



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

NEWS Release
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Gulf Disaster Continues to Dominate Coverage, Interest
NEWS MEDIA TRUSTED FOR INFORMATION ON OIL LEAK

The public expresses far more trust in the news media for information about the Gulf oil leak than it does in either the federal government or BP.

Fully 67% say they have a lot (20%) or some trust (47%) in information on the oil leak coming from news organizations. That compares with 51% who have at least some trust in

information from the federal government and 39% in information from BP.

More Trust News Organizations than Government, BP for Oil Leak Information

<i>Trust information about oil leak from...</i>	A lot/ <u>some</u> %	Not too much/ <u>Not at all</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
News organizations	67	31	2=100
Federal government	51	46	2=100
BP	39	57	4=100

Pew Research Center, June 3-6, 2010. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

The latest News Interest Index survey, conducted June 3-6 among 1,002 adults by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, finds that the oil leak continues to dominate the public’s news interest. Nearly two-thirds (66%) cite the Gulf disaster as the story they followed most closely – more than seven times the percentage citing the economy (9%), the second-leading story. As the disaster continued to grow, the leak was also the most heavily covered story, accounting for 35% of the newshole last week, according to the Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism.

The survey finds that the public is much more interested in the impact of the Gulf oil leak and how far it might spread than in the response by politicians or assessments of blame.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) say they are very interested in the impact of the leak on the environment and

wildlife in the gulf; 71% say they are very interested in projections of how far the oil will spread. Smaller numbers say they are very interested in how elected officials in Washington are responding to the leak (54%) or questions about who is to blame and how they should be held accountable (51%).

More Interest in Oil Leak’s Impact than in Political Response, Assessments of Blame

<i>Interested in aspects of news coverage:</i>	<u>Very</u> %	Some- <u>what</u> %	Not too/ <u>Not at all</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
Impact on Gulf environment/wildlife	74	19	6	*=100
Projections about oil spread	71	19	9	1=100
Impact on Gulf people/economy	69	22	9	1=100
Methods used to try to stop leak	66	22	8	3=100
Response of elected officials in D.C.	54	28	15	3=100
Who is to blame/accountability	51	27	19	2=100

Pew Research Center, June 3-6, 2010. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Republicans Trust Media on Gulf News

Pew Research Center surveys have consistently shown that more Republicans than Democrats or independents say that news stories are politically biased and often inaccurate. (See [Press Accuracy Rating Hits Two Decade Low](#), September 13, 2009). But nearly as many Republicans (64%) as Democrats (74%) say they have a lot or some trust in information on the oil leak provided by news organizations.

Media More Trusted Across Party Lines

<i>Information source:</i>	<i>Trust a lot/some</i>			
	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %
News organizations	67	64	74	67
Federal government	51	45	66	46
BP	39	50	37	34

Pew Research Center, June 3-6, 2010.

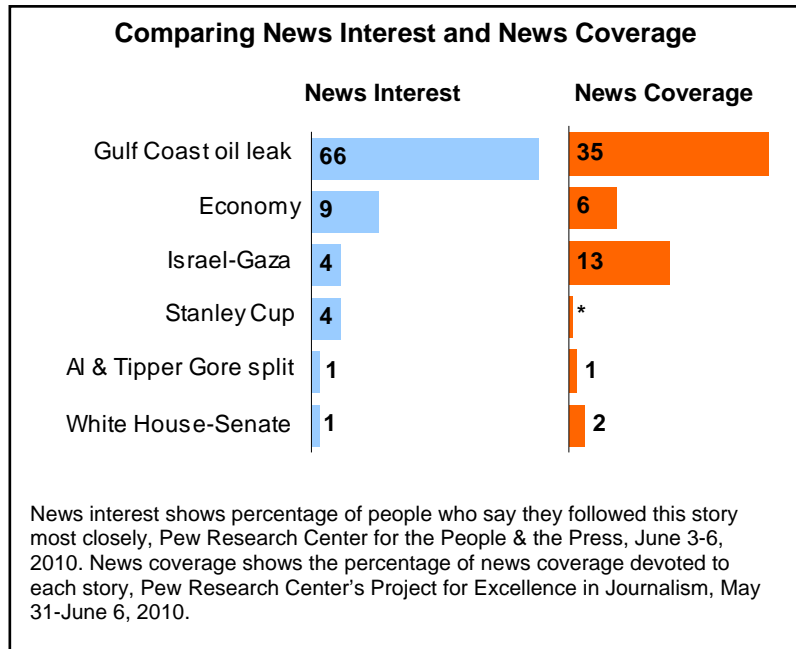
There are larger partisan differences in trust in information from the federal government and BP. Republicans (50%) are more likely than Democrats (37%) or independents (34%) to say they have at least some trust in information from BP. On the other hand, Democrats (66%) are more likely than Republicans (45%) or independents (46%) to say they have at least some trust in the information that comes from the federal government about the oil leak.

The Week’s News

With so much focus on the crisis in the gulf last week (66% most closely, 57% very closely), other top stories received relatively little attention from the public.

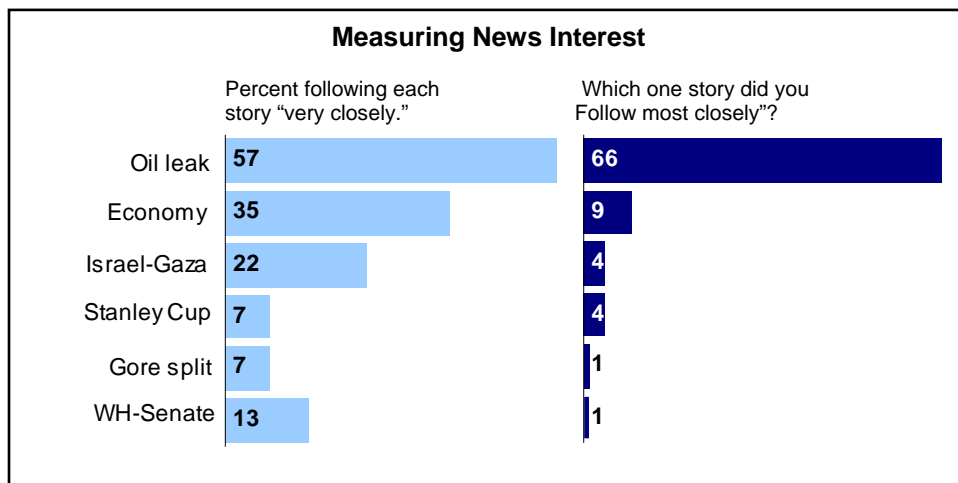
Just 9% say they followed news about the economy – the second ranking story on the list – more closely than any other news. About a third (35%) say they followed news about the economy very closely. This topic garnered 6% of coverage.

Israel’s deadly interception of a flotilla of boats carrying supplies to Gaza attracted far more coverage (13% of the newshole) but somewhat less public attentiveness. While 22% say they followed this story very closely, just 4% say this was the news they followed most closely. A matching number say they followed the National Hockey League’s Stanley Cup finals most closely; 7% say they followed this news very closely. Stanley Cup stories made up less than 1% of newshole measured by PEJ.



Just 1% says they followed news about the separation of former Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper, more closely than any other story; 7% followed this story very closely. Stories about the breakup of the 40-year marriage accounted for 1% of coverage.

Another 1% say they most closely followed reports that the White House had discussed the possibility of administration jobs with Democratic Senate candidates to get them not to run against its preferred candidates; 13% say they followed these stories very closely. This news accounted for 2% 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 coverage. 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. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected May 31-June 6, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected June 3-6, from a nationally representative sample of 1,002 adults.

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 Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. (For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.) The News Interest Index survey collects data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a national sample of 1,002 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from June 3-6, 2010 (672 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 330 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 137 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2009 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2009 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,002	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	284	7.0 percentage points
Democrats	300	7.0 percentage points
Independents	328	6.5 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.

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, Michael Remez, Senior Writer
Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian, Jocelyn Kiley and Alec Tyson, Research Associates
Jacob Poushter, Research Analyst

For more information about the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press' weekly News Interest Index, go to www.people-press.org.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
June 3-6, 2010 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,002

ASK ALL:

PEW.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>	(VOL.) DK/ Refused
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
June 3-6, 2010	35	33	16	14	1
May 27-30, 2010	43	29	13	15	*
May 20-23, 2010	40	35	13	11	*
May 13-16, 2010	49	32	11	8	1
May 7-10, 2010	42	34	11	12	*
April 30-May 3, 2010	32	37	17	14	1
April 23-26, 2010	42	31	13	14	*
April 16-19, 2010	40	32	14	14	0
April 9-12, 2010	40	32	15	13	*
April 1-5, 2010	33	34	14	19	*
March 19-22, 2010	41	32	14	13	*
March 12-15, 2010	41	35	12	12	*
March 5-8, 2010	40	34	12	13	*
February 26-March 1, 2010	31	33	17	19	*
February 19-22, 2010	38	34	15	12	*
February 12-15, 2010	35	34	15	16	*
February 5-8, 2010	43	36	13	9	*
January 29-February 1, 2010	45	32	13	10	*
January 22-25, 2010	41	34	14	10	*
January 15-18, 2010	37	38	14	11	*
January 8-11, 2010	39	33	15	12	*
December 18-21, 2009	45	31	14	10	0
December 11-14, 2009	42	31	14	13	*
December 4-7, 2009	41	36	13	9	1
November 13-16, 2009	38	33	14	15	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	34	32	17	16	*
October 23-26, 2009	44	30	15	10	1
October 9-12, 2009	41	29	16	13	*
October 2-5, 2009	44	30	15	11	0
September 25-28, 2009	44	37	10	10	*
September 18-21, 2009	44	34	15	7	*
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
July 2-5, 2009	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	*
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

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
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	*
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
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

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
b. A major oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico					
June 3-6, 2010	57	27	9	6	*
May 27-30, 2010	55	26	11	7	*
May 20-23, 2010: <i>An oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico threatening the coast of several states</i>	47	35	11	7	*
May 13-16, 2010	58	29	9	4	*
May 7-10, 2010	46	33	11	10	*
April 30-May 3, 2010: <i>Oil leaking into the ocean near the Louisiana coast after an off-shore oil rig explosion</i>	44	35	11	10	*
April 23-26, 2010: <i>An explosion on an off-shore oil rig near the coast of Louisiana</i>	21	35	22	23	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
April 1-5, 2010: <i>President Obama's proposal to allow offshore oil and gas drilling</i>	20	24	21	33	1
July 25-28, 2008: <i>A major oil spill into the Mississippi River</i>	14	19	25	41	1
December 4-8, 2002: <i>The large oil spill polluting the coast of Spain</i>	15	29	28	27	1
May 4-7, 1989: <i>The Alaska oil spill</i>	52	37	7	4	--
c. Israel intercepting boats carrying supplies to Gaza, killing nine aboard					
June 3-6, 2010	22	26	17	33	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
March 19-22, 2010: <i>Reports about tensions in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians</i>	15	28	27	30	1
June 19-22, 2009: <i>The situation between Israelis and Palestinians</i>	15	26	30	29	1
January 23-26, 2009: <i>Conflict between the Israeli military and Hamas forces in Gaza</i>	31	31	18	20	*
January 16-19, 2009	24	31	22	22	1
January 9-12, 2009	34	35	18	13	0
January 2-4, 2009	28	32	22	18	*
March 7-10, 2008: <i>Continued violence in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis</i>	20	33	26	21	*
August, 2006: <i>The military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon</i>	40	34	14	10	2
September, 2003: <i>Continued violence in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis</i>	31	36	20	13	*
July, 2003	26	40	20	13	1
December, 2002	29	36	22	12	1
Early October, 2002	32	39	20	8	1
June, 2002	38	33	18	10	1
April, 2002	38	37	14	10	1
Early April, 2002	44	33	13	9	1
December, 2001	31	40	19	9	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
April, 2001: <i>Continued violence in the Middle East</i>	22	34	24	19	1
Mid-October, 2000: <i>Continued violence in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis</i>	30	38	18	13	1
Early October, 2000: <i>Renewed violence in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis</i>	21	30	27	21	1
January, 1997: <i>Renewed tensions between Israelis and Palestinians over Hebron</i>	12	23	29	35	1
January, 1993: <i>Israel's expulsion of 400 Moslem fundamentalists following the murder of an Israeli soldier in the West Bank</i>	10	25	31	33	1
June, 1990: <i>The incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians and the West Bank riots that followed</i>	11	28	30	30	1
May, 1988: <i>The conflict in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the occupied territories</i>	18	37	34	9	2
d. The NHL Stanley Cup finals June 3-6, 2010	7	9	11	72	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
October 30-November 2, 2009: <i>The Major League Baseball World Series</i> ¹	16	16	18	49	*
October 24-27, 2008	12	12	18	58	*
October 26-29, 2007	20	16	20	43	1
November, 1989	23	17	22	38	*
October, 1988	31	21	19	28	1
June 5-8, 2009: <i>The NBA Finals</i>	13	9	12	67	*
June 20-23, 2008: <i>The Boston Celtics winning the NBA Finals</i>	18	17	22	42	1
e. Reports that the White House discussed the possibility of administration jobs with Democratic Senate candidates to get them to not run against its preferred candidates June 3-6, 2010	13	17	18	50	2
f. Former Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper announcing that they are separating after 40 years of marriage June 3-6, 2010	7	16	25	50	2

¹ October 24-27, 2008 and October 26-29, 2007 asked about "The Major League Baseball Playoffs and World Series." November 1989 and October 1988 asked about "The World Series."

ASK ALL:

PEW.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.]**

June 3-6

2010

- 66 A major oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico
- 9 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 4 Israel intercepting boats carrying supplies to Gaza, killing nine aboard
- 4 The NHL Stanley Cup finals
- Former Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper announcing that they are separating after 40 years of marriage
- 1 Reports that the White House discussed the possibility of administration jobs with Democratic Senate candidates to get them to not run against its preferred candidates
- 1 Some other story (VOL.)
- 6 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 8

QUESTIONS PEW.3 AND PEW.4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

PEW.5 Thinking about the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico, we would like to know how interested you are in some aspects of the news coverage. First, are you very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested or not at all interested in **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**. Next **[INSERT NEXT ITEM]**. **[REPEAT RESPONSE CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]**

		Very <u>interested</u>	Somewhat <u>interested</u>	Not too <u>interested</u>	Not at all <u>interested</u>	(VOL.) <u>Don't know</u>
a.	The impact on the people and economy of the Gulf Coast June 3-6, 2010	69	22	5	4	1
b.	The impact on the environment and wildlife in the Gulf June 3-6, 2010	74	19	3	3	*
c.	Projections of how far the oil will spread June 3-6, 2010	71	19	4	5	1
d.	The methods being used to try to stop the oil leak June 3-6, 2010	66	22	4	4	3
e.	Questions about who is to blame and how they should be held accountable June 3-6, 2010	51	27	11	8	2
f.	How elected officials in Washington are responding to the oil leak June 3-6, 2010	54	28	7	8	3

ASK ALL:

PEW.6 How much do you trust information about the Gulf Coast oil leak that comes from [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]: A lot, some, not too much or none at all?

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not too much</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>(VOL.) Don't know</u>
a.	BP [IF NECESSARY: The oil company] June 3-6, 2010	8	31	29	28	4
b.	The federal government June 3-6, 2010	12	39	25	21	2
c.	News organizations covering the oil leak June 3-6, 2010	20	47	20	11	2

PEW.7-PEW.10 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED