

EVENTS/CAUSES

Johnnie Walker educates on environment impact of Internet use

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Johnnie Walker's Earth Mode

By STAFF REPORTS

Scotch whisky maker Johnnie Walker is making consumers pause and think about their digital carbon footprint with the launch of a branded Google Chrome plug-in.

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Once the consumer opts-in and downloads Earth Mode, the plug-in will track the amount of energy used by her online activity for four weeks, giving an idea of the annual energy consumption. Through a partnership with Earth Day Network, Johnnie Walker will then support the planting of trees to offset the annual carbon footprint of Earth Mode users.

Green screen

The plug-in became available ahead of Earth Day, celebrated on April 22. Johnnie Walker's partner in the initiative, Earth Day Network, is dedicated to inspiring consumers to take action for the environment.

Designed in collaboration with Carbon Analytics chief executive Michael Thornton, the plug-in is intended to be an eye-opening experience. According to research by Carbon Analytics, the average consumer uses 130 kilograms of carbon per year, equal to driving about 460 miles in a car.

Consumers can download the plug-in for free. Once installed, they can click on a Johnnie Walker "Striding Man" logo to reveal a drop down detailing their energy usage and the number of trees that will be planted to combat their Internet activity.

Johnnie Walker presents Earth Mode

"Each time that you use a Web site or search the Internet it requires a lot of energy to provide the data," Mr. Thornton said in a statement. "Cumulatively across the world, this creates a large carbon footprint.

"The Earth Mode plug-in is an easy-to-use calculator that is a helpful tool for understanding that footprint," he said. "Individuals will be able to see their carbon usage displayed as the equivalent of everyday activities such as using a microwave, driving a car or taking a flight."

Since 2011, Earth Day Network's Canopy Project has planted more than 3 million trees, focusing on areas of high deforestation including East Africa. Johnnie Walker has pledged to plant up to 75,000 trees for the cause at the end of the four weeks.

"We believe that everyone wants their tomorrow to be better than today, and Earth Mode gives people the opportunity to make a positive impact on the environment," said Guy Escolme, Johnnie Walker global brand director, in a brand statement. "It is just one environmentally-friendly act but we hope it will educate and inspire users around the world to take other small actions to help Earth Day achieve its goal of reaching 3 billion Acts of Green.'

"Johnnie Walker is proud that our parent company Diageo has reduced its carbon emissions by 33 percent over eight years and one of the ways they have done that is to make its 35,000 employees across the world aware of the energy they use every day," he said. "Diageo aims to reduce carbon emissions by 50 percent by 2020."

Responding to the growing need for environmental action, other brands have made investments to reduce carbon usage.

French conglomerate Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton is investing in the environment with the creation of a group-wide fund aimed at reducing the impact its operations have on the planet.

A first for the company, the initiative places a monetary value on the greenhouse gas emissions produced through its activities and will then put that amount to work within its organization, making investments that will lower the amount of carbon released into the environment. LVMH's goal is to create a "virtuous cycle" that will create ecological progress across its stable of houses ([see story](#)).

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