

Which consumers will pay for greener products?

– Survey shows those in UK less willing than neighbours in Western Europe

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For immediate release

According to survey results released by Canalys today, consumers in other Western European countries are more willing than those in the UK to pay a premium for electronic goods produced in a more environmentally conscious way. The online survey was conducted in April among more than 2,000 employed, adult mobile phone and PC users in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK.

The independent survey asked a series of questions relating to consumer attitudes, opinions and behaviour in relation to a number of technology products and services. One of the key issues facing the technology industry is how it contributes to reducing the threat of global warming. Technology can help businesses reduce their carbon footprints, for example by replacing paper forms with digital equivalents or reducing employees' road travel through the use of mobile devices and GPS systems. But as a global industry manufacturing and distributing billions of electronic products each year, its own emissions and the commercial implications of reducing them must be considered.

“Slightly more than half – 55% – of consumers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: ‘I would pay up to a 10% premium for electronic products that were manufactured in a more environmentally conscious way.’ You should expect more people to say this than would actually do it, but 11% strongly agreed with the statement and the reality is most likely somewhere between the two today,” said Canalys senior analyst Pete Cunningham. “We will be monitoring this issue closely in future surveys to see the effect growing awareness of environmental concerns is having on consumer buying behaviour.”

Widespread media coverage of global warming has helped raise awareness across all social groups. The Canalys survey shows that there was very little variation in attitude across gender or income groups. There was also only slight variation among respondents of different education levels. Two areas where there were bigger differences in attitude were across age groups and countries. The willingness to pay such a premium decreased with the age of respondent, from 67% of 15–17 year olds down to 49% of those aged 50 or over.

“More than two-thirds of respondents in Spain indicated they would be willing to pay a premium for greener electronic products, compared to 55% in Italy, Germany and France. The UK came out badly in comparison to the other countries,” Cunningham continued. “It was bottom of the five by some way with only 40%

suggesting they were prepared to pay more. It also had the highest proportion, at 22%, who disagreed strongly with the idea.”

Reinforcing these results, in Italy, 66% of respondents said they already only bought kitchen appliances with the best energy efficiency ratings. In France it was 61%, and over 50% in both Germany and Spain. In the UK the proportion was just 41%. In areas where the behaviour does not require the consumer to make or change a purchase decision, such as turning off the TV at night or turning lights off when leaving a room, the UK is far more in line with the other countries. In fact, across all countries, energy-saving measures that did not involve a purchase decision were more commonly undertaken than those that did.

“Technology vendors exploring green initiatives in relation to the products they are building and marketing must be aware of these differences in attitude,” Cunningham said in closing. “Current survey results suggest that they will see greater acceptance of those initiatives among younger buyers and that the response will vary by country. Overall there is good awareness of the need to conserve energy, and willingness on the part of consumers to do their bit. At the point of purchase they will often be influenced by other factors, but vendors that can boast genuine green credentials should expect to see a positive response from many customers.”

About the Consumer Mobility Analysis service

The research results discussed in this release come from the new Canalys Consumer Mobility Analysis EMEA service, which provides clients with analysis of results from a continuous programme of large-scale consumer surveys. Each quarter, different mobility topics and country markets within EMEA are covered by the survey to provide monitoring of trends and reaction to new initiatives, products and services. In addition to analysis of the survey results, clients receive regular reports, supporting databases and direct access to Canalys analysts. More information is available from the Canalys web site.

About Canalys

Canalys specialises in delivering high quality market data, analysis and advice to the world’s leading technology vendors. It is recognised as a key provider of continuous advisory services and confidential custom projects for marketing managers and strategists within blue-chip IT, telecoms, navigation and consumer electronics companies. It has unrivalled expertise in European routes to market for all kinds of high technology products and services in the consumer, SMB and large enterprise segments, and provides worldwide market data and trends analysis.

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