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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Today's Journalists Less Prominent
 Fewer Widely Admired than 20 Years Ago

The increasingly fragmented media landscape has diminished the prominence of the nation's top journalists. Two decades ago, the vast majority of Americans had a "favorite" journalist or news person, and the top picks were representatives of the big three broadcast television networks. Today, only a slim majority can name the journalist they admire most and the preferences are much more scattered. Reflecting the myriad choices news consumers have today, the top ten journalists named by the public are drawn from the networks, cable news channels, public television and even Comedy Central.

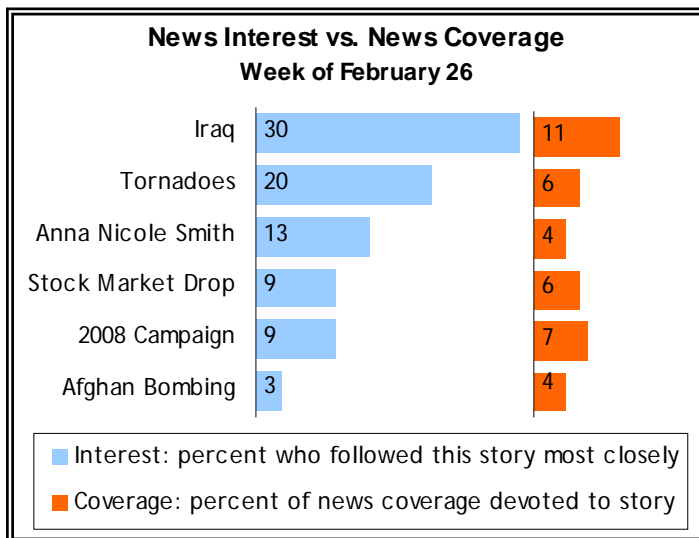
In another sign of the times, the internet was a major source of news about the recent downturn in the stock market. One-in-five Americans who were paying at least some attention to the stock market news say they first heard about the drop in stocks by going online. After a major market tumble in 1997 only 2% of those following the news story said they first heard about it online. Far fewer Americans got the recent news about the market from television compared to 10 years ago. Among those who were following the stock market news very closely, the internet was an even bigger source of information. Fully 29% of this group first heard about the market downturn online, only 40% heard the news on television (down from 66% in 1997).

<u>1985</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>%</u>
Rather	11	Couric	5
Cronkite	6	O'Reilly	4
Jennings	6	Gibson	3
Brokaw	4	Rather	2
Walters	3	Brokaw	2
Koppel	2	Williams	2
<i>Top Six</i>	<i>32</i>		<i>18</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>33</i>		<i>42</i>
<i>No answer</i>	<i>35</i>		<i>44</i>
	100		104*

* 2007 figures add to 104% because respondents could offer more than one name.

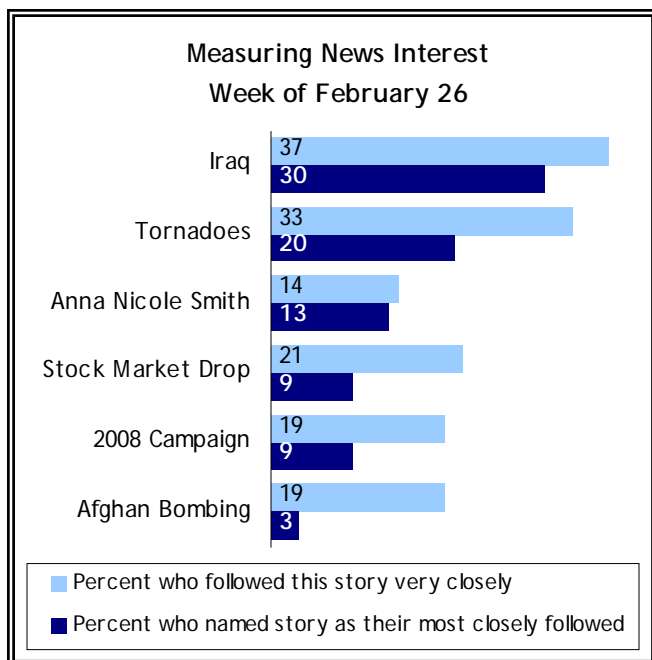
Top Stories of the Week

Overall, the stock market was in the top tier of news stories, both in terms of public interest and news coverage during the week of Feb. 26. In a week crowded with news, the situation in Iraq maintained the top spot, as 37% of the public followed this story very closely and 30% listed it as the story they followed most closely. News about Iraq, both the policy debate and events on the ground, made up 11% of the newshole for the week. The public also paid very close attention to the deadly tornadoes in the South. Fully one-third followed this story very closely and 20% listed it as their top story. News coverage of the tornadoes, which occurred late in the week, made up 6% of the newshole.



These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly *News Interest Index*, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's agenda. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis.

Interest in the Anna Nicole Smith saga remained about the same last week, in spite of the fact that media coverage of the story dropped off significantly. Some 14% of the public followed the Smith story very closely (basically unchanged from 13% the previous week), and 13% listed Smith's death when asked which story they had followed most closely. As has been the case since the story broke, younger women remain the most riveted by Smith's story. Women under age 50 were nearly three times more likely than men in that same age



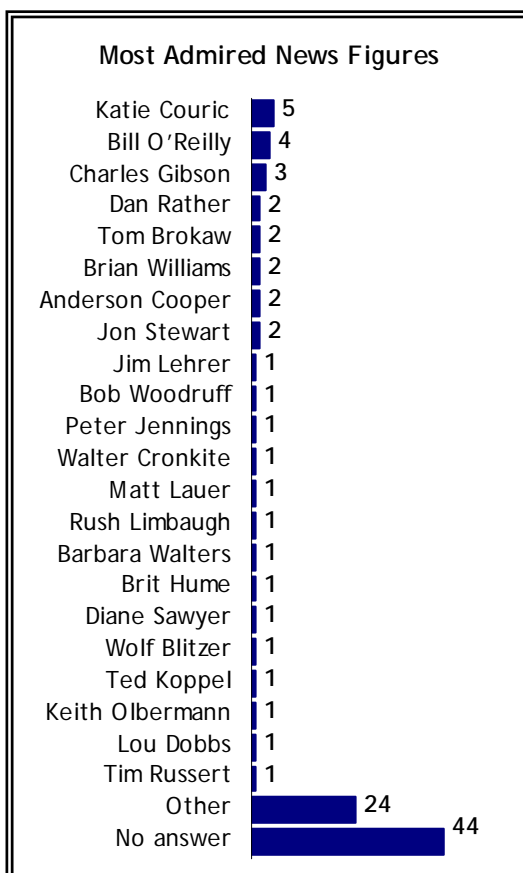
group to say Smith’s death was the story they followed most closely last week (23% vs. 8%, respectively).

Other top stories of the week included the 2008 presidential campaign and the terrorist bombing in Afghanistan outside a base where Vice President Dick Cheney was staying. The campaign continues to attract more attention than the 2004 presidential contest did in its early stages. The Afghanistan bombing was followed very closely by 19% of the public; 3% said this was the story they followed most closely. News coverage of this, which went beyond the bombing to include the broader situation in Afghanistan, was substantial (4% of the newshole).

Today’s Favorite Journalists

Looking at the list of most admired journalists, no individual news person is named by more than 5% of the public. In fact, the differences among the top 3, Katie Couric, Bill O’Reilly, and Charles Gibson, are not statistically significant. In 1987 Dan Rather stood out among his colleagues with 11% of the public naming him as their favorite journalist.

Some of today’s top journalists appeal to distinct constituencies reflecting the nature of their audiences. For example, Bill O’Reilly tops the list of most admired journalists among Republicans – 10% name the Fox News Channel talk show host. Only 2% of Democrats and Independents name O’Reilly. Much of Katie Couric’s support comes from women: 7% of women name Couric as the news person they admire most compared to 2% of men. And Jon Stewart, host of the Daily Show on Comedy Central, is popular mainly with young people. Among those under age 30, 6% say Stewart is their favorite journalist, making him along with O’Reilly the top pick among this age group. This compares with less than 1% of those over age 30, who admire Stewart most.



Online News Sources

When the U.S. stock market plunged over 400 points last week, Americans heard the news from a wide variety of sources. While a plurality of Americans learned about the downturn from television, the internet was a much more important source of news this year than it had been in November 1997 when stocks fell over 500 points in a day. In 1997, 59% of those who were paying at least some attention to the stock market fall first heard the news on television, this compares with 43% today. The percent of the public who heard the stock market news online increased ten-fold from 1997 to today. Roughly one-in-five (19%) heard about the market from listening to the radio (unchanged from 1997), 8% heard about it from talking to others (down slightly from 1997), and 9% heard about it by reading a newspaper (up marginally from 1997).

<i>First learned about stock downturn...</i>	Nov 1997 %	March 2007 %
Watching television	59	43
Going online	2	20
Listening to radio	19	19
Reading newspaper	7	9
Talking with others	12	8
Other/Didn't hear	1	1
Don't know	*	*
	100	100

Based on those following the story
very/fairly/ not too closely

Among those who did hear the news on television, equal percentages cited hearing it on cable news channels and network news. A smaller percentage heard the news on their local stations. In 1997, network had a slight advantage over cable.

About the News Interest Index

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.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

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.

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 six 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:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2-5, 2007 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1015

N.1 Thinking about the news, what journalist or news person do you most admire? [OPEN END. ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR MORE THAN ONE]

<u>Total*</u>		<u>August</u> <u>1985¹</u>	
5	Katie Couric	11	Dan Rather
4	Bill O'Reilly	6	Walter Cronkite
3	Charles Gibson	6	Peter Jennings
2	Dan Rather	4	Tom Brokaw
2	Tom Brokaw	3	Barbara Walters
2	Brian Williams	2	Ted Koppel
2	Anderson Cooper	33	Other
2	Jon Stewart	<u>35</u>	None/Don't Know/Refused
1	Jim Lehrer	100	
1	Bob Woodruff		
1	Peter Jennings		
1	Walter Cronkite		
1	Matt Lauer		
1	Rush Limbaugh		
1	Barbara Walters		
1	Brit Hume		
1	Diane Sawyer		
1	Wolf Blitzer		
1	Ted Koppel		
1	Keith Olbermann		
1	Lou Dobbs		
1	Tim Russert		
24	Other		
44	None/Don't know/Refused		

*Figures for 2007 total more than 100% because respondents could name more than one journalist.

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, 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 ITEMS] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]

	<u>Very</u> <u>Closely</u>	<u>Fairly</u> <u>Closely</u>	<u>Not too</u> <u>Closely</u>	<u>Not at all</u> <u>Closely</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Refused</u>
a. News about the current situation in Iraq	37	37	16	9	1=100
Feb 23-26, 2007	36	36	15	13	*=100
Feb 16-19, 2007	30	36	19	14	1=100
Feb 9-12, 2007	37	34	18	11	*=100
Feb 2-5, 2007	38	38	17	7	*=100
Jan 26-29, 2007	36	38	15	11	*=100
Jan 19-22, 2007	37	34	18	10	1=100
Jan 12-15, 2007	38	36	17	8	1=100
January, 2007	46	40	8	5	1=100
Jan 5-8, 2007	40	32	16	12	0=100

¹ In August, 1985 the question was worded: "Who is your favorite journalist or newsperson?"

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, 2006	42	39	12	7	*=100
Nov 30-Dec 3, 2006	40	36	13	11	*=100
Mid-November, 2006	44	38	12	6	*=100
September, 2006	33	43	14	8	2=100
August, 2006	41	39	12	7	1=100
June, 2006	37	43	13	6	1=100
May, 2006	42	35	15	7	1=100
April, 2006	43	36	13	7	1=100
March, 2006	43	38	12	6	1=100
February, 2006	39	42	12	6	1=100
January, 2006	40	40	12	7	1=100
December, 2005	45	38	11	5	1=100
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*=100
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*=100
Early September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1=100
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1=100
June, 2005	41	39	12	7	1=100
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2=100
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*=100
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*=100
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1=100
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1=100
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*=100
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1=100
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*=100
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1=100
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1=100
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1=100
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1=100
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*=100
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*=100
April 11-16, 2003 ²	47	40	10	2	1=100
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
March 13-16, 2003 ³	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002 ⁴	48	29	15	6	2=100

² From March 20 to April 16, 2003, the story was listed as “News about the war in Iraq.”

³ From 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.”

⁴ 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>
b. The recent drop in the U.S. stock market	21	28	25	26	*=100
Early September, 2002 ⁵	27	30	20	22	1=100
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 ⁶	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
c. The death of Anna Nicole Smith	14	19	30	36	1=100
Feb 23-26, 2007	13	22	33	31	1=100
Feb. 16-19, 2007	14	25	29	31	1=100
Feb 9-12, 2007	11	27	31	30	1=100
d. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election	19	31	26	23	1=100
Feb 23-26, 2007	22	33	24	21	*=100
Feb 16-19, 2007	18	32	22	27	1=100
Feb 9-12, 2007	24	30	24	21	1=100
Feb 2-5, 2007	24	36	22	18	*=100
Jan 26-29, 2007	24	33	23	20	*=100
Jan 19-22, 2007⁷	24	27	22	26	1=100
2004 Presidential Election⁸					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	46	30	12	11	1=100
Early September, 2004	40	34	14	11	1=100
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*=100
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1=100
June, 2004	28	34	19	18	1=100
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*=100
Late February, 2004	24	40	23	12	1=100
Early February, 2004	29	37	20	13	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1=100
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1=100

⁵ From Early September, 2002 to January, 1998 and in Mid-November 1997, April 1997, and February 2006, the story was listed as "Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market."

⁶ 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?"

⁷ January 19-22, 2007, asked about: "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

⁸ In previous election years, the question wording of stories varies because of factors such as timing within the election cycle (primaries or general election) and the nature of the race (incumbent candidate or open field of candidates).

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, 2003	16	26	27	30	1=100
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1=100
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1=100
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1=100
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1=100
January, 2003	14	28	29	28	1=100
2000 Presidential Election					
Early November, 2000 (RVs)	39	44	12	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2000 (RVs)	40	37	15	8	8=100
Early October, 2000 (RVs)	42	36	15	6	1=100
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	*=100
July, 2000	21	38	20	20	1=100
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1=100
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*=100
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1=100
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1=100
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*=100
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1=100
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1=100
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1=100
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1=100
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1=100
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1=100
1996 Presidential Election					
November, 1996 (RVs)	34	45	15	6	*=100
October, 1996	31	39	18	12	*=100
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*=100
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1=100
April, 1996	23	35	25	17	*=100
March, 1996	26	41	20	13	*=100
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1=100
September, 1995	12	36	30	22	*=100
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*=100
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
1992 Presidential Election					
October, 1992 (RVs)	55	36	7	2	0=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	47	36	11	6	*=100
August, 1992 (RVs)	36	51	11	2	0=100
July, 1992	20	45	26	9	*=100
May, 1992	32	44	16	8	*=100
March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
October, 1991	12	26	31	29	2=100
1988 Presidential Election					
October, 1988 (RVs)	43	44	11	2	*=100
August, 1988 (RVs)	39	45	13	3	*=100
May, 1988	22	46	23	6	3=100
November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
September, 1987	14	34	37	14	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>
e. A bombing in Afghanistan near where Vice President Dick Cheney was staying	19	33	26	21	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
Late July, 2002 ⁹	41	38	13	7	1=100
June, 2002	38	32	20	9	1=100
April, 2002	39	39	13	8	1=100
Early April, 2002	45	37	12	5	1=100
February, 2002	47	39	8	5	1=100
January, 2002	51	35	9	4	1=100
December, 2001	44	38	12	5	1=100
Mid-November, 2001	49	36	11	3	1=100
Early November, 2001	45	36	12	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2001	51	35	10	3	1=100
f. Tornadoes and violent storms in the South and Midwest	33	38	18	11	*=100
Feb 16-19, 2007¹⁰	30	33	18	18	1=100
Feb 9-12, 2007¹¹	36	36	15	13	*=100
Jan 19-22, 2007	31	32	22	14	1=100
Jan 5-8, 2007	24	30	25	21	*=100
January, 2001	42	31	15	11	1=100
January, 1999	37	34	17	12	*=100
Early December, 1998	39	35	13	12	1=100
January, 1994	51	30	12	7	*=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.**)

- 30 News about the current situation in Iraq
- 20 Tornadoes and violent storms in the South and Midwest
- 13 The death of Anna Nicole Smith
- 9 The recent drop in the U.S. stock market
- 9 News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election
- 3 A bombing in Afghanistan near where Vice President Dick Cheney was staying
- 8 Some other story (**SPECIFY**)
- 8 Don't know/Refused
- 100

⁹ From Mid-October, 2001 to Late July, 2002 the story was listed as "the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan."

¹⁰ For February 16-19, 2007, the story was listed as "Cold winter weather and snowstorms in the Northeast and Midwest."

¹¹ For February 9-12, 2007, the story was listed as "Cold winter weather." For January 19-22, 2007, the story was listed as "Snow and ice storms in some parts of the country." For January 5-8, 2007, the story was listed as "Winter snowstorms in the western U.S." In January 2001 the story was listed as "Cold winter weather and storms in the Northeast and Midwest." In January 1999 the story was listed as "Cold winter weather and storms in the Midwest." In December, 1998 the story was listed as "Unseasonable weather patterns." In January 1994 the story was listed as "News about cold weather conditions in the Northeast and Midwest."

Q.3 In general, do you think news reports are making the situation in Iraq seem WORSE than it really is or BETTER than it really is, or are reports showing the situation about the way it really is?

		April	Dec	Mid- Sept	Oct
		<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2003</u>
38	Worse	37	39	35	38
20	Better	17	19	19	14
36	About the way it really is	35	35	38	36
<u>6</u>	Don't Know/Refused	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>
100		100	100	100	100

Q.4 On another subject, how did you first learn about the stock market's recent downturn? Was it from talking with others; listening to the radio; watching television; reading a newspaper; or going online over the Internet? [ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

<u>Total</u>		Following Very/Fairly/ Not too Closely		Following Very Closely	
		March <u>2007</u>	Nov <u>1997</u>	March <u>2007</u>	Nov <u>1997</u>
10	Talking with others	8	12	6	9
16	Listening to the radio	19	19	19	14
42	Watching television	43	59	40	66
9	Reading a newspaper	9	7	4	3
17	Going online	20	2	29	3
*	Other (VOL. – SPECIFY)	*	1	1	5
5	Didn't hear about it (VOL)	1	n/a	*	n/a
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
100 (N=1015)		100 (N=782)	100	100 (N=242)	100

IF TELEVISION IN Q.4, ASK:

Q.5 Was this on an all-news cable channel such as CNN or CNBC; on network broadcast television such as ABC, NBC, or CBS; or on a local television news broadcast in your area?

<u>Total</u>		Following Very/Fairly/ Not too Closely		Following Very Closely	
		March <u>2007</u>	Nov <u>1997</u>	March <u>2007</u>	Nov <u>1997</u>
15	All news cable channel	16	21	19	31
16	Network television news	16	26	12	17
11	Local television news	10	10	9	15
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>3</u>
42%		42%	59%	40%	66%