

# DIGITAS

## WHY ONLINE VIDEO ADS ARE GREENER THAN TV ADS



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Recently a colleague sent me a video she produced for the weekly green-focused Internet show “ZapRoot called “Truth About The Pickens Plan.” In the video, the bubbly, matter-of-fact host exposes the greedy initiatives behind self-made oil man T. Boon Picken’s plan to build the largest wind farm in America.

Although I found the subject matter and her mission to uncover the truth compelling and noteworthy, what made a bigger impression on me was the fact that ZapRoot’s video had more views and responses than Mr. Boon’s original TV ad posted almost one month earlier.

This led me to think: does online video advertising out-green TV advertising?

To answer that question, I thought it would be fun to compare the two - not only in terms of green marketing effectiveness, but also which is actually better for our planet!

### **Environmentally Conscious**

In 2006, a UCLA study revealed that the film and television industry and associated activities make a larger contribution to air pollution in L.A. than almost any of the other industries studied. In fact, only the petroleum industry generated higher emissions. And despite measures taken to offset the carbon footprint, film and television production methods in general are more caustic to the environment than online video productions.

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For one, most TV spots today are still shot with film. And film stock isn't reusable, plus post-production processes often require an excessive number of beta tapes to be transferred for editing, and even more tapes then dubbed for trafficking to TV stations that have yet to go digital. The amount of waste byproduct adds up fast.

Online video production, on the other hand, has not only embraced HD video production methods, but has also become nearly tapeless. Camcorders like the Panasonic HVX200A now offer reusable, direct-to-digital P2 storage cards that allow shooting to be essentially 100 percent recyclable!

Plus, the lifespan of online videos and advertising far surpasses the limited time slots often bought for television spots. With online ads, if you're happy with your content and the response is good, you and your audience can spread and watch it indefinitely - a truly sustainable medium.

## Measurable Impact

During this past week's debates, ABC refused to air the Alliance for Climate Protection's Repower America ad about how oil and coal companies have blocked the country's switch to truly clean energy. Apparently, staying on the good side of Big Oil (and their pockets) was more important than creating awareness around real climate change issues.

Which makes me wonder: how committed are TV networks to getting the truth out about global warming and taking measures against it? Are they more prone to greenwashing (define) and keeping the corporate dollars that often follow?

Thankfully, the Alliance for Climate Protection can rely on the Web and online video to fight back. Since last Wednesday's refusal, the alliance has gotten nearly 250,000 people to write to ABC asking the TV network to reconsider its stance. And with the number of people blogging and sharing the message, the alliance ironically probably made a bigger impact than if its ad had aired. ABC's actions only helped to make their point more poignant.

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Indeed, most people would agree: when it comes to our environment, we are now in a position where we need to move beyond awareness and take direct action. And whether you look at green-focused Internet shows like ZapRoot, or one of the 100-plus other online green initiatives out there, the Internet and online video far surpass television - not only in creating awareness about global warming, but in taking the real actions that are needed.

In fact, GoGreenTube is one of the latest great examples of a company making a measurable impact. Its solution: for each green-centric video watched on their site, it will remove one pound of CO2 from the air. Hopefully it is only a matter of time before YouTube and MySpace take up such a worthy stance.

While television networks have taken some commendable actions in the past, my greatest hope relies on their ability to let go of some of their corporate alliances and embrace online video and marketing methods to get the word out.

That would be a 360-degree campaign solution that could really make a difference for both mediums.