



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
Andrew Kohut, Director  
Kim Parker, Senior Researcher

**Continuing Partisan Divide in Cable TV News Audiences**  
**INTERNET NOW MAJOR SOURCE OF CAMPAIGN NEWS**

Many more Americans are turning to the internet for campaign news this year as the web becomes a key source of election news. Television remains the dominant source, but the percent who say they get most of their campaign news from the internet has tripled since October 2004 (from 10% then to 33% now).

While use of the web has seen considerable growth, the percentage of Americans relying on TV and newspapers for campaign news has remained relatively flat since 2004. The internet now rivals newspapers as a main source for campaign news. And with so much interest in the election next week, the public's use of the internet as a campaign news source is up even since the primaries earlier this year. In March, 26% cited the internet as a main source for election news, while the percentages citing television and newspapers remain largely unchanged.

Not surprisingly, the internet is a considerably more popular source for campaign news among younger Americans than older ones. Nearly three times as many people ages 18 to 29 mention the internet than mention newspapers as a main source of election news (49% vs. 17%). Nearly the opposite is true among those over age 50: some 22% rely on the internet for election news while 39% look to newspapers. Compared with 2004, use of the internet for election news has increased across

**Presidential Campaign News:  
Internet Boom in '08**

<i>First or second mentions</i>	Oct 2004 %	Oct 2008* %	'04-'08 Change
Television	76	72	-4
Internet	10	33	+23
Newspapers	28	29	+1
Radio	15	21	+6
Magazines	2	3	+1
Other	3	2	-1
Don't know	2	1	-1

Figures add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

\*Based on combined surveys conducted Oct 17-20 and Oct 24-27, 2008. [N=2,011]

**Campaign News Sources**

<i>First or second mentions</i>	Total* %	18-29 %	30-49 %	50-64 %	65+ %
Television	72	61	70	78	82
Internet	33	49	37	29	12
Newspapers	29	17	23	34	45
Radio	21	15	27	18	16
Magazines	3	5	2	2	3
Other	2	3	1	1	2
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1

Figures add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

\*Based on combined surveys conducted Oct 17-20 and Oct 24-27, 2008.

all age groups. Among the youngest cohort (age 18-29), TV has lost significant ground to the internet.

On television, the cable news outlets clearly dominate the big three networks as main sources of campaign news. Nearly half of the public (46%) turns to the cable news channels, with 25% naming CNN as a main source of campaign news, 21% naming Fox News Channel and 10% naming MSNBC. Only 24% rely on the network news outlets ABC, CBS and NBC. Another 13% look to local TV news. This reflects broader changes in news consumption patterns. In recent years, cable news outlets have overtaken the networks as the general news sources that the public watches most regularly. [See [“Key News Audiences Now Blend Online and Traditional Sources”](#) released August 17, 2008]

October 2008*	Oct* %
Cable Net	46
CNN	25
Fox	21
MSNBC	10
Network TV	24
Local TV	13
Other	1
Don't know	1

Note: Based on total population; multiple responses allowed. TV viewers may name more than one cable news source; however the *Cable Net* percentage counts cable viewers only once.

\*Based on combined surveys conducted Oct 17-20 and Oct 24-27, 2008.

### Cable News Audiences Highly Partisan

The audiences for the major cable news networks are highly partisan, while the audiences for network TV and the internet are more in line with the general public.

Among those who name the Fox News Channel as their main source for campaign news, 52% are Republicans and only 17% are Democrats. By contrast, among those who rely on MSNBC for their campaign news, 50% are Democrats and only 11% are Republicans. Similarly, CNN's campaign news audience is largely Democratic – 45% are Democrats and 13% are Republicans.

Notably, there are substantial differences in awareness of recent campaign events among the different cable news audiences. Majorities in each audience said they heard a lot about reports that the Republican National Committee spent about \$150,000 on clothing for Sarah Palin and her family. But far more of those who get most

October 2008*	Percent who are...			
	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	Other/ DK %
<i>Those who get most Campaign news from...</i>				
Fox News Channel	52	17	30	1=100
MSNBC	11	50	36	3=100
CNN	13	45	38	4=100
Network TV news	23	36	37	4=100
Local TV News	22	38	36	4=100
Internet	24	34	38	4=100
Newspapers	22	41	34	3=100
Radio	31	31	34	4=100
<i>General public</i>	25	35	35	5=100

Note: Percentages read *across* and show the share of each audience who identify as Republicans, Democrats and independents.

\*Based on combined surveys conducted Oct 17-20 and Oct 24-27, 2008.

campaign news from MSNBC than those who rely on Fox News heard a lot about the controversy (71% vs. 51%, respectively heard a lot about this story). Among those who turn to CNN for election news, 62% reported hearing a lot about Palin's wardrobe.

Colin Powell's endorsement of Barack Obama registered more widely among the MSNBC news audience than among those who rely on Fox News for presidential campaign coverage. Seven-in-ten MSNBC viewers heard a lot about the Powell endorsement, compared with 54% of the Fox News audience. Close to six-in-ten (59%) of those who turn to CNN heard a lot about the endorsement.

About two-thirds of those who rely mainly on Fox News for campaign coverage (66%) said they had heard a lot about links between Obama and ACORN, the community organizing group that has been accused of voter registration fraud. A comparable proportion (62%) of those who rely mainly on MSNBC heard a lot about this story. A majority of those who get most of their campaign news from CNN (52%) heard a lot about the ACORN allegations.

What the Cable News Audiences are Hearing About					
<i>\$150,000 spent on Palin's wardrobe*</i>					
	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<i>Those who get most campaign news from...</i>	%	%	%	%	
Fox News Channel	51	33	16	*=100	(224)
CNN	62	18	20	*=100	(231)
MSNBC	71	17	12	*=100	(111)
General public	52	27	20	1=100	(1008)
<i>Colin Powell endorsing Obama*</i>					
	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<i>Those who get most campaign news from...</i>	%	%	%	%	
Fox News Channel	54	34	12	*=100	(224)
CNN	59	36	5	*=100	(231)
MSNBC	70	27	3	*=100	(111)
General public	49	39	12	*=100	(1008)
<i>Obama's connection to ACORN**</i>					
	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<i>Those who get most campaign news from...</i>	%	%	%	%	
Fox News Channel	66	23	11	*=100	(223)
CNN	52	32	16	*=100	(264)
MSNBC	62	22	16	*=100	(107)
General public	48	34	18	*=100	(1003)
Note: Percentages read <i>across</i> and show the share of each audience who identify as Republicans, Democrats and independents.					
*Asked Oct 24-27, 2008.					
**Asked Oct 17-20, 2008.					

## About the Survey

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

The results for this press release are based on landline telephone interviews conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation) based on the combined data from two nationwide samples of adults, 18 years of age or older. For results based on the combined sample of 2,011 respondents, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based on the separate survey samples conducted October 17-20, 2008 (N=1,003) and October 24-27, 2008 (N=1,008), the sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to [www.journalism.org](http://www.journalism.org).

## About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Kim Parker, Senior Researcher  
Michael Remez, Senior Writer  
Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley, Research Associates  
Kathleen Holzward and Alec Tyson, Research Analysts

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**OCTOBER 24-27, 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY**  
**TOPLINE**  
**N=1,008**

**QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

Q.7 How do you get most of your news about the presidential campaign? From television, from newspapers, from radio, from magazines, or from the internet? **[IF ONLY ONE RESPONSE IS GIVEN, PROBE FOR ONE ADDITIONAL RESPONSE BY SAYING: "IS THERE ANOTHER ONE YOU CAN NAME?" ACCEPT TWO ANSWERS:]**

NOTE: Totals may exceed 100% because of multiple responses.

	<u>Tele-</u> <u>vision</u>	<u>News-</u> <u>papers</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>Maga-</u> <u>zines</u>	<u>Inter-</u> <u>net</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
<b>October, 2008<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>72</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
October 24-27, 2008	72	25	24	3	33	1	1
October 17-20, 2002	73	32	18	3	33	2	1
<b>May 30-June 2, 2008</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>March 20-24, 2008</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Late December, 2007	71	30	13	4	26	3	2
November, 2006 <sup>2</sup>	69	34	17	2	15	6	3
November, 2004	78	39	17	3	18	4	2
Mid-October, 2004	76	28	15	2	10	3	2
Early September, 2004	80	41	18	3	17	3	1
Early January, 2004	79	39	15	2	13	2	2
November, 2002	66	33	13	1	7	7	2
November, 2000 (RVs)	70	39	15	4	11	1	*
June, 2000	65	27	11	2	5	2	2
February, 2000	73	33	15	2	7	2	1
January, 2000	75	31	12	3	6	3	1
November, 1996 (RVs)	72	60	19	11	3	4	1
September, 1996	75	44	14	5	2	2	1
April, 1996	81	48	21	6	2	3	1
February, 1996	85	56	21	5	2	1	1
November, 1992 (RVs)	82	57	12	9	n/a	6	1
September, 1992	83	49	13	5	n/a	4	1
June, 1992	84	55	18	7	n/a	4	*
May, 1992	86	51	17	6	n/a	3	1
March, 1992	83	48	14	4	n/a	3	*
February, 1992	80	49	18	4	n/a	3	1

<sup>1</sup> Results for Q.7 and Q.8 are based on data collected October 17-20, 2008 and October 24-27, 2008 [N=2,011].

<sup>2</sup> November trends are from the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

**IF '1' TELEVISION AS EITHER 1ST OR 2ND RESPONSE IN Q.7 ASK:**

Q.8 On television, do you get most of your campaign news from [READ AND RANDOMIZE. ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL]

**BASED ON TOTAL:**

Oct <u>2008</u> <sup>3</sup>	Oct 24-27, <u>2008</u>	Oct 17-20, <u>2008</u>		May 30- June 2, <u>2008</u>	March 20-24, <u>2008</u>
13	13	12	Local news programs	16	19
24	24	24	Network news like ABC, CBS and NBC	28	26
25	24	26	CNN Cable news	22	22
10	10	10	MSNBC Cable news	9	10
21	21	21	The Fox News Cable Channel	16	18
1	1	1	(DO NOT READ) Other	1	1
1	1	1	(DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused	2	1

**QUESTIONS 9 THROUGH 11 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

On another subject...

Q.12 How much if anything have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? [READ ITEMS; ROTATE ITEMS]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Sarah Palin's recent appearance on Saturday Night Live	56	30	14	*=100
b. Colin Powell endorsing Barack Obama for president	49	39	12	*=100
c. Joe Biden's comment that Barack Obama would be tested by an international crisis early on in his presidency	43	35	21	1=100
d. Barack Obama's campaign raising \$150 million in the month of September	42	39	18	1=100
e. The Republican National Committee spending over \$150,000 on new clothes for Sarah Palin and her family members	52	27	20	1=100

**QUESTION 13 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

<sup>3</sup> Based on data collected October 17-20, 2008 and October 24-27, 2008 [N=2,011].

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS  
OCTOBER 17-20, 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY  
TOPLINE  
N=1,003**

**QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 12 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

On another subject...

Q.13 How much if anything have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[READ ITEMS; ROTATE ITEMS]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Barack Obama's connection to the community organizing group ACORN, which has been accused of voter registration fraud	48	34	18	*=100
b. A man known as Joe the plumber who was mentioned frequently in the most recent presidential debate	64	25	11	*=100

**ITEM C. HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

d. John McCain's recent appearance on the Late Show with David Letterman	23	41	35	1=100
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