

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**APRIL 3-6, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY**  
**TOPLINE**  
**N=1007**

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?”]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Reports about the rising unemployment rate	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 6-9, 2009</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 6-9, 2009</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 9-12, 2009</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 5-8, 2008</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 7-10, 2008</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>June 6-9, 2008</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
b. Financial problems in the U.S. auto industry	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:<sup>1</sup></b>					
<b>February 20-23, 2009: U.S. automakers seeking billions in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 19-22, 2008: Bush administration plan for emergency loans to U.S. automakers</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>December 12-15, 2008: Debate over a government bailout for U.S. auto industry</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December 5-8, 2008: Debate in Congress over a bailout for U.S. auto industry</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>November 21-24, 2008</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>November 14-17, 2008: Problems facing U.S. automakers</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>October 31-November 3, 2008: Possible merger of GM and Chrysler</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>May 18-21, 2007: DaimlerChrysler sells Chrysler</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>September 28-October 1, 2007: Agreement between GM and UAW ending strike</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>December, 2005: General Motors job cuts</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>June, 1998: Chrysler/Daimler Benz merger</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>January, 1992: General Motors job cuts</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*=100</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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>
c. Barack Obama's trip to Europe and meetings with foreign leaders	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:<sup>2</sup></b>					
July, 2001: <i>G.W. Bush's trip to Europe to attend G-8 Summit</i>	6	21	31	40	2=100
d. A shooter killing several people at an immigration services center in Binghamton, New York	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>3</sup></b>					
<b>March 13-16, 2009: Alabama shooting spree</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 8-11, 2008: Missouri city council meeting</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>December 14-17, 2007: Colorado religious centers</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>December 7-10, 2007: Omaha mall</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1=100</b>
e. The NCAA basketball tournament	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 28-31, 2008</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1=100</b>
March, 1998	20	13	19	47	1=100
April, 1990	24	16	14	46	*=100
f. North Korea's plans to test a long range missile	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>4</sup></b>					
<b>June 27-30, 2008: North Korea takes steps to halt its nuclear weapons program</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 16-19, 2007: Nuclear weapons negotiations</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1=100</b>
Late October, 2006: <i>Nuclear weapons test</i>	45	33	13	8	1=100
February, 2005: <i>Nuclear weapons program</i>	22	34	22	22	*=100
September, 2003	19	32	27	21	1=100
May, 2003	27	40	22	11	*=100
March, 2003	34	34	19	12	1=100
February, 2003	33	34	18	13	2=100
January, 2003	33	34	18	14	1=100
Late October, 2002: <i>Admits to secret weapons program</i>	25	31	23	20	1=100
June, 1994: <b>Refuses U.N. inspections</b>	27	33	26	14	*=100

<sup>2</sup> July, 2001 asked about: "George W. Bush's trip to Europe to attend the G-8 Summit in Genoa, Italy." This question was not asked as part of a list.

<sup>3</sup> March 13-16, 2009 asked about "A shooting spree in Alabama that resulted in the death of 11 people." 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."

<sup>4</sup> June 27-30, 2008 asked about: "North Korea taking steps to halt its nuclear weapons program." February 16-19, 2007 asked about: "Recent negotiations to shut down North Korea's nuclear weapons program." October, 2006 asked about: "North Korea's announcement that it recently tested a nuclear weapon." January, 2003 to February, 2005 asked about: "North Korea's nuclear weapons program." Late October, 2002 asked about: "North Korea's admission that it has been secretly developing nuclear weapons." June, 1994 asked about: "Reports about North Korea's building of nuclear weapons and refusal to allow UN inspections."

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.]

- 22 Barack Obama's trip to Europe and meetings with foreign leaders
- 17 Reports about the rising unemployment rate
- 13 Financial problems for the U.S. auto industry
- 11 A shooter killing several people at an immigration services center in Binghamton, New York
- 9 The NCAA basketball tournament
- 8 North Korea's plans to test a long range missile
- 8 Some other story (SPECIFY)
- 12 Don't know/Refused
- 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. <b>The recall of pistachio nuts due to potential salmonella contamination</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
<i>July 3-7, 2008: An outbreak of salmonella possibly linked to fresh tomatoes</i>	<b>66</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>*=100</b>
b. <b>The end of the TV drama ER</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>*=100</b>
c. <b>Barack and Michelle Obama meeting with the Queen of England</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>*=100</b>
d. <b>The largest ever increase in U.S. taxes on tobacco and cigarettes</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:<sup>5</sup></b>				
<i>June, 1998: The dispute between the tobacco industry and the federal and state governments regarding the advertising and sale of tobacco products</i>	72	23	5	*=100
	<u>Heard A lot</u>	<u>Heard something</u>	<u>Never heard of</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
<i>June, 1990: Proposed further restrictions on cigarette Advertising</i>	32	44	23	1=100

<sup>5</sup> The June, 2008, trend for comparison was not asked as part of a list. For June, 1990 the question stem was worded "As I read a list of names, places or events tell me if you have heard a lot about it, something about it or never heard of?"