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Global Media Usage Up 0.3% in '25, Minus Mega Sports Events, Fewer Key Elections in Top Markets; Growth Surge Expected in '26 on Winter Olympics, World Cup & Political Ad Spend

STAMFORD, CT – March 31, 2026 (PRWeb) – Global consumer media usage, including all digital and traditional media channels, rose only 0.3% in 2025 to an average of 57.65 hours per week (HPW), following strong growth of 2.1% in 2024. Decelerating growth in 2025 was due primarily to the lack of major international sporting events and fewer federal elections in the top 20 global markets versus 2024, according to new research released today by [PQ Media](#), the world's leading provider of media econometrics.

While a decline in consumer media usage was expected in 2025, major geopolitical tensions around the world, such as the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Israel-Hamas stand-off, China's continuing threats against Taiwan, and the global tariff wars, drove up digital media usage, particularly online and mobile video, audio, podcasting, social media, magazines and newspapers, according to PQ Media's 13th annual [Global Consumer Media Usage Forecast 2026-2030](#).

Consumer time spent with media is projected to accelerate at a 2.4% pace in 2026, driven by the Winter Olympics in Italy; the FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico; federal elections in 13 of the 20 largest global markets, as well as 44 major elections overall; and growing geopolitical tensions, such as the Israel-US strikes on Iran and the impact of retribution across the Middle East; the US raid and capture of Venezuela's leader; and the continuing conflicts between Ukraine/Russia and China/Taiwan.

PQ Media's analysis of the 2025-2030 period continues to support the secular growth trend of media usage rising in even years, when most markets hold major elections and international sporting events like the Olympics, FIFA World Cup and the World Cup of Hockey. Meanwhile, declines are expected in each odd year during the forecast period, when there are fewer federal elections and global sporting events are limited to sports played by fewer countries, such as the ICC World Cup.

"We saw no indication that the uncertain worldwide economy caused by the various geopolitical tensions and shifting economic policies in 2025 negatively impacted media usage, despite anticipated increases in the cost of technology used to access media content on digital devices during the latter half of the year," said [PQ Media CEO & Founder Patrick Quinn](#). "Instead, consumers reverted to previous media consumption habits we've tracked over the past 25 years, in that they use media as a catharsis when the economy weakens and more people are stuck at home after losing a job, allowing them to watch more television and read more books, among other secular media consumption habits."

The shift from traditional to digital media continued unabated in 2025, with digital's share rising to 42.6% globally, up from 31.4% in 2020. While that share may seem low, both India and China have populations over 1 billion, with a high percentage of people living in poverty and unable to afford internet access and/or smartphones, among other emerging nations with similar population profiles. That said, digital media usage accounted for over 50% of total consumption in 11 of the top 20 global markets, including the US, South Korea and the Netherlands, according to the [Global Consumer Media Usage Forecast 2026-2030](#).

Currently, AI is having only a minor impact on media consumption, as queries answered by AI tools on popular search engines like Google and Yahoo are actually shortening the length of time some

consumers are spending online, such as students researching topics for coursework. AI queries on content sites, such as Netflix, have not yielded any discernable consumption differences either.

Among other key findings from the report:

- The average global consumer spent 8.24 hours per day with media in 2025, up from 7.62 hours in 2020 (in Japan daily media usage exceeded 13 hours, in the Netherlands it exceeded 12 hours, and five countries posted media usage over 11 hours per day, including the United States);
- Ad-supported media accounted for 52.7% of time spent in 2025, down from a 55.5% share in 2020, while in 11 markets, including the US, consumer-driven media usage exceeds 50.1%, led by Spain at 58.6% (Poland to become 12th market in 2026 as it reached 49.96% in 2025);
- From a demographic perspective, Great Gens (born before 1945) used media the most worldwide (102.20 HPW), while the newly born ai-Gens used media the least (6.30 HPW) in 2025;
- Television (including live, digital, streaming and over-the-top (OTT) video) remains the most used of the 11 media platforms that PQ Media tracks, reaching 27.74 hours per week in 2025, while film & home video posted the fastest growth, up 7.8%, fueled by more movies being released on streaming services and more theatrical movies being produced in 2025 compared with 2024;
- Mobile video posted the highest gain of the 22 digital channels that PQ Media monitors, up 13.8% in 2025, while OTT video (streaming, VOD, PPV and DVR viewing) was the most used digital channel at 9.50 hours per week;
- Print books was the only traditional media platform of the eight that PQ Media monitors, to post positive growth in 2025, up 1.7%, which was a sharp deceleration from the 3.6% gain in 2024, when more adult trade bestseller titles were released; Print books remain an anomaly in traditional media, as some younger demographics have turned back to print books due to screen fatigue from spending hours on social media, streaming video and videogames.

About the Forecast:

[PQ Media's 13th annual Global Consumer Media Usage Forecast 2026-2030](#) delivers the world's most comprehensive and actionable media consumption intelligence covering the 2020-2030 period; the Top 20 Global Markets and the Rest of the Countries in each of the 4 major global regions; 25 digital media platforms & channels; 11 traditional media platforms; 11 hybrid (digital + traditional) media silos; 7 consumer generations; and both genders. The new edition includes in-depth econometric data and market insights delivered through a PDF Report & Analysis providing 445 slides of analysis and 600 datagraphs; and a Deep-Dive Excel Databook delivering 250,000 data points examining all media platforms, channels and markets worldwide. Click the report link above to download free report samples and to purchase a site license.

About PQ Media:

[PQ Media](#) delivers intelligent data and analysis to the world's leading media organizations via syndicated market intelligence reports, custom drill-down research, and on-demand strategic consulting. This latest *Forecast* is part of PQ Media's annual Global Media Forecast Series, which includes three reports covering the industry's KPIs: advertising & marketing spending; consumer media usage; and consumer spending on media. Click the link above to download free report samples and for details regarding our Special Three-Report Bundle License.

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