Getting Started with Autodesk Green Building Studio

Customers who add subscription to their Autodesk[®] Ecotect[™] Analysis license can access¹ whole building energy, water, and carbon analysis tools via the Autodesk[®] Green Building Studio[®] web-based service for the duration of their subscription. This document describes how to access your web-service account and manage projects, and provides tips to help you get started.

¹ Access to the Autodesk Green Building Studio web-based service is subject to the terms of use that accompanies the service. For details, visit www.greenbuildingstudio.com/default.aspx.

Contents

Introduction	
Account Setup	
Single Users:	
Multiple User Accounts:	4
How the Autodesk Green Building Studio Web-based Service Works	5
Installing the Green Building Studio Desktop Client	5
Creating New Projects	7
Locate Your Project	7
Share Project Data	8
Project Information	8
Managing Projects	9
Exporting to Autodesk Green Building Studio from Autodesk Revit-based Software BIM	
Understand the Analysis Results	10
Energy and Carbon Results	10
Estimated Energy and Cost Summary	10
Energy End-Use Charts	10
Getting to Carbon Neutral	11
Carbon Neutral Potential	11
Electric Power Plant Sources	11
Water Usage and Cost	11
Photovoltaic Potential	11
LEED Glazing Score	11
Wind Energy Potential	11
Natural Ventilation Potential	11
Building Summary	12
Export Files	12
gbXML File	12
VRML File	12
DOE-2 File	12
EnergyPlus File	12
Weather File (Binary and CSV)	12
Navigation Links	12
Run List Link	13

Design Alternatives Link	13
Notes Link	13
Navigation Tabs	14
U.S. EPA ENERGY STAR	14
Water Usage	14
PV Analysis	14
LEED Glazing	14
Weather	14
3D VRML View	14
The VRML Model	15
Design Alternatives	15
The Design Alternatives Page	16
Adding Design Alternatives	16
Summary	17

Introduction

Autodesk® Ecotect™ Analysis 2011 software is a comprehensive concept-to-detail sustainable design analysis tool, providing a wide range of simulation and analysis functionality through desktop and web-service platforms. Powerful web-based whole-building energy, water, and carbon analysis capabilities converge with desktop tools for visualizing and simulating performance of the building model within the context of its environment. Use the desktop tools and web-service functionality together to help create more sustainable designs. This document describes how to access your Green Building Studio web-service account and manage projects, and provides tips to help you get started.

Account Setup

Single Users:

- 1. Ask your reseller to add subscription to your Autodesk Ecotect Analysis purchase.
- 2. Your reseller will complete the Order Form and set up your web-service account.
- You will receive an email requesting validation and, after doing so, a username and temporary password required to log on to the Autodesk Green Building Studio web service for the first time.
- 4. You will need to review and accept the Autodesk Terms of Use, and you will be asked to change your password.
- 5. You are now a validated user and your account is ready to use.

Multiple User Accounts:

When you purchase multiple seats of Autodesk Ecotect Analysis with subscription, you can organize your company's access to Green Building Studio and its associated project lists using a multi-user account. The number of users you can add, including the administrator, is equivalent to the number of Autodesk Ecotect Analysis software purchased with subscription.

- When you purchase subscription with Autodesk Ecotect Analysis, designate an administrator (the reseller will list this person as the software coordinator on the order form) for your web-based service account. The administrator's role will include managing users, access to projects, and project templates.
- Your reseller will complete the Order Form—including the total number of Autodesk
 Ecotect Analysis subscriptions purchased and set up an Autodesk Green Building
 Studio web service multi-user account.
- The designated administrator can then complete the setup process, following the validation process outlined in Steps 3 and 4 above, and begin the process of adding other validated users.
- Each additional user must register with Autodesk Single Sign On for the Green Building Studio web service and complete the New User Registration form and validation process. To complete the New User Registration form, visit www.greenbuildingstudio.com/register.aspx.
- 5. A single user can access their account prior to being added to a multi-user account. They will be accessing the account as a trial user until they are added to a multi-user account. While under the trial user status, they will not be able to view the multi-user account projects. Also they will be limited to creating a maximum of 2 projects while accessing the service as a trial user.

- The designated administrator can add or remove validated users from the multi-user account at any time. The administrator can also assign additional administrators to the account.
 - For Accounts Purchased via the web: To add a user to the account, log in and go to the My Account tab. Click the Users tab and send invitations to users by entering their email address.
 - For Subscription Accounts: Edit users at the Autodesk Subscription Center.
- 7. The designated administrator(s) can assign permissions to users.
 - For Accounts Purchased via the web: Permissions can be assigned when sending invitations or later with the Edit option in the Current Licensed Users table on the same page. This option can also be used to add additional administrators.
 - For Subscription Accounts: Assign and Edit Permissions at the Autodesk Subscription Center.

How the Autodesk Green Building Studio Web-based Service Works

Autodesk Ecotect Analysis includes innovative building energy and carbon analysis tools made available through the Green Building Studio web-based service. The web service provides a user-friendly front end to powerful building energy analysis software. All of the computationally intensive hourly simulations are carried out on remote servers, and the results are provided to you in a web browser. The web-based service will collect data from three sources:

- Your Revit[®] software model. All the building geometry comes from your model, including the number of rooms, the connections between rooms, and their relationship to the exterior, exposure, and aspect to the sun; and the shape and total area of built surfaces or openings.
- 2. Your responses to a few basic questions. In order to explain the building's use or context, you will need to select a building type from a drop-down menu and enter the postal code for the site. You will also have a chance to select a weather station for the project, although the closest one is selected to be the default.
- Regionalized databases. Based on the above information, Autodesk Green Building Studio will extract additional information about local weather conditions, construction, and materials. The service will automatically add any information you have not provided, so it can adapt to your requirements as your design evolves.

Installing the Green Building Studio Desktop Client

To access and run the web-based whole building analysis tools for models created in Autodesk® Revit® Architecture software or Autodesk® Revit® MEP software, you will need to use the Green Building Studio Desktop client. The client submits the green building extensible markup language (gbXML) files created by the Revit software to the web service.

- Download the appropriate zip file containing the Green Building Studio client from the Autodesk Green Building Studio website downloads page: https://www.greenbuildingstudio.com/download.mvc
- 2. Unzip the file and double-click the setup.exe file.

3. Once installed, launch the Green Building Studio Desktop client from your desktop. Now you are ready to create new projects in the Autodesk Green Building Studio web service, create designs using the Revit platform for building information modeling (BIM), and analyze the performance of your conceptual building designs.

Creating New Projects

Once you log in you will be on the Project List page, and you are ready to add your first project. Just click the New Project link on the top left of the project list. You must enter the Project Name and select a Building Type from the list of approximately 30 typologies and a unique building schedule, which is optional.

Locate Your Project

The web service incorporates Google[™] Maps to facilitate entry of a new project and

selection of the appropriate weather file. Enter your project's address or the city and state or postal code in the Location text box, and click the Find Location button. Move your green building icon to relocate. When satisfied with the selected location, check the checkbox below the map, and click the Next button.

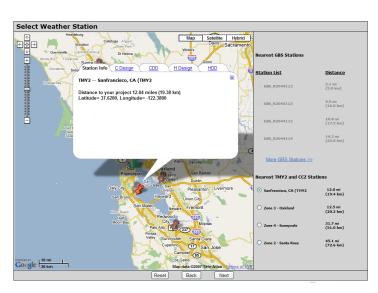
The next New Project screen will display all the weather files that the web service has in the vicinity of your project. Through this screen you can explore



each weather file's degree day and design day characteristics and select the appropriate one, though by default the station closest to the building is selected.

Autodesk Green Building Studio stations are based on recent "actual year" weather data rather than TMY2 and CZ2 stations, which are based on 30-year averages of weather data.

Simply select the radio button to the right of the map to select the desired weather file, and click the Next button.



Hints and Tips

The choice you make for Building Type and Schedule can have a significant impact on your results. For example, if you are modeling a mixeduse building and choose retail, the analysis will assume higher interior lighting loads than if you choose office. Furthermore, the default schedules vary by building type. A retail store by default is assumed to be open more hours per year than an office building and hence will use more energy.

Hints and Tips

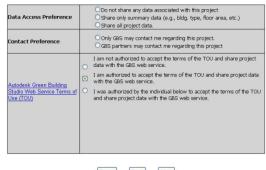
C Design and H Design are the outdoor cooling and heating design temperatures typically used to size heating and cooling equipment. HDD and CDD are the heating and cooling degree day totals for the weather location you have chosen. Compare the design and CDD/HDD data for the available weather files to help determine which weather file most closely approximates the weather for your site.

The next screen is where you specify additional address information as well as utility cost information. Make sure a location is entered, and click the Get Utility Cost button to retrieve the electric and fuel cost defaults. These are based on the previous year's state, territory, or country average prices for fuel and electricity that are published by the U.S. Department of Energy. Modify them if you have more relevant data. In cases where no default utility rates are available you must enter a value before continuing. Check with your local utility provider for current rates.

Share Project Data

The web service enables you to share information about your project with design team members and Green Building Studio partners who may provide more information on how

their products can assist you with your building design. The web service needs to know who has authorized you to share project data if you are not the owner of the building information you are submitting. The authorizing agent you specify will also receive a copy of the Autodesk Green Building Studio Terms of Use (TOU).



Reset Back Next

Project Information

Finally, for new projects you need to specify the budget, current design phase, the estimated construction start date, and if the project has a green building goal.

Please indicate project related information.

Total Construction Budget	Make Selection	•
Current Design Phase	Make Selection	
Estimated Construction or Renovation Start Date	Make Selection	
Green Building Goal	Make Selection	
Notes		

After you create a new project you will receive an email containing the Green Building Studio TOU for your records.

Managing Projects

For every project in your list, drop-down choices are available to access additional information.



Set Up Project Defaults lets you customize project defaults such as internal gains, construction materials, glazing type, cooling and heating set points, and so on. This can be useful when using the Green Building Studio web service to analyze an existing building that has less efficient systems or less insulation, or if the default values do not represent your project.

Edit Project Details allows you to view and edit project information.

Manage Project Members facilitates managing project team members. You can invite other validated subscribers on your design team to participate in the analysis, and you can individually assign them rights to the project (Read-Only, Download and Read-Only, Add Runs or Manager).

Exporting to Autodesk Green Building Studio from Autodesk Revit-based Software for BIM

- 1. Within Revit, on the Home tab, Room & Area panel, open the Area and Volume Computations dialog from the panel drop-down menu. Select the Compute Room Volumes option.
- 2. Click the Revit icon> Export>gbXML and follow the steps to save a gbXML file.
- From your computer Start menu open Green Building Studio>Green Building Studio
 Desktop
- 4. Enter your Green Building Studio Username and Password and click the Login button. You must be connected to the Internet for this to work.
- 5. If you have projects in your Green Building Studio account, they will be listed in the Project list. Simply select the project to which this model is assigned.
- 6. Click "Browse gbXML" button and choose the gbXML file you just saved out of Revit.
- 7. Click Create New Run to initiate the simulations and get results.

The web-based service will first check your Revit model for missing data or errors, and if problems are found, an error message will appear. Assuming there are no errors, a browser window will open presenting you with the status of your whole building energy, water, and carbon analysis.

The length of time it takes to run the simulations using the web service typically varies from less than a minute to 5 or 10 minutes. The run time depends on the server traffic, complexity of the model, and the number of surfaces, windows, rooms, spaces, and zones. Most runs are complete within minutes. Very large models (with gbXML files more than 8 to 12 MB) may take up to an hour to run. This is a good reason to start analysis in the early stages of design with a simple model. Once your run is complete you will see a results page.

Understand the Analysis Results

The results pages provide accurate yet easy-to-understand summary information on building energy and resource use, carbon emissions, simulation assumptions, performance metrics, and costs. These results can be used to compare the energy costs of multiple building design scenarios at the conceptual design stage. The following serves as a guide to help you interpret the results effectively.

Energy and Carbon Results

The general information section at the top of the page describes the project scenario, building type, geographic location, and gross floor area.

Estimated Energy and Cost Summary

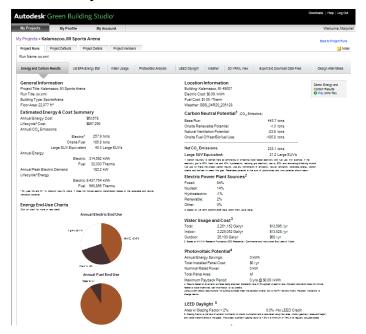
Most building energy cost comparisons and early compliance decisions can be made using annualized energy cost and consumption information. Costs are estimated using statewide, territory, or country average utility rates, or the customized rates you may have applied to the project.

The following estimated information is provided:

- Annual energy cost.
- Lifecycle energy costs (30 year).
- Annual energy consumption (electric and gas).
- Peak electric demand (kW).
- Lifecycle energy consumption (electric and gas).
- CO2 emissions are based on the on-site fuel use and the fuel sources for the electricity in the region.
- An equivalency using an SUV (driven 15,000 miles/year) is given to put the building's CO2 emissions into perspective.

Energy End-Use Charts

Further breakdowns of estimated energy use for major electric and gas end uses such as lighting, HVAC, and space heating are provided in graphical format. Additional details associated with each category can be seen by clicking on the pie charts.



Getting to Carbon Neutral

In addition to energy use and cost, the web service provides additional information required to help design a carbon neutral building. *This additional information includes the following:*

Carbon Neutral Potential

This section will summarize the estimated CO_2 emissions for your building design and identify the options to help reduce them. If your net CO_2 emissions are less than zero, there is a high potential for this building to be carbon neutral.

Electric Power Plant Sources

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has historical records for all the fuel and emissions of all power plants in the United States and the Carbon Monitoring for Action (CARMA) database has the carbon emissions data of more than 50,000 power plants world-wide. This section summarizes the fuel sources for electricity generated in this region. In order for a project to be carbon neutral, electricity consumption must be reduced or offset using renewables by an amount equal to the portion of the electricity that comes from fossil fuels.

Water Usage and Cost

A summary is given of the estimated water use in the building based on the number of people in the building as well as the building type. Note that the water consumption is not related to the number of fixtures.

Photovoltaic Potential

The web service software automatically analyzes every exterior surface of the building, including roofs, walls, and windows, for their estimated potential to generate electricity using photovoltaics. Exterior shades are not currently included in the photovoltaic analysis. The results of this analysis are summarized in this section. Note that this analysis assumes that PVs can be installed on vertical as well as horizontal surfaces as long as the surface generates significant amounts of PV power. See the PV tab for details on the surfaces that are analyzed.

LEED Glazing Score

The LEED glazing score is the percentage of regularly occupied floor area that has a Glazing Factor greater than 0.02. Note that the tool assumes the entire floor area of your project to be regularly occupied unless you have defined some spaces through Revit MEP as restrooms, corridors, storage, mechanical rooms, or other spaces not considered to be regularly occupied by LEED. The score must be more than 75 percent to score LEED points and achieve full benefit from daylighting controls throughout the building.

Wind Energy Potential

The estimated annual amount of electricity that can be generated from one 15-foot-diameter wind turbine of conventional design.

Natural Ventilation Potential

The tool approximates the annual operating hours and energy required to mechanically cool and ventilate the building. It also estimates the annual number of hours that outdoor air could be used to naturally ventilate the building. Potential energy savings associated with not running the mechanical cooling and ventilation system during this

period are projected, and finally, the net hours that cooling is required, even with natural ventilation, are estimated.

Building Summary

Detailed statistics, assumptions, and information on building constructions are also provided. This information allows the building designer to get an early assessment of code compliance and rough estimates of equipment sizing requirements for heating, cooling, and water heating, as well as window, wall, and floor area breakdowns.

Export Files

The Green Building Studio web service provides the user with file download capabilities that can be used to share information with other members of the design team who are performing detailed engineering analyses, such as equipment sizing or design. The user simply clicks on the links to access these items to download or navigate. Each file or link is described below.

gbXML File

This link is to the fully populated gbXML file that contains the building information necessary for an advanced energy simulation as well as the results from the Autodesk Green Building Studio simulation. The gbXML file also includes information on the BIM model and the local assumptions and building code information brought in through Green Building Studio. This file can be used with design tools such as Trane's Trace™ 700 application.

VRML File

Click this link to open the 3D VRML view in a new window or right-click it and choose Save Target As... to download the file. See the "3D VRML View" section below for more information.

DOE-2 File

This link exports the geometrically more accurate DOE-2.2 input file that was generated by Green Building Studio for the energy simulation. It can be used downstream as the starting point for other more detailed engineering analysis. This file can be directly imported into the free eQUEST DOE-2 application at www.doe2.com.

EnergyPlus File

This link exports the geometrically more accurate EnergyPlus™ file that was generated by Green Building Studio. It can be used as a starting point for more detailed engineering analyses. The EnergyPlus simulation program can be downloaded for free at www.energyplus.gov.

Weather File (Binary and CSV)

The DOE-2 binary weather file used in the simulation can be downloaded for further analysis off-line using eQUEST. The comma separated values (CSV) file can also be downloaded for use in other applications as well as conversion to other simulation engine weather formats such as EnergyPlus.

Navigation Links

Simply click on the links to access these items or navigate.

Run List Link

This link returns you to the list of runs for this project.

Design Alternatives Link

This link will take you to the design alternative screen where you can change design assumptions for this run and assess the impact of those changes. See the next section for details on the Design Alternative feature of Green Building Studio.

Notes Link

If you want to make or view comments about this run, click on the Notes link.

Navigation Tabs

At the top of each results page are navigation tabs that allow the user to view additional information about their building design.

U.S. EPA ENERGY STAR

This tab will display the estimated ENERGY STAR score and associated data that can be



used to benchmark the building design's total energy use performance relative to the U.S. EPA's ENERGY STAR requirements. Buildings that receive an ENERGY STAR score above 75 from the EPA qualify for "Designed to earn the ENERGY STAR" and recognition from the EPA.

Water Usage

The water usage tab allows the user to apply a variety of water saving measures, including efficient fixtures, water catchments, native vegetation, and others. It also summarizes the potential LEED points available for these measures.

PV Analysis

The details of the photovoltaic (PV) potential analysis are listed in this tab showing the individual PV potential for every exterior surface in the building. Estimated price per watt for the PV system can be made on this tab to account for rebates or other regional differences that affect PV system cost. See the VRML view tab to determine the building surface associated with each result.

LEED Glazing

This tab lists all the spaces in the building and their individual Glaze Factor value. This data can be used to determine what spaces in the building could qualify for LEED daylighting credits.

Weather

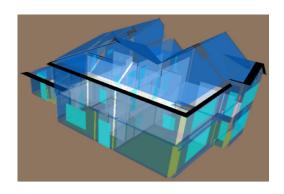
This tab contains a variety of weather data graphs and charts. These graphs can also be set for specific data types over specific periods of time.

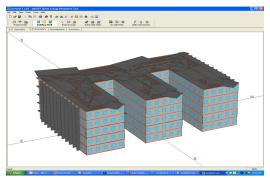
3D VRML View

The 3D VRML View tab allows the building designer to review the gbXML geometry data in 3D, and rotate it to review the placement of walls, windows, floors, and other spaces. It requires a VRML Viewer program that is available for free, such as the free Cortona VRML client at www.parallelgraphics.com for Windows® operating systems, and the FreeWRL VRML/X3D Viewer at www.apple.com for Mac® operating systems to view these files. Click on the surfaces in the list at the right of the window to identify them. When selected, a surface will highlight in red in the 3D view, and its surface type will be displayed at the bottom of the window.

The VRML Model

One of the download formats available on the Green Building Studio results web page is a VRML file (see example above, right). This is a 3D model that shows what the gbXML export has extracted from your project. Viewing the VRML file is a useful way for you to establish that your simulation is an accurate representation of the whole building. Rooms or surfaces that are missing or that have been incorrectly identified (for example, a roof shown as a shading surface) will be more apparent in this model. In the VRML (below left) the black edges along the roof have been exported to Autodesk Green Building Studio as shading surfaces and not roof surfaces. The image on the right is an example of a DOE-2 file opened in eQUEST. Notice there are several shades on the roof—this is because the upper limit of the room objects on the top floor is not high enough to contact the roof. To solve this, extend the room object's top surface to above the roof's top surface.

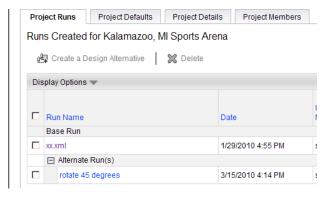




Design Alternatives

The design alternative feature allows you to modify the base case assumptions and then run a simulation so that you can estimate the impact of these modifications on energy efficiency. This feature helps you make significant design decisions more quickly.

The design alternative feature can be accessed from the main "Energy and Carbon" results page link as described



in the previous section or on the Run List page Create a Design Alternative link above the Runs List as seen in the image to the right. Clicking on either the Energy and Carbon results page Design Alternative link or the Run List page Create a Design Alternative link will take you to the Design Alternative page.

The Design Alternatives Page

The top portion of the table has standard links to the Run List, the results page for the base run associated with these Design Alternatives. The section directly below lists the values for all the parameters that have been modified for the currently modified design alternative or the design alternative selected by the user.



Adding Design Alternatives

Go to the Design Alternative screen associated with the run. Begin making the modifications you would like to analyze by selecting a tab and choosing the drop-down list value you would like to be applied for this alternative. Enter an Alternative name, and then click the Add Alternative button. Continue doing this until all the desired Design Alternatives are added.

Select the Run Added Alternatives button to place the alternatives in the run queue. Depending on the model complexity, server load, and the number of alternatives you are analyzing, it will take between a few minutes and an hour to complete your runs. Users can also add and run alternatives individually as they are defined or as described above, add a group of alternatives and run the group at one time. Once all the alternatives are run, you can review their results either on the Design Alternatives or the Run List page.

Hints and Tips

If your model is large and complex it will take longer to run. Try submitting design alternatives individually as they are defined. While that alternative is running, define and submit additional design alternatives.

Summary

Architects and engineers can use digital design information to help analyze and understand how their projects will perform before they are built. Developing and evaluating multiple alternatives simultaneously makes comparison easier and helps inform better sustainable design decisions. Building information modeling (BIM) is core to Autodesk's sustainable design approach for building performance analysis and simulation.

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