

Global Warming: A Self-Inflicted, Very Serious Problem

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Global Warming: A Self-Inflicted, Very Serious Problem, According to More Than Half the World's Online Population
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Freak weather patterns that have caused droughts, hurricanes and wildfires have made global warming an issue that the world can no longer ignore.

“It has taken extreme and life threatening weather patterns to finally drive the message home that global warming is happening and is here to stay unless a concerted, global effort is made to reverse it,” said Patrick Dodd, President, ACNielsen Europe. ACNielsen, the world’s largest market information company, recently conducted a global online survey on consumer attitudes towards global warming.

“The good news is that nine out of 10 people globally are aware of global warming. The bad news is that only over half of them (57%) consider it a ‘very serious problem’,” said Dodd.

The ACNielsen Global Online Consumer Opinion Survey, the largest half-yearly survey of its kind, was conducted in late October/early November, surveying 25,408 internet users in 46 markets from Europe, Asia Pacific, North America, the Baltics and Middle East.

In Europe, 95% of consumers say they are aware of global warming and 57% consider it a very serious problem.

“The countries that are most aware and most concerned about global warming are, not surprisingly, those who have experienced firsthand and directly suffered from the effects of global warming in the past few years,” observed Dodd.

Globally, Czechs are the most aware about global warming, with 99% saying they know about this issue, followed by 98% of Chinese, Portuguese, Russian and Thai consumers.

In August 2002, Prague - one of the world’s most beautiful and well-preserved medieval cities - became submerged as flash floods caused 40,000 residents to leave their homes and caused devastation throughout the city.

A year later, in August 2003, Europe recorded its hottest summer ever on record which resulted in an estimated 35,000 deaths across Europe, with 14,804 people perishing in France from heatwave-related deaths. France’s recent experience with global warming three years ago prompted French consumers (80%) along with Brazilians (81%) to top the world for thinking that global warming is a “very serious problem.”

Most Aware and Most Concerned - Latin Americans and Europeans

Latin Americans, who live in a region that scientists predict will be one of the worst hit by global warming in the next twenty years, are the most aware and concerned group about global warming.

North America - Least Aware and Least Concerned

In North America, which is the world’s largest producer of carbon dioxide emissions, 84% say they are aware of global warming, but less than half of them (43%) consider it a very serious problem. More worrying, 12% of North Americans said they had never heard or read anything about global warming and one in ten consumers said it was “not a serious problem at all.”

“North Americans consistently ranked least aware and least concerned about global warming,” said Dodd. North America’s apathy towards global warming was likely to be a major reason for Al Gore to make his controversial environmental film documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth”, which was described by critics as “the most important movie made in 2006”.

The three lowest countries globally in terms of awareness were the UAE, where 16% of respondents said that they had not heard of global warming, followed by the US (13%) and Malaysia (11%).

Global Warming - A Result of Human Actions?

Half the world's population (50%) said global warming is a result of human actions and 43% believe it's a combination of both natural changes in the climate and human actions. Again, Latin Americans lead the world for believing global warming is a direct result of human actions – 62% of Latin Americans compared to 32% of North Americans say global warming is a direct result of our actions.

Those who believe global warming is a result of human actions are more likely to make changes to save the environment," said Dodd. "In this case, it's gratifying to see that those who most believe that global warming is caused by human activities are the Chinese (73%) followed by 70% of Brazilians – two of the world's largest developing economies."

One out of eight North Americans (12%), the highest percentage globally, thought global warming is caused by natural changes in the climate.

46 Markets Covered

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

About ACNielsen

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