

Carbon Combatants

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
Max Strater	2025	International Business and Finance
Alyssa Souza	2025	Sustainability Management
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Topic Title: Are You Still Watching? Carbon Emissions Are Streaming

Audience: Netflix Board of Directors

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG# 12: “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.”

Executive Summary

In 2007, Netflix disrupted the entertainment industry by creating a new demand for video streaming services. The innovation of streaming has allowed audiences globally to conveniently access digital content. As of 2022, 3.28 billion people worldwide accessed video streaming services through various devices. With the amount of time spent on streaming services, it's reasonable to assume that there are excess amounts of energy wasted through idle screen time. A 2022 study found that a single hour spent on a streaming service could emit up to 55 grams of CO₂ emissions. Although this number seems insignificant, 55 grams of CO₂ is equivalent to charging seven smartphones simultaneously. This excess use of carbon emissions is concerning considering the immense amount of people who utilize Netflix's streaming services worldwide. Netflix has shown an increase in revenues between 2010 to 2022 from \$2.1 million to \$31.6 million dollars. Netflix's financial success is also indicative of an increase of users: this is also reflected in the number of subscribers gained between 2011 and 2019 (increasing from 21,600,000 to 167,090,000 respectively). This growth is largely beneficial for the company but is dangerous for the environment given the proportionality of growth with carbon emissions. Even more concerning, it should be assumed that this trend of growth will continue into the future given the demand for streaming services and Netflix's continuous growth in international markets.

Despite the sustainability inadequacies of the streaming industry giant Netflix, there are solutions that can tangibly and legally be implemented such as increasing the frequency of the timed log-off messages. Another realistic way to reduce energy consumption would be through automatic brightness adjustments and picture/audio quality reductions which could be timer based and centered around industry research on streaming usage spikes and dips. This would all be largely beneficial for the firms and consumers in the industry as well as for the environment since less energy is demanded.