoned professionals who are ready to serve your needs around the clock.</td>
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**WHY QTS CHICAGO**

- QTS Chicago is a carrier-neutral facility
- Direct access to 350 E. Cermak and Chicago Mercantile Exchange
- Free Parking
- In-building access to multiple providers; such as AT&T, Verizon, Zayo and FiberLight.
- Access to all local carrier hotels and long haul POPs

**LOW LATENCY**

**REDUNDANCY**

**HIGH CONNECTIVITY**

**Phase 1**
- 317,000 SQ. FT.
- 48,000 SQ. FT. OF RAISED FLOOR
- 8 MEGAWATTS OF CRITICAL POWER

**Future Scalability**
- ADDITIONAL 213,000 SQ. FT. OF RAISED FLOOR
- 32 MEGAWATTS OF POWER

**Phase 2**
- 133,000 SQ. FT. OF RAISED FLOOR
- 24 MEGAWATTS OF CRITICAL POWER

**Bringing total to: 346,000 square feet of raised floor and 56 megawatts of power within the campus.**

QTS is the only large, wholesale and colocation data center in the Chicago market using Kyoto cooling, the most economical and efficient data center cooling technology on the market today. Kyoto cooling provides 90% effectiveness in heat rejection to produce and maximize constant free cooling hours.

**NET PROMOTER SCORE**

**63.5**

**INDUSTRY AVERAGE**

**45**
## SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON OF CHICAGO COMPETITORS

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<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>QTS CHICAGO DATA CENTER</th>
<th>TYPICAL CHICAGO DATA CENTER</th>
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<tr>
<td>SCALABLE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS</td>
<td>QTS is the nation’s only fully integrated technology services platform providing flexible, scalable solutions for the federal government, financial services, healthcare and high tech industries.</td>
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<td>SPACE NOW AVAILABLE</td>
<td>Located in the downtown corridor, Phase I of QTS’ mega Chicago data center includes 48,000 square feet of new raised floor and 8 megawatts of critical power. When fully developed, the 317,000 square foot Building 1 will support a total of 133,000 square feet of raised floor encompassing 24 megawatts of power.</td>
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<td>ROOM FOR GROWTH</td>
<td>On the 30-acre site, QTS Chicago has the ability to add an additional 213,000 square feet of raised floor and 32 megawatts of power in Building 2 for a total of 346,000 square feet of raised floor and 56 megawatts of power within the campus.</td>
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<td>INNOVATIONS IN COOLING AND POWER EFFICIENCY</td>
<td>Taking advantage of the local climate with modular, dry KyotoWheel™ technology, QTS Chicago was built to achieve an annualized power usage effectiveness (PUE) of 1.17, while championing flexibility and innovative mechanical cooling solutions.</td>
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<td>CONNECTIVITY</td>
<td>QTS Chicago offers fiber ring options to 350 E. Cermak Street, as well as 100+ network carriers and partners, and will feature abundant connectivity with low latency in a carrier neutral facility.</td>
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<td>CUSTOMER AMENITIES</td>
<td>Free parking, gym, office space available, and customer break rooms</td>
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<td>DEDICATED COMPLIANCE TEAM</td>
<td>The QTS Internal Audit team is focused on helping our customers define controls and processes to meet their ever-expanding compliance requirements.</td>
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<td>24X7X365 SUPPORT</td>
<td>National Operations Service Center, located in Atlanta-Suwannee, providing 24x7x365 monitoring and support all QTS data center customers. In addition, QTS Chicago has a dedicated team that are on site and on call to support your needs around the clock.</td>
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<td>OWNED AND OPERATED FACILITY</td>
<td>QTS mega data centers are 100% owned and operated.</td>
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### CONTRIBUTORS

**ABOUT QTS | 877.QTS.DATA | QTSDATACENTERS.COM**

QTS Realty Trust, Inc. (NYSE: QTS) is a leading provider of secure, compliant data center, hybrid cloud and managed services. QTS features the nation’s only fully integrated technology services platform providing flexible, scalable solutions for the federal government, financial services, healthcare and high tech industries. QTS owns, operates or manages more than 5 million square feet of data center space and supports more than 1,100 customers in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. In addition, QTS’ Critical Facilities Management (CFM) provides increased efficiency and greater performance for third-party data center owners and operators. For more information, please visit [www.qtsdatacenters.com](http://www.qtsdatacenters.com), call toll-free 877.QTS.DATA or follow us on Twitter @DataCenters_QTS.