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## **Global Consumer Spending on Media & Related Tech Expected to Grow 3.7% in 2026, Accelerating From Only 2.8% in 2025, Fueled by Winter Olympics, World Cup & Political Spending**

**Stamford, CT, April 30, 2026 (PRWeb)** – Global consumer spending on overall media content and technology grew 2.8% to \$2.439 trillion in 2025, decelerating from a 4.4% increase in 2024, as there were no major international sporting events and fewer federal elections and related media buying, according to new research released today by [PQ Media](#), the leading provider of media econometrics.

The growth deceleration was not unexpected in 2025, as consumer spending on media is exhibiting similar characteristics to the other two media KPIs that PQ Media covers in its annual [Global Media Forecast Series 2026](#) – advertising & marketing and consumer media usage. Increasingly, consumer spending is registering fluctuating growth rates – rising in even years when there are major international sporting events and a host of federal elections worldwide. For example, PQ Media tracked accelerating growth during the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy, and expects the same with the FIFA World Cup this year, which is tri-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Consumers tend to increase spending on video content and devices during these periods, such as pay-per-view (PPV) and video-on-demand (VOD) of games and contests involving a consumer's country, as well as purchasing new TVs and upgrades to digital devices. When elections are included, print media also exhibits faster growth, as more single-copy issues are purchased the day after matches or elections, and consumers are less likely to cancel subscriptions to newspapers, sports and news magazine titles, as well as streaming services that carry the games, according to the new [Global Consumer Spending on Media Forecast 2026-2030](#).

Global consumer spending on overall media content grew 6.1% in 2025 to \$1.141 trillion, while total media-related technology spending was almost flat, inching up 0.1% to \$1.298 trillion. Consumer spending on digital media content and tech worldwide increased 4% in 2025 to \$1.854 trillion, while end-user spending on traditional media content and tech fell 0.7% to \$584.68 billion.

The US remained the largest consumer media market in the world with total spending of \$553.06 billion in 2025, while South Africa was the fastest growing of the top 20 leading global markets, rising 6%. Global consumers spent an average of \$414.23 on all media content and tech in 2025, a 2.4% gain over 2024, of which \$314.93 was spent on digital media and \$99.30 on traditional media, according to PQ Media.

Consumer spending on media is expected to decelerate during the 2026-2030 forecast period, as numerous media categories become obsolete, such as dial-up internet; feature mobile phones; music CDs and CD players; single music downloads and MP3 players; video DVDs, DVD players, home video subscriptions and e-Readers after Amazon announced it will no longer manufacture its Kindle device in 2026. Concurrently, many digital tech categories will post declining growth rates in the forecast period because they are reaching penetration saturation in developed nations, including tablets, smartphones, laptops, PCs, and digital audio receivers, among others.

Meanwhile, many traditional media categories are posting growth, such as print books, physical music units and movie admissions & home video units, due to screen fatigue from constant video, music and e-

book usage. Consumers are returning to movie theaters with more blockbusters being released post-COVID, though 14 of 16 traditional media categories will post declines.

However, the tariff wars, rising inflation and geopolitical tensions in Europe and the Middle East led to surging fuel prices and the supply chain interruptions following the shutdown of the Hormuz Strait. And there are indications of consumers trimming media budgets further if inflation continues to rise.

“Since the Iran War began, consumer confidence indicators have fallen to their lowest level in decades, even surpassing the chaotic years of the Great Recession. Data shows that the share of discretionary spending allocated for media content & technology peaked at 3% in 2016, but has fallen annually since, except during the 2020-2021 pandemic when consumers were stuck at home. In 2025, the share dropped to 2.4%, the lowest share since 1998, during an era in which new digital content and devices led to a surge in spending for the next three decades,” said [PQ Media CEO & Founder Patrick Quinn](#). “The Iran War and tariffs are impacting both developed and emerging markets, particularly relating to electronically delivered content and the devices that are used to upload this content.”

This steady drop in media spending as a share of discretionary spend is attributable to the lack of groundbreaking new digital content or device launches that, historically, were drivers of consumer spending on media. For example, the introduction of music CDs, console videogames, home PCs, cable networks and PPV drove spending in the 1980s; DVDs, laptops, MP3 players and internet access were behind the 1990s gains; broadband, feature mobile phones, tablets and e-books, and satellite radio fueled spending in the 2000s; and smartphones, HDTV and streaming media were instrumental in the rise of spending in the 2010s.

But nothing of game-changing caliber has been introduced in the 2020s, except AI, yet consumers are not spending much money on AI, though AI has helped drive spending on certain entertainment and workflow software. Research currently indicates that AI remains a nice-to-have. The other reason that discretionary spending on media is decelerating is a decline in new media content being made available, as some streaming services have reduced production budgets for new TV shows and movies due to declining profits and stock prices, while movie studios are merging with only a few majors left. Many young gamers are switching to digital games, so console publishers have cut back on the number of new titles released to mainly key franchises, such as *Mario Bros.*, *Call of Duty*, and *Madden NFL*.

#### **Other Key Takeaways from the new PQ Media Forecast include:**

- Wireless data subscriptions was the largest of the 28 digital media categories in 2025 at \$313.79 billion, while digital audio streaming and satellite radio posted the fastest growth, both up 13.4%;
- Basic and premium TV subscriptions was the largest of the 14 traditional media categories in 2024 at \$231.32 billion, and physical music units registered the strongest growth (+3.8%);
- Among the top 20 global markets, Russia ranked first in its digital media share of total content and tech spend in 2024 at 84.4%, while Japan ranked first in average consumer spend on all media at \$1,886.35;
- Global consumer spend on all media content and tech is forecast to rise 3.7% in 2026, while the US market is projected to register a 3.6% gain.

#### **About the Report:**

PQ Media's 13th annual [Global Consumer Spending on Media Forecast 2026-2030](#) delivers the most comprehensive and actionable strategic intelligence on consumer spending on digital and traditional media content and technology, including econometric data and analysis of 2 overall spending sectors (media content and technology); 5 total spending segments (unit purchases, content subscriptions,

access, devices, and software); and 28 digital and 14 traditional media content and tech categories. Click the report link above to download FREE report samples.

**About PQ Media:**

[PQ Media](#) delivers intelligent data and analysis to the world's leading media and technology organizations via syndicated market intelligence reports and custom drill-down research. PQ Media publishes the annual [Global Media Forecast Series 2026](#), a three-report series in which each report focuses on one of the industry's three KPIs to provide the only holistic view of the global media landscape, including this new edition of the Global Consumer Spending on Media Forecast 2026-2030. Click the GMF Series 2026 link above to access FREE executive summaries and samples datasets from all three reports, as well as more information about our specially discounted Three-Report Enterprise Bundle License.

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