# Channel partners vital to driving sustainable AI solutions this Earth Day



This Earth Day, the spotlight is falling on the environmental implications of artificial intelligence (AI) and the pivotal role channel partners can play in developing sustainable, energy-efficient AI solutions. As AI continues to transform industries and daily life, its environmental footprint—particularly in energy consumption, carbon emissions, and water usage—has become a pressing concern.

Recent data reveals that AI's growing demand on resources is substantial. In 2023, AI operations worldwide consumed roughly 4.5 gigawatts of power, accounting for approximately 8 percent of total data center energy usage. Projections indicate this could surge to 20 percent by 2028. Moreover, the carbon footprint associated with training large AI models is significant, with anticipated emissions reaching up to 500 million tons by 2035 if current trends persist. Beyond power usage, water consumption for cooling AI infrastructure is also considerable; for example, Microsoft’s data centres in Iowa used 11.5 million gallons of water in a single month in 2022.

In response to these challenges, prominent technology companies are undertaking initiatives to reduce the ecological impact of AI while also enhancing innovation. Apple has achieved a reduction of 5 percent in its climate pollution for 2024 compared to previous years, amounting to 800,000 metric tons, and has cut its emissions by over 60 percent over the past decade despite AI-driven industry growth. Google DeepMind has employed AI itself to optimise data centre cooling, reducing energy use for cooling by 40 percent. Microsoft has focused on low-carbon building materials, energy-efficient AI systems, and water-conscious data centre operations as part of its sustainability strategy.

In addition to reducing harm, AI is being harnessed to actively address environmental problems. Agricultural AI solutions from Blue River Technology, a John Deere company, use machine learning to target weeds precisely, significantly decreasing herbicide application. Water management company Xylem leverages AI for infrastructure monitoring, leading to reduced water loss and better access to clean water globally. Carbon Engineering utilises AI to facilitate large-scale carbon capture by directly removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Global efforts to promote sustainable AI are gaining momentum. The Coalition for Sustainable AI, formed by the United Nations Environment Programme, France, and the International Telecommunication Union, now includes over 90 members, including 37 corporations. Organisations such as the Radiant Earth Foundation are developing open-source AI tools aimed at supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, emphasising the cooperative, worldwide approach to green AI.

For channel partners, several actionable opportunities exist to contribute to this movement. These include advocating for energy-efficient AI solutions backed by transparent sustainability metrics, encouraging clients to adopt renewable energy for AI and data operations, conducting sustainability audits to identify environmental impact and improvement possibilities, and engaging with global initiatives like the Coalition for Sustainable AI to stay at the forefront of developments.

The CRN Magazine highlights that technology's ethical implications are shaped by human decisions. It underscores that with the rise and expansion of AI innovations, channel partners and vendors possess both the capacity and the responsibility to advance AI technologies that harmonise innovation with ecological stewardship. By integrating sustainability deeply into AI development and deployment, the technology sector can aspire to leave a smaller environmental footprint while continuing to drive progress.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.statista.com/topics/12959/environmental-impact-of-ai/> - This URL supports the discussion on the environmental impact of AI, particularly highlighting the significant water usage and energy consumption associated with AI operations, such as data center cooling.
* <https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117> - This article explains the environmental consequences of generative AI, including increased electricity demand and water usage, aligning with the concerns about AI's environmental footprint.
* <https://thesustainableagency.com/blog/environmental-impact-of-generative-ai/> - The statistics provided here underscore the environmental impacts of generative AI, corroborating the article's focus on AI's contribution to the climate crisis.
* <https://planetdetroit.org/2024/10/ai-energy-carbon-emissions/> - This report details AI's environmental impacts, including energy consumption, water use, and strain on electricity grids, supporting the article's claims about AI's ecological challenges.
* <https://www.analystnews.org/posts/ai-hidden-costs-are-accelerating-the-climate-crisis> - The article highlights AI's environmental costs, including resource extraction and e-waste, which are echoed in this URL's discussion on AI's role in accelerating the climate crisis.