

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 13-16, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1,000

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; ROTATE ITEMS IN BLOCKS A-C FIRST, FOLLOWED BY D-F] [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>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Bernard Madoff pleading guilty to charges of fraud involving a scheme that cheated investors out of billions of dollars	27	33	17	23	0=100
December 19-22, 2008¹	30	26	18	25	1=100
b. Barack Obama’s decision on federal funding for stem cell research	31	30	20	19	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
July, 2005: <i>Congress approves stem cell bill</i>	21	35	21	22	1=100
Early Sept., 2001: <i>Bush’s decision on funding</i>	31	34	18	15	2=100
c. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	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
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

¹ For December 19-22, 2008 the story was listed as “News about a Wall Street investor who allegedly cheated people out of billions of dollars.”

² July, 2005 asked about “The passage of a bill in Congress allowing stem cell research.” Early September, 2001 asked about “George W. Bush’s decision on federal funding for stem-cell research.”

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>
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
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

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>
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
d. News about political instability in Pakistan	14	20	26	40	0=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
September 26-29, 2008: Hotel bombing	16	32	23	28	1=100
August 15-18, 2008: Pakistan instability	10	25	29	35	1=100
February 22-25, 2008: Parliamentary elections	9	24	28	39	*=100
January 11-14, 2008: Pakistan instability	19	33	20	27	1=100
January 4-7, 2008: Bhutto assassination	32	36	15	16	1=100
Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2007: Pakistan instability	16	28	26	30	*=100
Nov. 23-26, 2007: Pakistan instability	13	27	31	28	1=100
Nov. 16-19, 2007: Pakistan instability	20	30	21	28	1=100
Nov. 9-12, 2007: Pakistan instability	20	29	23	28	*=100
October 19-22, 2007: Pakistan bombing aimed at Bhutto	21	28	21	30	*=100
July 13-16, 2007: Raid on Pakistani Mosque	10	19	23	47	1=100
e. Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market	38	31	14	17	0=100
March 6-9, 2009⁴	35	31	15	19	*=100
February 20-23, 2009	31	32	20	17	*=100
November 21-24, 2008	50	23	15	12	*=100
October 17-20, 2008	54	31	9	6	*=100
October 10-13, 2008	59	26	9	6	*=100
July 3-7, 2008	22	29	23	26	*=100
March 14-17, 2008	25	31	23	21	*=100
January 25-28, 2008	29	28	19	23	1=100
August 17-20, 2007	21	24	22	33	*=100
July 27-30, 2007	15	26	21	37	1=100
March 2-5, 2007	21	28	25	26	*=100
Early September, 2002	27	30	20	22	1=100

³ September 26-29, 2008 asked about "A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people." November 9-12, 2007 through November 30-December 3, 2007; January 11-14, 2008 and August 15-18, 2008 asked about "Political instability in Pakistan." February 22-25, 2008 asked about "Parliamentary elections and changes in party control in Pakistan." January 4-7, 2008 asked about "The assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and resulting instability in Pakistan." October 19-22, 2007 asked about "A bombing in Pakistan aimed at former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that killed over 120 people." July 13-16, 2007 asked about "The Pakistani government's raid on a mosque held by Islamic radicals."

⁴ October 10-13, 2008 and November 21-24, 2008 through March 6-9, 2009 asked about "Recent major drops in the U.S. stock market." March 2-5, 2007 asked about "The recent drop in the U.S. stock market." 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?" From February, 1996 to Mid-November, 1997, the story was listed as "Recent major ups and downs in the stock market." For all other dates, the story was listed as "Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market."

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>
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	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
f. A shooting spree in Alabama that resulted in the death of 11 people	18	33	24	25	*=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁵					
February 8-11, 2008: Missouri city council meeting	13	28	25	33	1=100
December 14-17, 2007: Colorado religious centers	17	31	24	27	1=100
December 7-10, 2007: Omaha mall	30	36	18	15	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.]

- 27 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
 - 17 Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market
 - 15 Barack Obama's decision on federal funding for stem cell research
 - 10 Bernard Madoff pleading guilty to charges of fraud involving a scheme that cheated investors out of billions of dollars
 - 8 A shooting spree in Alabama that resulted in the death of 11 people
 - 3 News about political instability in Pakistan
 - 9 Some other story (VOL.)
 - 11 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

Q.3 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]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. The dispute between Comedy Central's Jon Stewart and CNBC's Jim Cramer	17	28	55	*=100

⁵ February 8-11, 2008 asked about "A shooting at a city council meeting in Missouri where six people were killed." December 14-17, 2007 asked about "Shootings at two religious centers in Colorado." December 7-10, 2007, asked about "A shooting at a shopping mall in Omaha, Nebraska where eight people were killed."

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
b. Controversy over the leadership of Michael Steele, Chairman of the Republican National Committee	14	32	54	*=100
c. The troubled relationship between pop singers Chris Brown and Rihanna	33	36	31	*=100
d. Sarah Palin's teenage daughter Bristol and her boyfriend calling off their engagement	13	43	44	0=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:				
September 5-8, 2008: News that Sarah Palin's 17 year old daughter is pregnant	69	21	9	1=100

On another topic...

Q.4 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

	<u>Feb 13-16 2009</u>	<u>Jan 16-19 2009</u>	<u>Dec 5-8 2008</u>
2 Hearing mostly good news about the economy	2	2	1
51 Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [OR]	60	67	80
46 A mix of good and bad	37	30	19
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
100	100	100	100