

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
July 2-5, 2009¹ 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. The sentencing of Bernard Madoff to 150 years in prison for investment fraud	18	32	23	27	0
March 13-16, 2009: Bernard Madoff pleading guilty to charges of fraud involving a scheme that cheated investors out of billions of dollars	27	33	17	23	0
December 19-22, 2008: News about a Wall Street investor who allegedly cheated people out of billions of dollars	30	26	18	25	1
b. The Supreme Court ruling that a group of firefighters were unfairly denied promotions because of their race	19	25	18	38	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
June 29-July 2, 2007: A Supreme Court ruling that public schools cannot use race to decide where students attend classes	23	23	19	34	1
c. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*

¹ No polling was conducted on July 4.

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>
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0

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>
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
d. News about controversy surrounding the recent Iranian election					
June 26-29, 2009: The Iranian government's crackdown on election protestors	22	31	23	23	*
June 19-22, 2009: Protests in Iran over disputed elections	31	27	18	23	1
June 12-15, 2009: The presidential election in Iran	28	28	21	22	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²	18	26	23	34	*
May 21-24, 2009: <i>Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel</i>	20	29	25	26	*
July 11-14, 2008: <i>The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel</i>	25	29	22	23	1
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships</i>	25	26	21	27	1

² May 21-24, 2009 asked about: "Iran testing a missile that could reach Israel." July 11-14, 2008 asked about: "The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel." January 11-14, 2008 asked about: "News about a naval encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships." December 7-10, 2007 asked about: "A new intelligence report stating that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003." October 26-29, 2007, February 23-26, 2007 and February 2-5, 2007 asked about: "Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran." September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent trip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations." June 1-4, 2007 asked about: "Recent talks between the United States and Iran." February 16-19, 2007 asked about: "Reports that Iran may be supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq." March, 2006 through June, 2006 asked about: "Iran's nuclear research program."

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>
December 7-10, 2007: <i>Intelligence report on Iran's nuclear weapons program</i>	25	31	20	23	1
October 26-29, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	26	34	21	18	1
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Ahmadinejad visit to U.S.</i>	23	31	20	25	1
June 1-4, 2007: <i>U.S.-Iranian talks</i>	19	27	27	26	1
February 23-26, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	29	37	18	15	1
February 16-19, 2007: <i>Iran supplying weapons to Iraqi insurgents</i>	28	32	20	19	1
February 2-5, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions</i>	33	38	18	10	1
Sept., 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	23	34	19	23	1
August, 2006	24	34	20	20	3
June, 2006	21	32	22	22	3
April, 2006	26	30	23	20	1
March, 2006	24	31	22	22	1
e. The death of singer Michael Jackson	25	29	28	18	1
June 26-29, 2009	30	28	23	19	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON—celebrity deaths:					
March 20-23, 2009: <i>Death of actress Natasha Richardson in a skiing accident</i>	18	28	24	30	*
October 3-6, 2008: <i>Death of Paul Newman</i>	19	29	28	23	1
June 13-16, 2008: <i>Death of Meet the Press host Tim Russert</i>	28	23	19	30	*
January 25-28, 2008: <i>Death of actor Heath Ledger</i>	13	29	27	30	1
November 30-December 3, 2007: <i>Death of NFL player Sean Taylor</i>	14	25	22	38	1
March 2-5, 2007: <i>Death of Anna Nicole Smith</i>	14	19	30	36	1
February 23-26, 2007	13	22	33	31	1
February 16-19, 2007	14	25	29	31	1
February 9-12, 2007	11	27	31	30	1
September, 2006: <i>Death of the Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin, from a stingray strike</i>	30	36	21	12	1
December, 2001: <i>Death of former Beatle George Harrison</i>	10	23	30	35	2
July, 1999: <i>Death of John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife and sister-in-law in a plane crash near Martha's Vineyard</i>	54	29	13	4	0
March, 1999: <i>Death of former baseball player Joe DiMaggio</i>	18	33	27	21	1
June, 1998: <i>The death of Frank Sinatra</i>	17	31	31	20	1
September, 1997: <i>The death of Princess Diana</i>	54	31	11	4	*
August, 1995: <i>The death of Jerry Garcia</i>	9	19	23	45	4
August, 1995: <i>The death of Mickey Mantle</i>	24	36	21	18	1
May, 1994: <i>The suicide of rock star Kurt Cobain</i>	7	14	25	52	2
TREND FOR COMPARISON—Michael Jackson:					
June, 2005: <i>Michael Jackson trial</i>	13	31	29	26	1
Mid-March, 2005	12	23	32	32	1
February, 2005	8	17	30	44	1
November, 2003: <i>Recent charges of child molestation against Michael Jackson</i>	29	27	22	20	2

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, 1994: <i>Michael Jackson's personal problems</i>	19	30	30	20	1
December, 1993	15	25	27	32	1
f. U.S. troops withdrawing from Iraqi cities	25	34	20	21	0
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
April 24-27, 2009	21	35	25	19	*
March 20-23, 2009	25	37	21	17	*
February 27-March 2, 2009 ³	40	37	13	9	1
December 12-15, 2008	24	35	25	16	*
November 21-24, 2008	32	31	24	13	0
November 14-17, 2008	24	33	27	16	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	30	35	22	12	1
October 24-27, 2008	29	35	25	11	*
October 10-13, 2008	23	34	30	13	*
October 3-6, 2008	29	33	28	10	*
September 5-8, 2008	24	37	26	13	*
August 29-31, 2008	22	32	29	16	1
August 22-25, 2008	26	31	27	15	1
August 1-4, 2008	27	40	23	10	*
July 25-28, 2008	28	33	22	17	*
July 18-21, 2008	33	35	20	12	*
July 11-14, 2008	24	35	24	16	1
July 3-7, 2008	25	35	25	15	*
June 20-23, 2008	25	36	24	15	*
May 9-12, 2008	29	35	21	14	1
May 2-5, 2008	26	35	25	13	1
April 25-28, 2008	29	35	23	12	1
April 18-21, 2008	29	39	20	11	1
April 11-14, 2008	25	39	20	15	1
April 4-7, 2008	25	37	23	15	*
March 28-31, 2008	29	40	19	11	1
March 20-24, 2008	30	38	19	13	*
March 14-17, 2008	29	38	23	10	*
March 7-10, 2008	28	39	18	15	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	28	40	19	13	*
February 8-11, 2008	24	35	25	16	*
February 1-4, 2008	28	39	22	11	*
January 25-28, 2008	23	35	26	16	*
January 18-21, 2008	31	33	20	15	1
January 11-14, 2008	25	38	21	16	*
January 4-7, 2008	27	38	20	15	*
December 14-17, 2007	26	32	24	18	*
December 7-10, 2007	28	37	21	14	*
November 23-26, 2007	25	37	21	16	1
November 16-19, 2007	31	37	19	12	1

³ February 27-March 2, 2009 asked about "Barack Obama's plan to withdraw most U.S. troops from Iraq by August 2010." From March 20-23, 2009 to April 24-27, 2009 and from May, 2003 to March 23-26, 2007, the story was listed as "News about the current situation in Iraq." From March 20-24, 2003 to April 11-16, 2003, the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq." From Early October, 2002, to March 13-16, 2003, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq." In Early September, 2002, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq."

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>
November 9-12, 2007	29	38	19	13	1
November 2-5, 2007	31	35	18	15	1
October 26-29, 2007	28	37	21	13	1
October 19-22, 2007	28	37	20	15	*
October 12-15, 2007	26	36	18	19	1
October 5-8, 2007	29	33	22	16	*
September 28 – October 1, 2007	30	41	18	11	*
September 21-24, 2007	32	38	17	13	*
September 14-17, 2007	31	36	18	15	0
September 7-10, 2007	32	34	20	14	*
August 30 – September 2, 2007	31	34	18	16	1
August 24-27, 2007	34	36	18	12	*
August 17-20, 2007	33	34	18	15	*
August 10-13, 2007	36	37	14	13	*
August 3-6, 2007	29	40	19	12	*
July 27-30, 2007	28	36	19	16	1
July 20-23, 2007	28	34	21	16	1
July 13-16, 2007	25	41	17	16	1
July 6-9, 2007	36	34	18	12	*
June 29-July 2, 2007	32	35	19	13	1
June 22-25, 2007	30	36	18	15	1
June 15-18, 2007	30	37	20	13	*
June 8-11, 2007	32	38	15	14	1
June 1-4, 2007	30	36	20	13	1
May 24-27, 2007	33	36	18	12	1
May 18-21, 2007	36	34	15	14	1
May 11-14, 2007	30	34	18	17	1
May 4-7, 2007	38	37	15	10	*
April 27-30, 2007	27	35	21	16	1
April 20-23, 2007	28	35	22	15	*
April 12-16, 2007	34	33	20	13	*
April 5-9, 2007	33	39	16	11	1
March 30-April 2, 2007	34	37	16	13	*
March 23-March 26, 2007	31	38	18	12	1
March 16-19, 2007	34	34	17	15	*
March 9-12, 2007	34	37	16	13	*
March 2-5, 2007	37	37	16	9	1
February 23-26, 2007	36	36	15	13	*
February 16-19, 2007	30	36	19	14	1
February 9-12, 2007	37	34	18	11	*
February 2-5, 2007	38	38	17	7	*
January 26-29, 2007	36	38	15	11	*
January 19-22, 2007	37	34	18	10	1
January 12-15, 2007	38	36	17	8	1
January, 2007	46	40	8	5	1
January 5-8, 2007	40	32	16	12	0
December, 2006	42	39	12	7	*
November 30-December 3, 2006	40	36	13	11	*
Mid-November, 2006	44	38	12	6	*
September, 2006	33	43	14	8	2
August, 2006	41	39	12	7	1
June, 2006	37	43	13	6	1
May, 2006	42	35	15	7	1

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>
April, 2006	43	36	13	7	1
March, 2006	43	38	12	6	1
February, 2006	39	42	12	6	1
January, 2006	40	40	12	7	1
December, 2005	45	38	11	5	1
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*
Early September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*
April 11-16, 2003	47	40	10	2	1
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1
March 13-16, 2003	62	27	6	4	1
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1
Early September, 2002	48	29	15	6	2

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.**]

- 30 The death of singer Michael Jackson
- 19 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 10 U.S. troops withdrawing from Iraqi cities
- 9 News about controversy surrounding the recent Iranian election
- 5 The Supreme Court ruling that a group of firefighters were unfairly denied promotions because of their race
- 4 The sentencing of Bernard Madoff to 150 years in prison for investment fraud
- 12 Some other story (VOL.)
- 11 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

On another topic...

Q.3 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?

		June 12-15 2009	May 8-11 2009	Apr 9-13 2009	Mar 13-16 2009	Feb 13-16 2009	Jan 16-19 2009	Dec 5-8 2008
3	Hearing mostly good news about the economy	4	4	4	2	2	2	1
41	Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [OR]	37	31	39	51	60	67	80
56	A mix of good and bad	59	64	56	46	37	30	19
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	*	1	1	1	1	1	*

Q.4 And thinking about the area where you live⁴. Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy in your area, mostly bad news about the economy in your area or a mix of both good and bad news?

		Apr 9-13 2009
7	Hearing mostly good news about the economy in your area	5
44	Hearing mostly bad news about the economy in your area [OR]	44
47	A mix of good and bad	49
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2

⁴ For April 9-13, 2009 question asked about "the local area where you live."

Q.5 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]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. A 12-year-old-girl who survived a plane crash in the Indian Ocean	17	48	35	0
b. An FDA panel recommending restrictions on painkillers such as Tylenol and Vicodin because they can cause liver damage	29	38	33	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
July 19-22, 2009: The FDA advising consumers to stop using Zicam cold remedy because it could damage people's sense of smell	21	35	44	*
c. The Court declaring Al Franken the winner of Minnesota's U.S Senate race	16	43	41	*
d. South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford admitting he had an affair	46	36	17	2
e. A military coup in Honduras	17	34	49	*
f. State and local budget problems	44	37	19	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
February 27-March 2, 2009: Worsening state and local budget problems	57	31	12	*
October 3-6, 2008: Reports that the State of California may need an emergency loan of \$7 billion from the federal government	20	39	41	*