

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JULY OMNIBUS – MEDIA UPDATE
FINAL TOPLINE
July 8 - 16, 2002
N=1365

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? [IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Late July, 2002 ¹	65	25	10=100
July, 2002	67	21	12=100
June, 2002	70	20	10=100
April, 2002	69	18	13=100
Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
February, 2002	78	13	9=100
January, 2002	80	11	9=100
Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
August, 2001	50	32	18=100
July, 2001	51	32	17=100
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
March, 2001	55	25	20=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

Q.2 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE. OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]**

ASK FORM 1 [N=686]:		Very	Fairly	Not too	Not at all	<u>DK/Ref</u>
		<u>Closely</u>	<u>Closely</u>	<u>Closely</u>	<u>Closely</u>	
a.F1	The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	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
	January, 1991 ²	67	28	4	1	0=100

¹ Late July 2002 was conducted July 22 - 28, 2002; N=995.

² In January 1991 the question was worded: "How closely have you been following news about the War in the Gulf?"

Q.2 CONTINUED

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
ASK FORM 2 [N=679]:						
b.F2	Defending against terrorist attacks in the U.S.	51	33	9	6	1=100
	June, 2002	45	35	12	7	1=100
	April, 2002	46	36	10	7	1=100
	Early April, 2002	49	35	10	5	1=100
	December, 2001 ³	60	29	7	3	1=100
	Mid-November, 2001	66	25	6	2	1=100
	Early November, 2001	63	26	6	3	2=100
	Mid-October, 2001	78	16	4	1	1=100
	Early October, 2001 ⁴	73	22	4	1	*=100
	Mid-September, 2001	74	22	3	1	*=100
c.	Recent business scandals involving WorldCom and other major U.S. corporations					
	Late July, 2002 ¹	29	34	19	17	1=100
	July, 2002	31	33	18	17	1=100
	February, 2002 ⁵	28	33	19	19	1=100
	January, 2002	19	24	20	35	2=100
	December, 2001 ⁶	11	23	28	36	2=100
d.	The Supreme Court ruling allowing vouchers to be used at private and religious schools	19	24	22	33	2=100
e.	The federal court ruling that the words “One nation, under God” cannot appear in the Pledge of Allegiance	52	27	10	10	1=100
f.	The Supreme Court ruling that bans the death penalty for the mentally retarded	16	23	25	34	2=100

³ From Mid-October 2001 to December 2001 the story was listed as “Terrorism attacks on the United States.”

⁴ In Early October 2001 and Mid-September 2001 the story was listed as “News about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington?”

⁵ In February 2002 and January 2002 the story was listed as “The ongoing investigation into the bankruptcy of the Enron corporation.”

⁶ In December 2001 the question was worded “The bankruptcy of the Enron Corporation and its impact on the retirement investments of Enron employees.”

Q.2 CONTINUED

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
g. Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market					
Late July, 2002 ¹	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
November, 1997 ⁷	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
h. George W. Bush's involvement in alleged accounting irregularities and insider stock trading at a Texas energy company in the early 1990s					
Late July, 2002 ¹	13	22	24	38	3=100
Gallup: July 9-11, 2002 ⁸	12	26	26	35	1=100

ASK Q.3 ITEMS ONLY IF CORRESPONDING ITEM IN Q.2 WAS FOLLOWED VERY OR FAIRLY CLOSELY

Q.3 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE. OBSERVE FORM SPLITS], excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Only Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a.F1 The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan	25	46	20	7	2=100 (N=541)
b.F2 Defending against terrorist attacks in the U.S.	26	47	18	8	1=100 (N=579)
c. Recent business scandals involving WorldCom and other major U.S. corporations	23	39	26	10	2=100 (N=901)
d. The Supreme Court ruling allowing vouchers to be used at private and religious schools	12	35	34	14	5=100 (N=610)
e. The federal court ruling that the words "One nation, under God" cannot appear in the Pledge of Allegiance	19	38	24	14	5=100 (N=1092)
f. The Supreme Court ruling that bans the death penalty for the mentally retarded	10	41	33	12	4=100 (N=550)

⁷ In November 1997, April 1997 and February 1996, the story was listed as "Recent major ups and downs in the stock market."

⁸ Gallup trend worded: "How closely have you followed the news about George W. Bush's involvement in alleged accounting irregularities and insider stock trading while he was a director at Harken Energy Corporation in Texas in the early 1990s -- very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not at all?"

ASK ALL:

Q.4 How much confidence do you have that the government is giving the public an accurate picture of how efforts to deal with terrorism in the U.S. are going? **[READ]**

		<u>Mid-Nov 2001</u>
14	A great deal of confidence	19
46	A fair amount of confidence	61
27	Not too much confidence	15
11	No confidence at all	3
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>
100		100

Thinking more generally about the news media,

Q.5 Which of the following two statements about the news media do you agree with more...**[READ]**

		<u>Mid-Nov 2001</u>	<u>Early Sept 2001</u>	<u>Early Feb 1998</u>	<u>Jan 1998</u>	<u>Feb 1997</u>	<u>March 1995</u>	<u>July 1994</u>
31	The news media helps society to solve its problems	35	31	29	31	36	33	25
58	OR The news media gets in the way of society solving its problems	51	58	65	63	54	57	71
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=686]:

Q.6F1 Some people think that by criticizing leaders, news organizations keep political leaders from doing their job. Others think that such criticism is worth it because it keeps political leaders from doing things that should not be done. Which position is closer to your opinion?

		<u>Mid-Nov 2001</u>	<u>Early Sept 2001</u>	<u>Feb 1999</u>	<u>Early Feb 1998</u>	<u>Feb 1997</u>	<u>Late Jan 1994</u>	<u>Early Jan 1994</u>	<u>Aug 1989</u>	<u>Dec 1986</u>	<u>June 1985</u>
26	Keeps leaders from doing their job	32	25	31	39	32	24	18	23	26	17
59	Keeps leaders from doing things that shouldn't be done	54	60	58	55	56	66	69	68	60	67
<u>15</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=679]:

Q.7F2 Some people think that by criticizing the military, news organizations weaken the country's defenses. Others think that such criticism helps keep our nation militarily prepared. Which position is closer to your opinion?

		<u>Mid-Nov 2001</u>	<u>March 1991</u>	<u>Aug 1989</u>	<u>Dec 1986</u>	<u>July 1985</u>
40	Weakens defenses	37	28	33	31	31
49	Keeps nation prepared	49	59	56	57	51
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>18</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.8 In general, do you think news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?

		<u>Mid-Nov 2001</u>	<u>Early Sept 2001</u>	<u>Feb 1999</u>	<u>Early Aug 1998</u>	<u>Early Feb 1998</u>	<u>Feb 1997</u>	<u>Jan 1992</u>	<u>Aug 1989</u>	<u>Aug 1988</u>	<u>May 1988</u>	<u>Jan 1988</u>	<u>July 1985</u>
35	Get the facts straight	46	35	37	33	34	37	49	54	40	48	44	55
56	Stories often inaccurate	45	57	58	58	63	56	44	44	50	43	48	34
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q.9 I'm going to read you some pairs of opposite phrases. After I read each pair, tell me which ONE phrase you feel better describes news organizations generally. If you think that NEITHER phrase applies, please say so. [ROTATE ITEMS NOTE FORM SPLIT]

			Mid- Nov 2001	Early Sept 2001	Feb 1999	Aug 1989	Jan 1987	July 1986	July 1985
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=686]:									
a.F1	30	Care about the people they report on, OR	47	23	21	--	41	--	35
	55	Don't care about the people they report on?	38	64	67	--	45	--	48
	10	Neither applies	11	10	9	--	9	--	10
	5	Don't know/Refused	4	3	3	--	5	--	7
	100		100	100	100		100		100
b.F1	23	Willing to admit their mistakes, OR	35	24	26	--	--	--	34
	67	Try to cover up their mistakes?	52	67	66	--	--	--	55
	6	Neither applies	9	5	6	--	--	--	4
	4	Don't know/Refused	4	4	2	--	--	--	7
	100		100	100	100				100
c.F1	39	Moral, OR	53	40	40	--	--	--	54
	36	Immoral?	23	34	38	--	--	--	13
	18	Neither applies	17	20	16	--	--	--	20
	7	Don't know/Refused	7	6	6	--	--	--	13
	100		100	100	100				100
d.F1	57	Growing in influence, OR	--	55	59	--	--	--	63
	29	Declining in influence?	--	29	32	--	--	--	17
	7	Neither applies	--	9	6	--	--	--	7
	7	Don't know/Refused	--	7	3	--	--	--	13
	100			100	100				100
e.F1	50	Protect democracy, OR	60	46	45	55	52	58	54
	29	Hurt democracy?	19	32	38	19	27	18	23
	14	Neither applies	14	15	13	20	13	17	13
	7	Don't know/Refused	7	7	4	6	8	7	10
	100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=679]:									
f.F2	65	Care about how good a job they do, OR	78	69	69	--	--	77	79
	23	Don't care about how good a job they do?	14	22	22	--	--	16	11
	8	Neither applies	6	7	6	--	--	5	4
	4	Don't know/Refused	2	2	3	--	--	2	6
	100		100	100	100			100	100
g.F2	49	Highly professional, OR	73	54	52	--	--	71	72
	31	Not professional?	12	27	32	--	--	13	11
	15	Neither applies	12	15	13	--	--	12	9
	5	Don't know/Refused	3	4	3	--	--	4	8
	100		100	100	100			100	100
h.F2	49	Stand up for America, OR	69	43	41	--	53	53	52
	35	Too critical of America?	17	36	42	--	35	28	30
	12	Neither applies	10	16	13	--	8	15	10
	4	Don't know/Refused	4	5	4	--	4	4	8
	100		100	100	100		100	100	100
i.F2	59	Politically biased in their reporting, OR	47	59	56	--	47	42	45
	26	Careful that their reporting is NOT politically biased	35	26	31	--	39	41	36
	10	Neither applies	11	8	8	--	7	9	7
	5	Don't know/Refused	7	7	5	--	7	8	12
	100		100	100	100		100	100	100

ASK ALL:

[ROTATE QUESTIONS 10 AND 11]

Q.10 Which of these statements comes closest to your view? **[READ, ROTATE PUNCH 1 AND 2 WITH PUNCH 3 ALWAYS COMING LAST]**

- 28 The press is scaring people by reporting too much about possible terrorist threats
- 20 The press is not giving the public the news it needs about possible terrorist threats
...or do you think...
- 41 The press is striking the right balance between the two
- 4 Some combination / Other **[VOL.]**
- 7 Don't know/Refused
- 100

Q.11 Which of these statements comes closest to your view? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

- 28 The government is scaring people too much with vague warnings about possible terrorist attacks
OR...
- 62 The government should be giving the public all the warnings it can, even if they are vague
- 2 Both **[VOL.]**
- 5 Neither **[VOL.]**
- 3 Don't know/Refused
- 100

Q.12 I'm going to read you a few more pairs of statements. As I read each pair, tell me whether the **FIRST** statement or the **SECOND** statement comes closer to your own views -- even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is... **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE] [AFTER CHOICE IS MADE, PROBE: Do you feel STRONGLY about that, or not?]**

		Feb 2002	Aug 1999	June 1997	Oct 1996	Oct 1995	April 1995	Oct 1994	July 1994
a.									
	54	50	48	--	45	45	43	38	41
		35	32	--	29	28	25	24	24
		15	16	--	16	17	18	14	17
	36	41	44	--	46	50	51	55	54
		31	32	--	33	37	38	41	39
		10	12	--	13	13	13	14	15
		9	8	--	9	5	6	7	5
		<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>		<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
b.									
	80	77	77	--	75	77	75	73	76
		62	62	--	61	62	59	58	59
		15	15	--	14	15	16	15	17
	12	17	17	--	18	18	20	20	19
		9	10	--	10	9	10	10	9
		8	7	--	8	9	10	10	10
		6	6	--	7	5	5	7	5
		<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>		<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
c.									
	58	54	52	51	51	53	51	50	52
		44	42	43	43	44	42	40	43
		10	10	8	8	9	9	10	9
	33	39	42	43	42	43	44	44	43
		24	29	28	27	27	26	28	27
		15	13	15	15	16	18	16	16
		7	6	6	7	4	5	6	5
		<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

C.1 and C.2 ASKED JULY 11 - 16 [N=840]:

Thinking again about the press...

C.1 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering [INSERT ITEM, ROTATE]?
 Would you say the press does an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job? (And how would you rate the job the press has done in covering [NEXT ITEM]?)

		<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	National politics and the federal government in Washington	9	47	33	9	2=100
b.	State politics and your state government in [INSERT NAME OF STATE CAPITAL]	7	39	36	13	5=100

C.2 I am going to read some things about television news reporting. For each, tell me if you think it is a good thing or a bad thing... First [INSERT ITEM, ROTATE] is that a good thing or a bad thing in your opinion?

		<u>Good Thing</u>	<u>Bad Thing</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Reporters and news people having background as advisers to political candidates and office holders	44	42	7	7=100
b.	News anchors delivering the news in a more friendly and informal way	76	16	4	4=100
c.	Hosts of cable news shows having strong opinions about politics	50	38	6	6=100

And finally,

Q.13 Do you happen to know what country's team won the World Cup soccer tournament this year? **[IF YES, PROBE: Which team?]**

		Early Aug
		<u>1998⁹</u>
31	Brazil/Brazilian team (<i>correct</i>)	38
14	Other/Incorrect	12
<u>55</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>50</u>
100		100

⁹

In Early August 1998, the correct answer was France.