

THE FOUNDATION

Seven Principles for an Ethical Data Center — A Community Standard

*The Core governs the mind of the machine.
The Foundation governs the ground it stands on.*

BLUF: The Core proposes a practical ethical framework for AI that shifts the focus from rule-based obedience to the cultivation of trustworthy behavior. Paired with The Foundation, which establishes principles for the responsible operation of AI infrastructure, the report argues that ethical AI requires both systems that act responsibly and the physical environments that support them to be accountable to people and communities.

Why this exists. Artificial intelligence is here to stay, and it is a good tool — it has given people their lives back, their sight, their voice, their work. But every model runs *somewhere*. It runs on land, water, and power that already belong to a community. Too often that community is simply asked to trust — to take a promise in place of a rule. It should not have to.

These are the terms a town has every right to require *before* a data center becomes its neighbor — not after. They are written to travel: wherever you are, put your own town's name where ours is. **Colorado Springs is where we prove them.**

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

- 1. Water Is Not Ours to Spend.** Cooling must run on a truly closed loop — metered, audited, and inspectable for the life of the facility. In a drought region, "closed loop" cannot be a marketing phrase. A community's water is a trust, not an input cost.
- 2. Bring Your Own Clean Power.** A large load must supply a required, specified share of its own energy from renewables — solar, wind — as a condition of operating, never a voluntary goal. Don't draw down the grid the rest of us depend on and call it progress.
- 3. Strengthen the Grid You Join.** The builder pays to upgrade the infrastructure it burdens. A data center runs at full load, twenty-four hours a day — it must *add* capacity and reliability to the grid, not borrow them from the people who were already here.
- 4. Be a Quiet Neighbor.** Noise, light, and heat mitigation must be real, engineered, and enforced — with the burden of proof on the builder, not the resident. A decibel promise means nothing until it is a permit condition with independent monitoring.
- 5. Nothing Hidden.** The community may see who occupies the facility, what it truly draws, and what it truly emits. No hiding the tenant, the load, or the impact behind non-disclosure agreements. You cannot consent to what you are not allowed to know.
- 6. Promises Become Conditions.** Every commitment a builder makes to win approval becomes a written, enforceable condition of that approval — with teeth, with monitoring, and with consequences for breaking it. A promise with no mechanism is not a promise; it is a wish.
- 7. A Human Hand, and a Human Voice.** The people who will live beside it get a real say before it is built and real recourse after. The final decision rests with accountable humans who answer to the community — not with a process that treats consent as a formality.

(Principle 7 is Principle 6 and 7 of The Core, come home to the neighborhood — a human hand on the irreversible, and the preservation of human agency.)

How a community uses this. Adopt these as the standard of approval. Hand them to a planning commission, a city council, a neighbor writing a comment. Require them as conditions, not courtesies. The question is never "*do we allow the future?*" — the future is coming. The question is "*on whose terms?*" These are ours.

Build it ethically, and the technology will have no stronger supporters than the towns that host it.

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A companion to The Core · 2026 · written by a resident who believes in the tool, and in the ground it stands on.