

Sustainability in Focus: Consumer Carbon Trends for 2026



A Complex Modern Paradox

Consumers are waking up to the hidden environmental cost of their digital lives. Awareness of the carbon emissions tied to everyday browsing and streaming has nearly doubled in just two years.

Consumers demand radical climate action from brands, but refuse to sacrifice the digital habits causing the problem.

When making purchase decisions,



prefer brands actively working to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Invisible Footprint Becomes Visible

Internet carbon emissions are entering mainstream consciousness, driving the single largest awareness shift in our tracking history. However, a massive education gap remains, with 62% of consumers still unaware of the carbon cost of their internet use.



High Climate Literacy

General climate literacy remains exceptionally high, dipping only slightly from 86% in 2024.



Digital Carbon Awareness

The percentage of consumers who know that everyday internet use generates carbon emissions nearly doubled from 20% in 2024.



Digital Anxiety

Consumers are concerned about emissions from their online activity. This peaks at 68% among Gen Z (18–24).

The Digital Divide vs. The Action Gap

The 2026 Paradox

As the internet becomes non-negotiable for daily life, a stark action gap has emerged. While digital carbon awareness has skyrocketed, overall willingness to alter daily habits has dropped as connectivity becomes a baseline necessity.

Willingness to alter daily internet habits to lower emissions

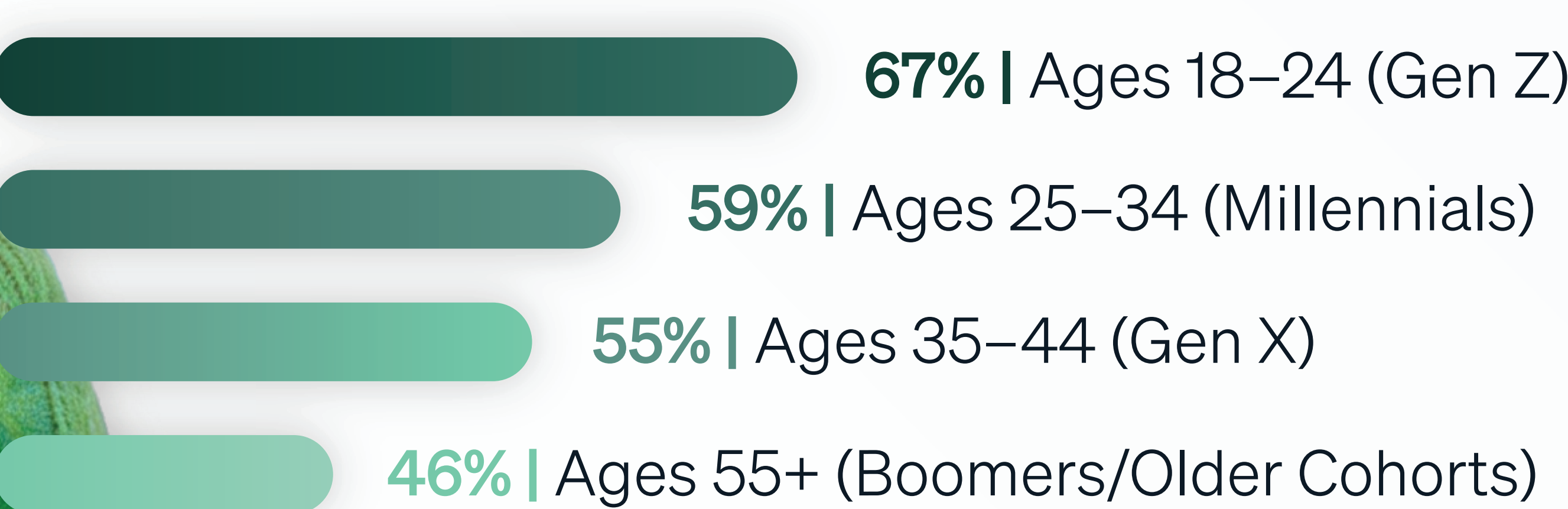
2024 Global Average



2026 Global Average



The 2026 Generational Exception



The Negotiable Luxury

While essential daily browsing habits are locked in, streaming is a flexible target. 62% of consumers say they would reduce time on Netflix, YouTube, or TikTok to save emissions.



The Brand Mandate: Filling the Leadership Void

Public trust in government climate action is stalling, leaving a leadership void for the private sector to fill. Forward-thinking brands and publishers that fill this void with transparent, data-backed messaging will own the next wave of climate-conscious digital behavior.



Trust brands more than governments to drive meaningful progress on climate change

To win, brands must navigate two fast-moving realities:



Demand Radical Transparency

Vague "eco-friendly" claims will fail. This near-unanimous demand has remained virtually unchanged since 2024, proving transparency is a permanent market baseline.



Want Increased Corporate Regulation

While trust in brands outpaces faith in government, nearly half of consumers still want policymakers to enforce stricter guardrails.

Working Together to Build A Clean Media Ecosystem

Meet Equativ GreenPMPs™

A clean digital ecosystem starts with smarter supply paths. Our curated GreenPMPs™ make it seamless for advertisers to measure, reduce, and offset the carbon emissions of their digital campaigns with zero compromise on performance.

Feature	Impact
Automatic Reduction	Instantly filters out high-emission, low-value inventory in real time.
Proven Performance	Reduces campaign emissions by an average of 25% while boosting viewability and CTR.
Turnkey Activation	Easily deploy eco-conscious campaigns directly through our curation platform.