

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**May 8-11, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY**  
**TOPLINE**  
**N=1002**

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?”]

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
a. News about political instability in Pakistan	18	23	23	36	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>1</sup></b>					
April 24-27, 2009: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	15	27	27	31	*=100
March 13-16, 2009: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	14	20	26	40	0=100
September 26-29, 2008: <i>Hotel bombing</i>	16	32	23	28	1=100
August 15-18, 2008: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	10	25	29	35	1=100
February 22-25, 2008: <i>Parliamentary elections</i>	9	24	28	39	*=100
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	19	33	20	27	1=100
January 4-7, 2008: <i>Bhutto assassination</i>	32	36	15	16	1=100
Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2007: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	16	28	26	30	*=100
Nov. 23-26, 2007	13	27	31	28	1=100
Nov. 16-19, 2007	20	30	21	28	1=100
Nov. 9-12, 2007	20	29	23	28	*=100
October 19-22, 2007: <i>Pakistan bombing aimed at Bhutto</i>	21	28	21	30	*=100
July 13-16, 2007: <i>Raid on Pakistani Mosque</i>	10	19	23	47	1=100
b. Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere	34	36	19	11	*=100
May 1-4, 2009: <i>Swine flu</i> <sup>2</sup>	43	37	15	4	1=100
April 25-27, 2009	25	30	19	26	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>3</sup></b>					
October 19-22, 2007: <i>Drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.</i>	26	31	19	24	0=100
June 1-4, 2007: <i>Atlanta man traveling with dangerous form of Tuberculosis</i>	24	34	21	19	2=100

<sup>1</sup> September 26-29, 2008 asked about “A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people.” November 9-12, 2007 through November 30-December 3, 2007; January 11-14, 2008, August 15-18, 2008, March 13-16, 2009 and April 24-27, 2009 asked about “Political instability in Pakistan.” February 22-25, 2008 asked about “Parliamentary elections and changes in party control in Pakistan.” January 4-7, 2008 asked about “The assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and resulting instability in Pakistan.” October 19-22, 2007 asked about “A bombing in Pakistan aimed at former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that killed over 120 people.” July 13-16, 2007 asked about “The Pakistani government’s raid on a mosque held by Islamic radicals.”

<sup>2</sup> For May 1-4, 2009 the story was listed as: “The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world.” For April 25-27, 2009 the story was listed as: “Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S.”

<sup>3</sup> October 19-22, 2007 asked about: “The growing danger of a drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.” June 1-4, 2007 asked about: “An Atlanta man with a dangerous form of tuberculosis who traveled to Europe against the advice of government health officials.” March, 2006 asked about: “Outbreaks of bird flu in different parts of the world.” Late October and November, 2005 asked about: “The outbreak of bird flu in Asia and Europe.” January, 2004 asked about: “Reports about a case of mad cow disease in Washington state.” May and June, 2003 asked about: “The lung disease called ‘SARS’ that has spread from Asia.” September, 2002 asked about: “Cases of West Nile Virus spread by mosquitoes.” Early September, 2001 asked about: “The spread of mad cow disease in Europe.” March, 2001 asked about: “The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among livestock in Europe.” January, 1998 asked about: “The outbreak of an Asian flu spread by birds or chickens.”

**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>
March, 2006: <i>Outbreaks of bird flu</i>	21	36	24	19	*=100
November, 2005: <i>Bird flu</i>	22	37	25	15	1=100
Late October, 2005: <i>Bird flu</i>	22	33	24	20	1=100
January 2004: <i>Mad cow disease in Washington state</i>	29	42	19	9	1=100
June 2003: <i>The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia</i>	28	44	19	8	1=100
May 2003: <i>SARS</i>	39	39	15	6	1=100
September, 2002: <i>Cases of West Nile virus</i>	34	36	21	8	1=100
Early September, 2001: <i>Mad cow disease in Europe</i>	18	34	27	20	1=100
March, 2001: <i>Foot-and-mouth disease</i>	22	33	22	22	1=100
January, 1998: <i>Bird flu</i>	19	36	25	20	*=100
<b>c. Steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>4</sup></b>					
<b>April 9-13, 2009: Gay marriage in IA &amp; VT</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>Nov. 7-10, 2008: CA vote bans gay marriage</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>June 20-23, 2008: Same sex marriage in CA</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>May 16-19, 2008: CA Supreme Court ruling</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1=100</b>
May 2004: <i>Gay marriage</i>	20	27	25	27	1=100
March 2004: <i>Gay marriage</i>	29	33	20	17	1=100
Early-February 2004: <i>Debate over gay marriage</i>	26	32	22	19	1=100
Mid-August 2003: <i>Debate over gay marriage</i>	19	30	22	28	1=100
<b>d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>May 1-4, 2009</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 17-20, 2009</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 9-13, 2009</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0=100</b>
<b>March 27-30, 2009</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 20-23, 2009</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 13-16, 2009</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 27-March 2, 2009</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 13-16, 2009</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 30-February 2, 2009</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 23-26, 2009</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0=100</b>
<b>January 16-19, 2009</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 2-4, 2009</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 12-15, 2008</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 5-8, 2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 21-24, 2008</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 14-17, 2008</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 7-10, 2008</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 31-November 3, 2008</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 24-27, 2008</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1=100</b>

<sup>4</sup> April 9-13, 2009, asked about: "The legalization of gay marriage in Iowa and Vermont." November 7-10, 2008, asked about: "California voting to ban gay marriage." June 20-23, 2008, asked about: "The issue of same sex marriage in California." May 16-19, 2008, asked about: "The California Supreme Court's decision giving same sex couples the right to marry." March, 2004 and May, 2004 asked about: "The issue of gay and lesbian marriage." August, 2003 and February, 2004 asked about: "The debate about allowing gays and lesbians to marry."

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>
<b>October 17-20, 2008</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 10-13, 2008</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 3-6, 2008</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>September 26-29, 2008</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>September 19-22, 2008</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>September 5-8, 2008</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>August 29-31, 2008</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>August 15-18, 2008</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>August 8-11, 2008</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>August 1-4, 2008</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0=100</b>
<b>July 25-28, 2008</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>July 18-21, 2008</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>July 11-14, 2008</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>June 27-30, 2008</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>June 13-16, 2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>May 9-12, 2008</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>May 2-5, 2008</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 18-21, 2008</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 4-7, 2008</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 28-31, 2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 20-24, 2008</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 29-March 3, 2008</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 15-18, 2008</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8=100</b>
<b>February 1-4, 2008</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>January 18-21, 2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 11-14, 2008</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>November 2-5, 2007</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>October 19-22, 2007</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>August 10-13, 2007</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>*=100</b>
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1=100
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1=100
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1=100
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1=100
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*=100
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2=100
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1=100
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1=100
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1=100
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1=100
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*=100
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1=100
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1=100
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1=100
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1=100
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2=100
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1=100
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1=100
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0=100
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1=100
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1=100

**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>
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2=100
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*=100
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*=100
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1=100
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*=100
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1=100
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*=100
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1=100
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1=100
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*=100
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1=100
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*=100
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1=100
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*=100
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*=100
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*=100
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1=100
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1=100
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*=100
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*=100
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*=100
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1=100
e. Reports about the rising unemployment rate	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>April 3-6, 2009</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 6-9, 2009</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 6-9, 2009</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 9-12, 2009</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 5-8, 2008</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 7-10, 2008</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>June 6-9, 2008</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
f. The debate in Washington over the federal budget	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>5</sup></b>					
<i>March 27-30, 2009: Debate over Obama's budget proposal</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<i>February 27-March 2, 2009: Barack Obama's budget proposal to increase spending, raise taxes on the wealthy</i>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<i>February, 2002: Debate in Congress over G.W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan</i>	17	31	28	23	1=100
April, 2001	24	38	20	18	*=100
February, 2001: G.W. Bush's tax-cut plan	31	35	19	14	1=100

<sup>5</sup> March 27-30, 2009 asked about: "The debate over Barack Obama's budget proposal." February 27-March 2, 2009 asked about: "Barack Obama's budget proposal for next year that raises taxes on wealthy Americans and increases spending on health care, education and other programs." April, 2001 and February, 2002 asked about: "The debate in Congress over George W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan." February, 2001 asked about: "George W. Bush's tax-cut plan."

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.**]

- 34 Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere
- 30 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 8 Reports about the rising unemployment rate
- 5 News about political instability in Pakistan
- 3 Steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire
- 3 The debate in Washington over the federal budget
- 8 Some other story (**SPECIFY**)
- 2 Don't know/Refused
- 100

On another topic...

Q.3 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? [**READ AND RANDOMIZE; ITEM d ALWAYS COMES LAST**]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. <b>A woman who received the first face transplant operation done in the United States</b>	22	49	28	1=100

**NO ITEM B**

c. <b>The suspension of the Dodger's Manny Ramirez after testing positive for banned substances</b>	25	40	35	*=100
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**NO ITEMS D AND E**

f. <b>Former police officer Drew Peterson being charged with the murder of his third wife</b>	28	46	26	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
<b>May 1-4, 2009: A man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website</b>	40	38	21	1=100
<b>April 23-26, 2009: The arrest of a man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website</b>	42	35	23	*=100
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
<b>April 17-20, 2009: The murder of an 8-year-old California girl by a Sunday school teacher</b>	50	28	22	*=100

Q.4 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Dec</u>
	9-13	13-16	13-16	16-19	5-8
	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
4 Hearing mostly good news about the economy	4	2	2	2	1
31 Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [ <b>OR</b> ]	39	51	60	67	80
64 A mix of good and bad	56	46	37	30	19
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL. DO NOT READ</b> )	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
100	100	100	100	100	100