

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
May 1-4, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1004

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. Financial problems in the U.S. auto industry	32	42	17	8	1=100
April 24-27, 2009	30	39	16	15	*=100
April 3-6, 2009	31	35	16	18	*=100
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:¹					
February 20-23, 2009: U.S. automakers seeking billions in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy	33	34	22	11	*=100
December 19-22, 2008: Bush administration plan for emergency loans to U.S. automakers	37	33	16	13	1=100
December 12-15, 2008: Debate over a government bailout for U.S. auto industry	40	33	18	9	*=100
December 5-8, 2008: Debate in Congress over a bailout for U.S. auto industry	34	38	17	11	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	41	26	17	15	1=100
November 14-17, 2008: Problems facing U.S. automakers	30	35	20	15	*=100
October 31-November 3, 2008: Possible merger of GM and Chrysler	16	28	24	31	1=100
May 18-21, 2007: DaimlerChrysler sells Chrysler	8	20	25	46	1=100
September 28-October 1, 2007: Agreement between GM and UAW ending strike	14	28	28	30	*=100
December, 2005: General Motors job cuts	22	30	26	21	1=100
June, 1998: Chrysler/Daimler Benz merger	12	22	27	38	1=100
January, 1992: General Motors job cuts	35	38	18	9	*=100

¹ February 20-23, 2009 asked about: “U.S. automakers seeking billions of dollars in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy.” December 19-22, 2008 asked about “The Bush administration’s plan to provide billions in emergency loans to U.S. automakers.” December 12-15, 2008 asked about “The debate over a government bailout for the U.S. auto industry.” November 21-24, 2008 and December 5-8, 2008 asked about “The debate in Congress over a government bailout for the U.S. auto industry.” November 14-17, 2008 asked about: “News about problems facing U.S. automakers.” October 31-November 3, 2008 asked about: “The possible merger of automakers General Motors and Chrysler.” May 18-21, 2007 asked about: “DaimlerChrysler’s decision to sell Chrysler to a private equity firm.” January, 1992 and December, 2005 asked about: “The major job cuts announced by General Motors.” June, 1998 asked about: “The merger of the Chrysler Corporation and Daimler Benz.” September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about “An agreement between General Motors and the United Auto Workers union that ended a two-day strike over wages and job security.”

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. The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world	43	37	15	4	1=100
April 24-27, 2009: Swine flu²	25	30	19	26	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
October 19-22, 2007: Drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.	26	31	19	24	0=100
June 1-4, 2007: Atlanta man traveling with dangerous form of Tuberculosis	24	34	21	19	2=100
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
c. The decision by Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter to join the Democratic Party	22	26	21	29	2=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
June, 2001: Jeffords leaves Republican Party	21	27	18	34	*=100
d. The first 100 days of the Obama administration	25	35	25	14	1=100
e. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	47	36	11	5	1=100
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1=100
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0=100
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*=100
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*=100
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*=100
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*=100
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*=100
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*=100
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0=100
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*=100
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*=100
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*=100
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*=100

² For April 24-27, 2009 the story was listed as: "Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S."

³ 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>
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*=100
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*=100
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*=100
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*=100
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1=100
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*=100
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*=100
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*=100
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*=100
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*=100
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*=100
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1=100
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*=100
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*=100
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0=100
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*=100
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*=100
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1=100
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1=100
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*=100
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*=100
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1=100
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1=100
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*=100
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*=100
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*=100
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1=100
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8=100
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1=100
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*=100
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1=100
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*=100
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

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>
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
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

f. Reports that Supreme Court Justice David Souter will retire at the end of the current court term	21	25	24	29	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴					
July, 2005: <i>Sandra Day O'Connor</i>	24	29	24	22	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.**]

39	The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world
22	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
11	Financial problems in the U.S. auto industry
10	The first 100 days of the Obama administration
3	The decision by Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter to join the Democratic Party
3	Reports that Supreme Court Justice David Souter will retire at the end of the current court term
5	Some other story (SPECIFY)
7	Don't know/Refused
100	

⁴ July, 2005 asked about: "The retirement of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor."

Now thinking about the swine flu that's been in the news lately.

Q.3 How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to this flu – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?

		Oct 19-22, 2007 <u>Staph infection</u> ⁵	May 2003 <u>SARS</u>
8	Very worried	12	12
28	Somewhat worried	32	23
37	Not too worried	32	31
27	Not worried at all	23	32
*	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100

Q.4 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering this story [READ]?

19	Excellent
43	Good
21	Only fair
14	Poor
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.5 Do you think news organizations are giving too much, too little, or the right amount of coverage to this story?

42	Too much
9	Too little
46	Right amount
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.6 Now I'd like to ask you about where you've been getting news about the swine flu. For each item that I read, please tell me whether you have learned something about the swine flu from this source, or not? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
a.	Local TV news	69	31	*=100
b.	National nightly network news on CBS, ABC and NBC	53	46	1=100
c.	Cable news networks such as CNN, MSNBC and the FOX news CABLE channel	63	36	1=100
d.	Morning television news shows	45	54	1=100
e.	Newspapers	48	51	1=100

⁵ Oct 19-22, 2007 asked: "Now thinking about the drug-resistant staph infection that's been in the news lately. How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to this infection – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?" In May 2003, the question read, "One last question about the new disease known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS. How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to SARS – very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?"

Q.6 CONTINUED...

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
f.	The Internet	49	50	1=100
g.	Radio	43	57	*=100

Q.7 Which of these sources, if any, has been most useful to you in learning about the swine flu, or is there another source that has been more useful? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

25	The Internet
19	Cable news networks such as CNN, MSNBC and the FOX news CABLE channel
17	Local TV news
9	National nightly network news on CBS, ABC and NBC
9	Newspapers
7	Radio
6	Morning television news shows
4	Something else (SPECIFY)
1	All most useful/Multiple (VOL.)
2	None of these (VOL.)
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

On another subject...

Q.8 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. A government plane flying over New York City that briefly raised concerns about a possible terrorist attack	43	35	22	*=100
b. A man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website	40	38	21	1=100
April 23-26, 2009: The arrest of a man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website	42	35	23	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON: April 17-20, 2009: The murder of an 8-year-old California girl by a Sunday school teacher	50	28	22	*=100
c. Vice President Joe Biden saying he advised his family to avoid traveling by air or subway because of concerns about the swine flu	29	38	32	1=100