

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 6-9, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1,001

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY “Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?”]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ refused</u>
a. Reports about the rising unemployment rate	42	33	13	11	1=100
February 6-9, 2009	44	36	11	9	*=100
January 9-12, 2009	45	34	14	7	*=100
December 5-8, 2008	40	33	17	10	*=100
November 7-10, 2008	39	32	17	12	*=100
June 6-9, 2008	25	31	23	21	*=100
b. Debate over Rush Limbaugh’s influence over the Republican Party	15	19	23	43	*=100
c. The two NFL players missing off Florida’s Gulf Coast	21	34	25	20	*=100
d. Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system	41	32	13	14	*=100
e. An arrest warrant for the president of Sudan on charges of war crimes in Darfur	9	19	24	48	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
June 1-4, 2007: Ethnic Violence in Darfur	12	22	29	36	1=100
December, 2006	13	23	29	34	1=100
May, 2006	16	22	27	33	2=100
July, 2004: <i>Ethnic Violence in Sudan</i>	14	22	27	35	2=100
f. Recent major drops in the U.S. stock market	35	31	15	19	*=100
February 20-23, 2009	31	32	20	17	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	50	23	15	12	*=100
October 17-20, 2008²	54	31	9	6	*=100
October 10-13, 2008	59	26	9	6	*=100
July 3-7, 2008	22	29	23	26	*=100
March 14-17, 2008	25	31	23	21	*=100
January 25-28, 2008	29	28	19	23	1=100
August 17-20, 2007	21	24	22	33	*=100
July 27-30, 2007	15	26	21	37	1=100
March 2-5, 2007	21	28	25	26	*=100
Early September, 2002	27	30	20	22	1=100

¹ May, 2006 through June 1-4, 2007 asked about “Ethnic violence in the Darfur region of Sudan.” July, 2004, asked about “Ethnic violence in Sudan.”

² October 17-20, 2008 asked about “Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market.” March 2-5, 2007 asked about “The recent drop in the U.S. stock market.” In Early November, 1997, the story was listed as “Thinking about last Monday when the stock market dropped, how closely did you follow what was happening?” From February, 1996 to Mid-November, 1997, the story was listed as “Recent major ups and downs in the stock market.” For all other dates, the story was listed as “Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
Late July, 2002	33	33	15	18	1=100
March, 2001	27	27	18	27	1=100
Mid-October, 2000	20	26	23	31	1=100
April, 2000	18	28	23	31	*=100
Early April, 2000	19	29	20	32	*=100
March, 2000	23	29	21	26	1=100
March, 1999	18	29	22	31	*=100
January, 1999	24	28	19	28	1=100
Early September, 1998	32	31	20	17	*=100
Mid-August, 1998	17	23	21	39	*=100
January, 1998	21	25	23	31	*=100
Early November, 1997	16	29	22	33	*=100
Mid-November, 1997	25	36	18	20	1=100
September, 1997	14	22	23	40	1=100
April, 1997	17	21	22	40	*=100
February, 1996	12	20	25	42	1=100

Q.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

- 26 Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system
 - 18 Reports about the rising unemployment rate
 - 18 Major drops in the stock market
 - 13 The two NFL players missing off Florida's Gulf Coast
 - 4 Debate over Rush Limbaugh's influence over the Republican Party
 - 1 An arrest warrant for the president of Sudan on charges of war crimes in Darfur
 - 11 Some other story (VOL.)
 - 2 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

Q.3 I have a few questions about where you get your LOCAL NEWS – that is news about people, events and politics in your area. How often, if ever, do you get local news **[INSERT, RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. From newspapers	41	23	17	19	0=100
b. On the internet	31	23	15	31	*=100
c. On television	66	18	10	6	*=100
d. On the radio	34	26	20	20	*=100

IF INTERNET (1-3 IN Q.3b) ASK [N=614]:

Thinking about the internet...

Q.4 How often, if ever, do you get LOCAL NEWS from [INSERT, RANDOMIZE]?

		<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a.	Newspaper websites	20	27	27	26	*=100
b.	The websites of TV stations in your area	16	29	24	31	*=100

BASED ON TOTAL:

		-----Gets local news online-----					No local news online	<u>DK/Refused</u>
		<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>	<u>online</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a.	Newspaper websites	13	19	19	18	*	31	*=100
b.	The websites of TV stations in your area	11	20	17	21	*	31	*=100

ASK ALL:

Q.5 How much if anything, have you heard about growing financial problems at national and local newspapers? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all?

- 53 A lot
- 31 A little
- 15 Nothing at all
- 1 Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]
- 100

Q.6 Now I'd like you to think about the local daily newspaper in your area. If there is more than one, think about the one you read most often. If that newspaper went out of business and no longer published in print or online, how much would this hurt civic life in your community? Would you say... [READ IN ORDER]

- 43 A lot
- 31 Some
- 15 Not much
- 8 Not at all
- 3 Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]
- 100

Q.6 Now I'd like you to think about the local daily newspaper in your area. If there is more than one, think about the one you read most often. If that newspaper went out of business and no longer published in print or online, how much would this hurt civic life in your community? Would you say... **[READ IN ORDER]**

IF Q.6= 1-4, ASK [N=973]:

Q.7 Why do you say that?

[IF NECESSARY, PROBE FULLY FOR SPECIFICS: Why do you think it would or would not hurt civic life in your community?] [OPEN END. RECORD ALL MENTIONS ON ONE SCREEN.]

BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO SAID THIS WOULD HURT CIVIC LIFE IN THEIR COMMUNITY 'A LOT' [N=449]

30 People rely on the newspaper for local news/to know what's going on
18 A lot of people read/rely on the newspaper
12 There is only one paper in the community
10 Reading the newspaper is a habit/I always read it/I enjoy it/I'm used to it
6 Newspaper news is better/more in-depth/more local than TV news/I don't watch TV news
6 Newspaper employment/Loss of jobs if newspaper closed
4 The newspaper is important to civic life
3 Newspaper ads or coupons
3 Senior citizens rely on the newspaper, including those who do not have internet access
3 Not everyone has the internet/Some people lack news options other than the newspaper
2 Newspapers are independent voices/Newspapers provide higher-quality coverage
2 The newspaper provides non-local/national news coverage
2 People communicate through the newspaper
1 There are other ways to get news, including TV, radio and the internet
11 Other
2 Don't know/Refused

Note: Total adds to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO SAID THIS WOULD HURT CIVIC LIFE IN THEIR COMMUNITY 'SOME' [N=297]

23 People rely on the newspaper for local news/to know what's going on
14 There are other ways to get news, including TV, radio and the internet
13 A lot of people read/rely on the newspaper
7 Newspaper employment/Loss of jobs if newspaper closed
6 Not everyone has the internet/Some people lack news options other than the newspaper
5 The quality of the newspaper is poor
4 I don't think other people read the newspaper
4 Newspaper ads or coupons
4 There is only one paper in the community
3 I don't read the newspaper
3 Reading the newspaper is a habit/I always read it/I enjoy it/I'm used to it
2 The newspaper is biased
2 The newspaper lacks national coverage
2 Senior citizens rely on the newspaper, including those who do not have internet access
2 Newspaper news is better/more in-depth/more local than TV news/I don't watch TV news
1 The newspaper is important to civic life
1 The newspaper provides non-local/national news coverage
1 Young people don't read the newspaper
21 Other
3 Don't know/Refused

Note: Total adds to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO SAID THIS WOULD HURT CIVIC LIFE IN THEIR COMMUNITY 'NOT MUCH' OR 'NOT AT ALL' [N=227]

29	There are other ways to get news, including TV, radio and the internet
20	The quality of the newspaper is poor
10	I don't read the newspaper
9	I don't think other people read the newspaper
5	The newspaper is biased
1	Newspaper employment/Loss of jobs if newspaper closed
22	Other
10	Don't know/Refused

Note: Total adds to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

ASK ALL:

Q.8 How much would you personally miss reading your local daily newspaper if it were no longer available? [READ]

33	A lot
25	Some
16	Not much
26	Not at all
*	Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]
100	

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO REGULARLY READ A DAILY NEWSPAPER:

On a different subject...

How much would you miss reading the newspaper, if newspapers were no longer available? [READ CATEGORIES]

April <u>2008</u>		April <u>2002</u>	April <u>1998</u>	June <u>1995</u>	Feb <u>1994</u>
59	A lot	57	60	58	67
22	Some	26	25	27	21
11	Not much	10	10	10	8
7	Not at all	7	4	4	4
1	Don't know/Ref. [VOL. DO NOT READ]	*	1	1	*
100		100	100	100	100