



**SWISS  
RADIO  
DAY 26**

Presented by



**ON LOCATION • ONLINE • ON-AIR**

**27 AUGUST 2026 KAUFLEUTEN ZÜRICH**

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for English please see page 2

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## THE QUIET RISE OF GEN Z'S AUDIO WORLD

Maarten Leyts  
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[trendwolves.com](https://trendwolves.com)

In a world flooded with video clips, scrollable feeds, and notifications, audio might seem like a surprising refuge. Yet for Gen Z, raised amid digital overstimulation, listening has become an intentional act. It is how they reclaim mental space, regulate emotions, and express identity. The 2025 Spring Podcast Download Report reveals that 58% of weekly podcast listeners still prefer audio-only content. This preference isn't a return to the past. It is a strategic move toward simplicity, depth, and focus. Gen Z is reclaiming the essence of radio, its intimacy, spontaneity, and voice-driven storytelling, and transforming it into something entirely their own. What was once linear and top-down is now interactive, ambient, and deeply personal.

Audio integrates effortlessly into their daily lives. Whether they are biking to class, exercising, commuting, or simply seeking a mental break from screen fatigue, sound fits in. Unlike video, it doesn't demand full attention. Instead, it offers a companionable presence that aligns with their fragmen-



ted routines and desire for control over their media consumption. This relationship with audio is also becoming more public and social. Smart TVs have become key listening hubs in Gen Z households, and platforms like TikTok and YouTube

are now primary entry points for discovering audio-first content. Listening is no longer confined to earbuds. It is ambient, shared, and often performative.

We witnessed this evolution through Trendwolves' work on AXA's "Dare To Be" campaign. The initiative invited young people to rediscover the nearly forgotten ritual of calling. Using a network of physical phone booths, interactive voice prompts, and audio-based challenges, the campaign encouraged expressive listening and playful participation. These weren't gimmicks. They were carefully crafted experiences designed to reframe listening as something active, emotional, and fun.

Gen Z is also reviving the spirit of radio culture in unexpected ways. On platforms like TikTok, they create mock radio shows, voice quirky interviews, and produce sound-driven content that references vintage aesthetics. This isn't about romanticizing the past. It is about reclaiming old formats and adapting them to new behaviors and tools. The result is something entirely fresh—an audio culture born from remixing, not reminiscing.

More importantly, this shift is not just cultural. It is technological. Audio is being reshaped by artificial intelligence, hyper-personalization, and real-time platform integration. Static playlists are giving way to adaptive soundscapes that respond to a listener's mood, schedule, or environment. The line between live and on-demand is blurring. Listening is becoming a behavioral loop that supports focus, connection, and emotional balance. And the influence doesn't stop with Gen Z.

Generation Alpha is growing up in a sound-first environment where smart speakers read bedtime stories. AI voices guide play, and sound is a core component of how they interact with technology. For brands, this means audio must be treated not as an accessory, but as a primary interface. From sonic branding to voice-first UX, the opportunity lies in designing experiences that feel natural, engaging, and intuitive. Ultimately, audio meets young people not just where they are, but how they feel. It supports their need for escape, self-expression, and belonging. So the real question is not whether Gen Z is listening. They clearly are. The question is whether we are truly listening back.



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## EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

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