



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

NEWS Release
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4350
Fax (202) 419-4399

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, December 21, 2009

Internet, Cell Phones Are Changes for the Better
CURRENT DECADE RATED AS WORST IN 50 YEARS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
202-419-4350

<http://www.people-press.org>

Internet, Cell Phones Are Changes for the Better **CURRENT DECADE RATED AS WORST IN 50 YEARS**

As the current decade draws to a close, relatively few Americans have positive things to say about it. By roughly two-to-one, more say they have a generally negative (50%) rather than a generally positive (27%) impression of the past 10 years. This stands in stark contrast to the public's recollection of other decades in the past half-century. When asked to look back on the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, positive feelings outweigh negative in all cases.

To be sure, the passage of time may affect the way people view these historical periods. For example, had we asked the public's impression of the 1970s in December of 1979, the negatives may well have outweighed the positives.

By a wide margin, the 9/11 terrorist attacks are seen as the most important event of the decade, with Barack Obama's election as president a distant second – even among his political supporters. And the sour view of the decade is broad-based, with few in any political or demographic group offering positive evaluations.

Happy to put the 2000s behind them, most Americans are optimistic that the 2010s will be better. Nearly six-in-ten (59%) say they think the next decade will be better than the last for the country as a whole, though roughly a third (32%) think things will be worse.

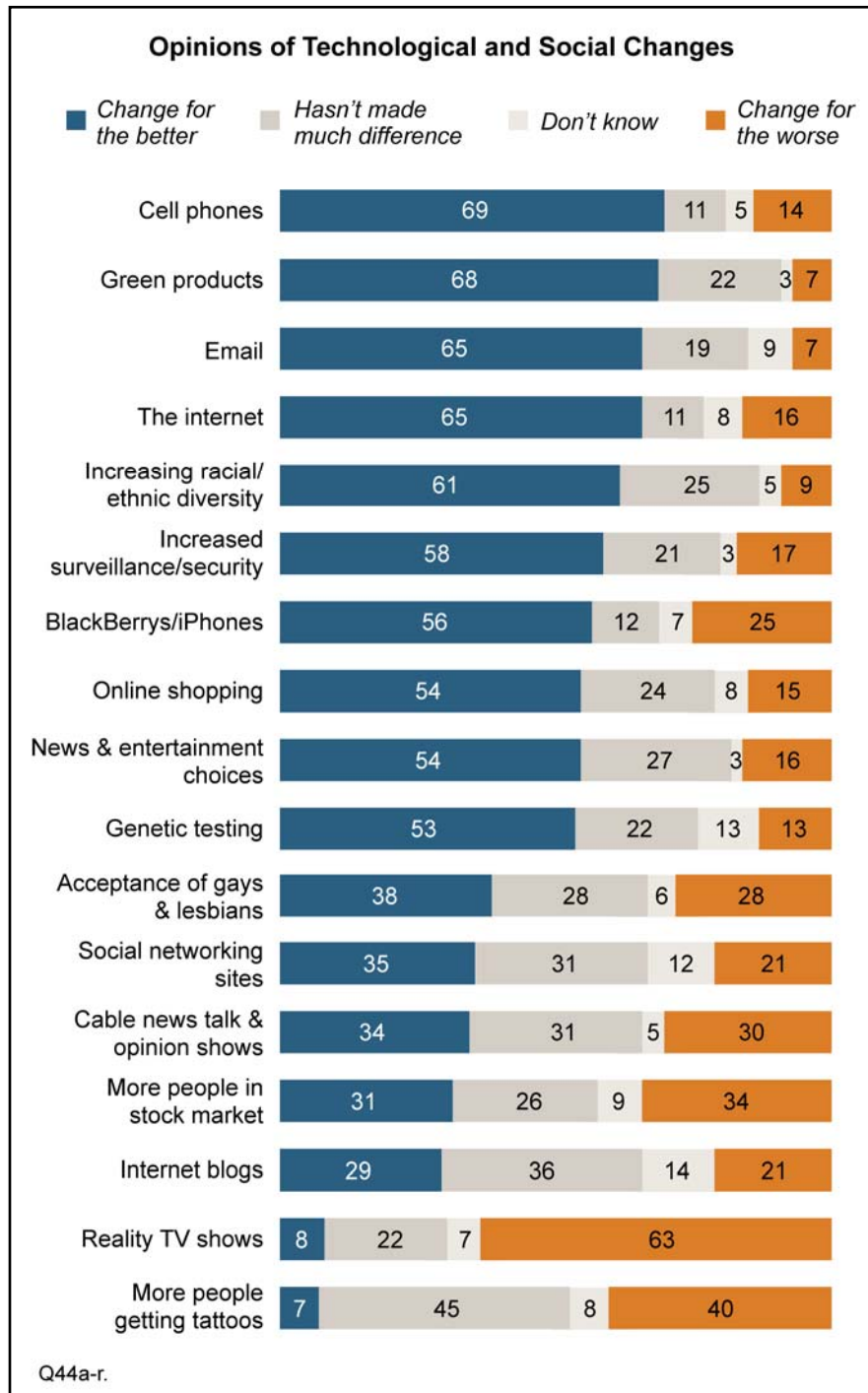
There are a number of recent changes and trends that are viewed favorably. In particular, the major technological and communications advances are viewed in an overwhelmingly positive light.

Good Riddance to the 2000s					
	<i>Your overall impression of the...</i>				
	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
<i>Is generally...</i>	%	%	%	%	%
Positive	34	40	56	57	27
Negative	15	16	12	19	50
Neither	42	37	27	22	21
Don't know	8	7	5	3	2
	100	100	100	100	100
9/11 Attacks Stand Out					
<i>Most important event of the decade</i>	%				
9/11 terrorist attacks	53				
Barack Obama's election	16				
2008 financial crisis	12				
George W. Bush's election	6				
War in Iraq	5				
Hurricane Katrina	3				
Other (Vol.)	1				
Don't know	3				
	100				
But Most Say 2010s Will Be Better					
<i>Next decade will be...</i>	%				
Better	59				
Worse	32				
Same (Vol.)	4				
Don't know	5				
	100				
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.					

Clear majorities see cell phones, the internet and e-mail as changes for the better, and most also view specific changes such as handheld internet devices and online shopping as beneficial trends. There is greater division of opinion, however, over whether social networking sites or internet blogs have been changes for the better or changes for the worse.

Most see increasing racial and ethnic diversity as a change for the better, as well as increased surveillance and security measures and the broader range of news and entertainment options.

But the public is divided over whether wider acceptance of gays and lesbians, cable news talk and opinion shows, and the growing number of people with money in the stock market are good or bad trends. Reality TV shows are, by a wide margin, the least popular trend tested in the poll; 63% say these shows have been a change for the worse. Tattoos are also unpopular with many – 40% say more people getting tattoos is a change for the worse, though 45% say it makes no difference and 7% see it as a change for the better.



A 'Downhill' Decade

The breadth and depth of discontent with the current decade is reflected in the words people use to describe it. The single most common word or phrase used to characterize the past 10 years is *downhill*, and other bleak terms such as *poor*, *decline*, *chaotic*, *disaster*, *scary*, and *depressing* are common. Other, more neutral, words like *change*, *fair* and *interesting* also come up, and while the word *good* is near the top of the list, there are few other positive words mentioned with any frequency.

Boomers Look Back Fondly

There is no significant generational divide in impressions of the current decade: Roughly half in all age groups view the 2000s negatively, while less than a third rates the decade positively. This is in stark contrast to generational differences in views of previous decades. The 1990s are viewed far more positively by younger people – roughly two-thirds of Americans younger than 50 have a positive impression of the decade compared with fewer than half of people ages 50 and older. The 1960s, by contrast, receive generally positive ratings from people ages 50 and older, while those under 50 offer more mixed views.

The biggest generational division of opinion is in retrospective evaluations of the 1970s. Baby Boomers – most of whom are between the ages of 50 and 64 today and were between 20 and 34 in 1979 – view this decade in an overwhelmingly favorable light, with positive impressions outnumbering negative views by 48 points (59% positive vs. 11% negative). By contrast, people who were younger than 20 at the end of the 1970s – who are currently in their

The 2000s in a Word*

36	Downhill	8	Bush
35	Change	8	Interesting
24	Good	8	Terrible
18	Poor	7	Confusing
17	Decline	7	OK
16	Disappointing	7	Sucks
16	Turbulent/Turmoil	6	Mess/Messed up
14	Chaos/Chaotic	6	Sad
13	Not good	5	Challenging
11	Bad	5	Crazy
11	Fair	5	Difficult
10	Disaster	5	Excess
10	Greed	5	Hard
10	Rollercoaster	5	Hopeful
10	Scary	5	Lost
9	Depressing	5	Struggle
9	Tumultuous	5	Successful
9	Worse/Worsening	5	Wow!

* Figures show the number of people, out of 779 asked, who offered each word or phrase. These figures are not percentages. Q40F1.

Generations View the Decades

	----- Current age -----			
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%
2000s				
Generally positive	28	31	26	23
Generally negative	49	49	55	45
Neither/DK	<u>24</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>32</u>
	100	100	100	100
1990s				
Generally positive	67	64	51	43
Generally negative	9	18	26	21
Neither/DK	<u>25</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>36</u>
	100	100	100	100
1980s				
Generally positive	49	60	59	54
Generally negative	9	12	17	11
Neither/DK	<u>42</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>36</u>
	100	100	100	100
1970s				
Generally positive	34	28	59	44
Generally negative	15	20	11	16
Neither/DK	<u>51</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>40</u>
	100	100	100	100
1960s				
Generally positive	26	22	49	46
Generally negative	9	17	15	19
Neither/DK	<u>65</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>35</u>
	100	100	100	100
N	112	201	216	181

Q41F2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

30s and 40s – offer a less positive assessment; just 28% view the decade positively, 20% negatively, and 52% say neither or offer no opinion.

The decade out of the last half century with the best image right now is the 1980s. While comparable percentages offer positive evaluations of the 1980s (56%) and 1990s (57%), negative ratings for the 1980s are lower than for the 1990s (12% vs. 19%). And the balance of opinion about the 1980s is overwhelmingly positive across all age groups – with positive views outnumbering negative by more than three-to-one across the board.

Next Decade Looks Better

Most Americans (59%) think the next decade will be better than the current one for the country as a whole, and this perspective is widely shared across most political and demographic groups. But a significant minority – 32% – is of the view that things will be worse in the 2010s than in the 2000s. Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats (42% vs. 20%) to offer a pessimistic assessment of the next decade. Roughly a third (34%) of independents offer a gloomy prediction.

Generationally, Americans between the ages of 50 and 64 are the most pessimistic about the 2010s – 42% think things will be worse over the next 10 years. This compares with 30% of people under 50 and just 26% of those age 65 and older. Along religious lines, white evangelical Protestants take a far more pessimistic view of the next decade than other major religious groups. Just over half (52%) of white evangelicals predict that the coming decade will be worse than the current one, far more than the number of white mainline Protestants (29%), white Catholics (24%) or unaffiliated (28%) Americans who take this view.

	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
<i>Impression of the 2000s</i>	%	%	%
Generally positive	35	25	26
Generally negative	46	54	49
Neither/DK	<u>19</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>24</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Outlook for 2010s</i>			
Better	49	75	55
Worse	42	20	34
Same/DK	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100

Q40AF1, Q41eF2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

	<i>Next decade will be...</i>			<u>N</u>
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same/DK</u>	
	%	%	%	
Total	59	32	9=100	779
18-29	65	29	7=100	101
30-49	60	31	9=100	267
50-64	50	42	8=100	234
65+	62	26	13=100	164
<i>Family income</i>				
\$75k+	64	32	4=100	223
\$30-75k	61	33	6=100	276
<\$30k	58	30	12=100	183
<i>Religion</i>				
Wh. Evang.	38	52	10=100	171
Wh. Mainl.	62	29	8=100	151
Wh. Cath.	66	24	10=100	123
Unaffiliated	63	28	9=100	129

Q40AF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

9/11 the Crystallizing Event

When offered a list of six major events of the decade, just over half (53%) say that the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks were the single most important event of the decade. Trailing far behind, 16% cite Obama's election as president, 12% the 2008 financial crisis, 6% George W. Bush's election as president, 5% the war in Iraq, and 3% cite Hurricane Katrina.

More than a quarter (28%) of Democrats say Obama's election was the single most important event of the decade, far more than among independents (12%) or Republicans (8%). Because of this focus on Obama's election, fewer Democrats (43%) cite the Sept. 11 attacks as the biggest event of the decade than Republicans (60%) or independents (56%).

	Total	----- Age -----				----- Party -----		
		18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
9/11 attacks	53	44	63	52	45	60	43	56
Obama's election	16	13	13	20	16	8	28	12
Financial crisis	12	16	10	10	16	15	9	14
Bush's election	6	7	7	4	8	6	8	6
Iraq war	5	11	1	4	5	4	6	5
Hurricane Katrina	3	5	2	4	3	3	3	4
Other (Vol.)	1	1	1	1	2	1	*	2
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	725	112	201	216	181	199	219	267

Q42F2. Figures may add to 100% because of rounding.

And while 9/11 is seen as the most important event across all age groups, opinions about the importance of other events differ in significant ways. People under age 30 are more likely than their elders to name the war in Iraq as the most important event of the decade (11% vs. 3% of those ages 30 and over). And, along with the oldest cohort, younger Americans are less likely to name 9/11 as the most important event.

Technology and Communications Changes Viewed Positively

The internet – perhaps the seminal technological development of recent decades – continues to be widely seen in a favorable light. About two-thirds (65%) say the internet has been a change for the better, while just 16% say it has been a change for the worse; 11% say it hasn't made much difference while 8% are unsure. This largely mirrors the balance of opinion at the close of the 1990s – the decade that saw the widespread adoption of the web. In 1999, 69% called the internet a change for the better and 18% called it a change for the worse.

	----- 1999 -----				----- 2009 -----			
	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	<u>DK</u> %	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
Total	69	18	7	6=100	65	16	11	8=100
18-29	76	16	6	2=100	76	12	8	4=100
30-49	74	15	7	4=100	70	19	9	3=100
50-64	64	22	5	9=100	66	18	11	6=100
65+	51	21	11	17=100	42	15	19	25=100
College grad+	81	11	5	4=100	82	10	6	2=100
Some college	77	13	4	5=100	72	14	9	5=100
H.S. or less	60	23	9	8=100	52	21	14	13=100
Republican	71	17	5	6=100	69	18	9	4=100
Democrat	66	18	7	8=100	68	12	11	9=100
Independent	68	17	9	5=100	63	17	12	8=100

Q44aF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

As with most technological developments, young people and the well educated are particularly likely to embrace the internet as a change for the better. About three-quarters (76%) of young people view the web as a positive change, compared with far fewer (42%) of those ages 65 and older. Older Americans, however, are no more likely to see the internet as a change for the worse than are younger people, rather more seniors simply say it has made no difference or are unsure as to its impact.

As was the case in 1999, far more of those with a college degree say the internet has been a change for the better (82%) than do those with no college experience (52%). And the internet – like most other technological developments – is not a politicized innovation: similar majorities of Republicans (69%), Democrats (68%), and independents (63%) say the internet has been a positive change.

Email, the form of communication born from the web, is viewed as favorably as the internet itself. By an overwhelming margin, more say email has been a change for the better (65%) than say it has been a change for the worse (7%); 19% say it hasn't made a difference. Views of email are largely unchanged from a decade ago, though there has been a slight decline in the share describing email as a change for the better. This decline has taken place largely among young people: 69% of those younger than 30 say email has been a change for the better, compared with 82% a decade ago. Very few young people – just 1% – say email has been a change for the worse, but a quarter of those who came of age in the current decade – with ever-increasing options for real-time, wireless communication – say email has not made much of a difference. In 1999, just 6% of those under 30 expressed that view.

	----- 1999 -----				----- 2009 -----			
	Change for the better %	Change for the worse %	No difference %	DK %	Change for the better %	Change for the worse %	No difference %	DK %
Total	71	9	12	8=100	65	7	19	9=100
18-29	82	9	6	3=100	69	1	25	5=100
30-49	78	8	9	4=100	74	4	19	3=100
50-64	66	8	17	9=100	65	12	16	7=100
65+	47	10	21	21=100	45	9	20	27=100
College grad+	78	6	10	6=100	83	5	10	3=100
Some college	79	9	9	4=100	69	6	18	7=100
H.S. or less	66	10	14	10=100	52	9	25	14=100

Q44kF2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

In addition to the internet and email, cell phones are broadly embraced by the public as a change for the better. Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) call cell phones a change for the better compared with just 14% who call them a change for the worse. Overall, the public's take on cell phones is slightly better than it was ten years ago. In 1999, 22% felt that cell phones were a change for the worse – this has fallen to 14% in the current survey.

Age Gap in Views of Handheld Devices

Handheld devices such as Blackberries and iPhones are seen as a good thing by most people (56%). However, a quarter (25%) says these devices have been a change for the worse. The age gap in attitudes toward these devices is particularly wide: 72% of those under 30 consider handheld wireless devices to be a positive change, compared with just 33% of those 65 and older.

The public is ambivalent when it comes to evaluating social networking sites such as Facebook. About a third (35%) call them a change for the better, 21% say they have been a change for the worse, while 31% say social networking sites have not made much of a difference and 12% are unsure. In fact, even among young people, fewer than half (45%) say social networking sites have been a change for the better.

And when it comes to internet blogs, the plurality opinion (36%) is that the emergence of blogs has not made much of a difference. Slightly fewer (29%) call them a change for the better, while 21% think they have been a change for the worse.

Handheld Devices, Online Shopping, Social Networking and Blogs				
	Change for the better %	Change for the worse %	No difference %	DK %
Handheld Devices				
Total	56	25	12	7=100
18-29	72	20	7	2=100
30-49	62	26	9	3=100
50-64	51	25	16	7=100
65+	33	30	17	20=100
College grad+	62	22	10	6=100
Some college	61	22	13	4=100
H.S. or less	50	29	13	8=100
Online Shopping				
Total	54	15	24	8=100
18-29	55	21	20	4=100
30-49	65	12	19	5=100
50-64	49	16	27	7=100
65+	39	9	34	18=100
College grad+	70	9	19	3=100
Some college	63	13	17	6=100
H.S. or less	40	18	30	12=100
Social Networking Sites				
Total	35	21	31	12=100
18-29	45	13	37	4=100
30-49	45	18	30	8=100
50-64	25	33	31	10=100
65+	21	21	27	31=100
College grad+	33	24	34	9=100
Some college	45	19	24	12=100
H.S. or less	31	21	34	14=100
Internet Blogs				
Total	29	21	36	14=100
18-29	44	14	39	4=100
30-49	34	17	40	10=100
50-64	22	28	36	14=100
65+	15	24	27	34=100
College grad+	27	24	39	10=100
Some college	34	19	33	13=100
H.S. or less	27	19	35	18=100
Q44bF1 & Q44m-oF2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.				

Greater Diversity Seen as Positive Change

A majority (61%) of the public says that the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the United States has been a change for the better; 25% say increasing diversity has not made much difference and only 9% say it has been a change for the worse. However, opinion that increased diversity has been a change for the better is more widely held among some demographic groups than others.

Older people are less likely to believe that increased diversity has been a change for the better; about half (49%) of people ages 65 and older say this has been a change for the better compared with about two-thirds (66%) of those younger than 50. More college graduates (72%) than those with a high school education or less (54%) think increased diversity is a change for the better.

Divisions over Acceptance of Gays

There is far less agreement about the increasing acceptance of gays and lesbians. Overall, 38% say this has been a change for the better, 28% a change for the worse and 28% say it has made no difference. As with other public opinion questions about homosexuality, there is a substantial divide between how younger and older Americans view this issue.

By greater than two-to-one, those younger than 50 see increased acceptance of gays and lesbians as a change for the better (45%), not worse (19%). By contrast, people ages 65 and older see this as a change for the worse, not the better, by more than two-to-one (46% to 21%).

There is a substantial gender divide on this

	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Total	61	9	25	5=100
18-29	67	3	29	2=100
30-49	65	10	21	4=100
50-64	58	11	24	7=100
65+	49	10	30	11=100
College grad+	72	7	18	3=100
Some college	61	13	21	5=100
H.S. or less	54	8	31	7=100
Republican	57	13	27	3=100
Democrat	66	6	23	5=100
Independent	60	9	25	6=100

Q44hF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Total	38	28	28	6=100
18-29	44	18	31	7=100
30-49	45	20	30	5=100
50-64	37	33	24	6=100
65+	21	46	29	5=100
Men	31	31	32	6=100
18-49	36	23	33	7=100
50+	23	41	31	5=100
Women	45	25	25	5=100
18-49	53	15	27	5=100
50+	36	36	22	6=100
College grad+	51	23	22	4=100
Some college	44	24	29	3=100
HS or less	28	32	32	8=100
Republican	21	51	25	4=100
Democrat	52	19	26	4=100
Independent	40	19	33	8=100
Wh. Evangelical	20	51	25	4=100
Wh. Mainline	48	16	32	3=100
Wh. Catholic	45	15	34	6=100
Unaffiliated	52	9	32	7=100

Q44qF2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

issue: more women than men think increased acceptance of gays and lesbians has been a change for the better (45% vs. 31%). And this gender gap spans generations. Younger women in particular see this as a change for the better; 53% of women under 50 say this has been a change for the better, compared with 36% of men in this age range.

There also are educational differences on the issue of increased acceptance of gays and lesbians: 51% of college graduates and 44% of those with some college education say this has been a change for the better compared with only 28% of those with a high school education or less. In addition, while 52% of Democrats and 40% of independents think increased acceptance of gays and lesbians is a change for the better, just 21% of Republicans agree. And just 20% of white non-Hispanic evangelical Protestants say greater acceptance of gays is a change for the better, a far lower percentage than in other religious groups.

Most See Benefits of Genetic Testing

A majority of Americans (53%) say that genetic testing has been a change for the better while 22% say it has not made much difference and 13% say it has been a change for the worse. A plurality across all age and educational groups says that genetic testing has been a change for the better, but fewer of those who are 65 and older or who have a high school education or less believe this.

White evangelical Protestants are more divided in their opinion than nearly all other demographic groups. About four-in-ten (39%) say genetic testing has been a change for the better, but 25% say it has made no difference and 23% say it has been a change for worse. A plurality of Republicans, Democrats and independents say that genetic testing has been a change for the better, but Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that it has been a change for the worse (18% vs. 8%).

	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Total	53	13	22	13=100
18-29	60	14	19	6=100
30-49	51	12	23	14=100
50-64	56	13	20	11=100
65+	44	9	27	19=100
College grad+	60	14	20	6=100
Some college	52	17	20	12=100
H.S. or less	49	10	25	17=100
Republican	47	18	25	10=100
Democrat	58	8	21	13=100
Independent	53	13	22	12=100
Wh. Evangelical	39	23	25	12=100
Wh. Mainline	56	10	21	13=100
Wh. Catholic	56	11	18	14=100
Unaffiliated	65	10	17	8=100

Q44cF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Generations Divide over Tattoos

The public is divided about the impact of more people getting tattoos; 45% say it has not made much difference, 40% think it has been a change for the worse and only 7% say this has been a change for the better. As might be expected, older Americans are far more likely to negatively view this trend: 64% of those 65 and older and 51% of those 50 to 64 say more people getting tattoos has been a change for the worse. A majority of those under 50 (56%) say the tattoo trend has not made much of a difference.

The age differences are larger among women than men. About six-in-ten (61%) women ages 50 and older say more people getting tattoos have been a change for the worse compared with 27% of younger women. The gap is smaller among men: 51% of men 50 and older say more people getting tattoos has been a change for the worse compared with 30% of younger men.

A majority (56%) of white evangelical Protestants say that more people getting tattoos has been a change for the worse; white mainline Protestants and white Catholics are more divided in their opinion. By comparison, 57% of those who are religiously unaffiliated say that more people getting tattoos has not made much difference.

More People Getting Tattoos Has Been a...				
	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Total	7	40	45	8=100
18-29	15	22	61	1=100
30-49	6	32	53	8=100
50-64	3	51	39	8=100
65+	4	64	19	13=100
Men	6	38	47	9=100
18-49	7	30	56	6=100
50+	3	51	33	13=100
Women	8	42	43	7=100
18-49	12	27	56	5=100
50+	3	61	28	8=100
Wh. Evangelical	2	56	37	5=100
Wh. Mainline	6	38	46	10=100
Wh. Catholic	6	41	48	4=100
Unaffiliated	11	26	57	6=100

Q44fF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Cable Talk a Mixed Bag

The public also is divided about the effect of cable news talk and opinion shows; 34% say they have been a change for the better, 31% think they have made no difference and 30% say they have been a change for the worse. More young people think these shows have been a change for the worse than people 65 and older. Similarly, more college graduates (43%) say cable news talk and opinion shows have been a change for the worse than those with some college education (28%) or with a high school education or less (23%).

On balance, more Republicans say cable news talk and opinion shows have been a change for the better (40%) than worse (24%). Democrats and independents are more divided with about the same percentages of each group viewing these shows positively and negatively.

A plurality (44%) of those who get most national and international news from cable television news say that cable talk and opinion shows have been a change for the better, compared with 31% who get most of their news from network news. People whose main news source is cable news are also more likely than those who get most news from newspapers to say these shows have been a change for the better.

The public overwhelmingly thinks that reality television shows have been a change for the worse; 63% say this compared with 22% who say they have not made much difference and only 8% who say they have been a change for the better. A plurality in all age groups says these shows have been a change for the worse. Even though a majority in all education groups says reality television shows have been a change for the worse; college graduates or those with some college education are more likely than those with a high school education or less to say they have been a change for the worse.

Cable News Talk and Opinion Shows

	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Total	34	30	31	5=100
18-29	26	38	33	2=100
30-49	35	31	30	4=100
50-64	34	27	32	7=100
65+	40	19	30	12=100
College grad+	30	43	23	4=100
Some college	37	28	31	4=100
H.S. or less	34	23	37	7=100
Republican	40	24	31	5=100
Democrat	30	29	36	5=100
Independent	34	33	28	5=100
<i>Main news source*</i>				
Cable news	44	24	30	2=100
Local news	34	21	37	8=100
Network news	31	29	31	9=100
Internet	33	35	28	3=100
Newspapers	27	34	33	6=100
Radio	32	24	36	8=100

Q44eF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

* People could provide multiple main news sources.

Reality TV: The Biggest Loser

	Change for the <u>better</u> %	Change for the <u>worse</u> %	No differ- <u>ence</u> %	Don't <u>know</u> %
Total	8	63	22	7=100
18-29	7	67	25	1=100
30-49	10	63	22	5=100
50-64	7	70	18	6=100
65+	8	49	23	20=100
College grad+	6	72	16	7=100
Some college	6	67	21	6=100
H.S. or less	11	56	25	7=100

Q44dF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a national sample of 1,504 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from December 9-13, 2009 (1,001 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 503 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 182 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2008 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2008 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	1,504	3.0 percentage points
Form 1	779	4.5 percentage points
Form 2	725	4.5 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 CENTER

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 Assistant

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
DECEMBER 2009 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
December 9-13, 2009
N=1504

Q. 1 THROUGH Q.39F1 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

On a different subject...

ASK ALL:

Q.N1 How do you get most of your news about national and international issues? From **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**? **[ACCEPT TWO ANSWERS: IF ONLY ONE RESPONSE IS GIVEN, PROBE ONCE FOR ADDITIONAL: "Anything Else?"]**

	<u>Tele- vision</u>	<u>News- papers</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>Maga- zines</u>	<u>Internet</u>	<u>(VOL.) Other</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
Dec 9-13, 2009	70	32	17	3	35	1	1
Jul, 2009	71	33	21	3	42	1	1
December, 2008	70	35	18	5	40	2	1
September, 2007	74	34	13	2	24	2	1
Late September, 2006	74	37	16	4	21	3	1
August, 2006	72	36	14	4	24	2	1
November, 2005	73	36	16	2	20	2	*
Early Sept, 2005¹ (Hurricane Katrina)	89	35	17	*	21	3	*
June, 2005	74	44	22	5	24	2	1
December, 2004	74	46	21	4	24	2	3
October, 2003	80	50	18	4	20	2	1
August, 2003	79	46	15	3	18	2	1
Early July, 2003	79	45	16	5	19	1	*
March, 2003 (War in Iraq)	89	24	19	*	11	2	*
February, 2003	83	42	19	4	15	3	*
January, 2003	81	44	22	4	17	2	1
January, 2002	82	42	21	3	14	2	*
Mid-September, 2001 (Terror Attacks)	90	11	14	*	5	1	1
Early September, 2001	74	45	18	6	13	1	*
February, 2001	76	40	16	4	10	2	1
October, 1999	80	48	19	5	11	2	*
January, 1999	82	42	18	4	6	2	*
January, 1996	88	61	25	8	--	2	*
September, 1995	82	63	20	10	--	1	1
January, 1994	83	51	15	10	--	5	1
September, 1993	83	60	17	9	--	3	*
January, 1993	83	52	17	5	--	1	1
Early January, 1991 (Persian Gulf)	82	40	15	4	--	1	*

Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

1 In Early September 2005, the question was worded "news about the impact of Hurricane Katrina." In March 2003, the question was worded "news about the war in Iraq," and in Mid-September 2001, the question was worded "news about the terrorist attacks." In September 1995, question wording did not include "international." In Early January 1991 the question asked about "the latest developments in the Persian Gulf."

IF '1' TELEVISION AS EITHER 1ST OR 2ND RESPONSE IN Q.N1 ASK:

Q.N2 On television, do you get most of your news about national and international issues from [READ, RANDOMIZE ITEMS 2 THRU 4 AND 5 THRU 7 SEPARATELY, AND RANDOMIZE SETS OF ITEMS (LOCAL; NETWORK; CABLE). ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL]

BASED ON TOTAL:

	<u>Local</u>	<u>ABC</u>	<u>CBS</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>MSNBC</u>	<u>FNC</u>	(VOL.) <u>Other</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	<i>TV not a main source</i>
Dec 9-13, 2009	16	12	8	10	19	6	19	3	2	(30)
Jul, 2009	18	11	10	13	22	6	19	3	1	(29)
December, 2008	15	12	9	10	23	8	17	4	2	(30)
September, 2007	18	11	8	13	22	7	16	3	2	(26)
August, 2006	13	10	9	12	24	6	20	6	1	(28)
November, 2005	16	14	12	15	24	8	22	5	3	(27)
Early Sept, 2005² <i>(Hurricane Katrina)</i>	19	14	8	12	31	9	22	3	3	(11)
June, 2005	13	12	9	12	18	5	16	2	4	(26)
December, 2004	15	11	9	14	20	6	19	3	3	(26)
October, 2003	17	12	8	13	20	6	17	--	4	(20)
August, 2003	17	12	10	15	26	7	18	3	4	(21)
Early July, 2003	17	12	11	14	27	9	22	3	3	(21)
January, 2002	16	11	11	15	28	8	16	4	2	(18)

Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

2 In early September 2005, the question was worded: "Have you been getting most of your news about the disaster from ..."

IF '5' INTERNET AS EITHER 1ST OR 2ND RESPONSE IN Q.N1 ASK [N=527]:

Q.N3 What web sites do you use to get news and information? Just name a few of the web sites that you go to the MOST often. [OPEN END; CODE UP TO THREE RESPONSES; DO NOT NEED TO TYPE “.com” EXTENSION; PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL: “Anything Else?”]

Dec 9-13

2009

29	CNN
27	Yahoo
15	MSN
13	Google
11	Fox
8	New York Times
7	MSNBC
5	AOL
2	Washington Post
2	BBC
2	ABC
2	Local news websites
2	Comcast
2	Drudge Report
1	NPR
1	USA Today
1	Huffington Post
1	Associated Press
1	New York Post
1	Other Internet service providers
1	Wall Street Journal
18	Other websites
7	DK/Refused

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=779]:

Q.40F1 Now a different kind of question, we're interested in how people think about the last decade, that is, from 2000 through 2009. Just from your own perspective, what one word or phrase best describes your impression of the last decade? [**OPEN END; PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE**].

RESPONSE CATEGORIES:

NOTE: The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; the numbers are not percentages.

Dec 9-13

2009

36	Downhill	6	Mess/Messed Up
35	Change	6	Sad
24	Good	5	Challenging
18	Poor	5	Crazy
17	Decline	5	Difficult
16	Disappointing	5	Excess
16	Turbulent/Turmoil	5	Hard
14	Chaos/Chaotic	5	Hopeful
13	Not Good	5	Lost
11	Bad	5	Struggle
11	Fair	5	Successful
10	Disaster	5	Wow!
10	Greed	4	9/11
10	Rollercoaster	4	Better
10	Scary	4	Horrible
9	Depressing	4	Mediocre
9	Tumultuous	4	Not Bad
9	Worse/Worsening	4	Prosperous
8	Bush	4	Recession
8	Interesting	4	Rough
8	Terrible	4	Stressful
7	Confusing	4	Troubled
7	Ok	4	Unsettling
7	Sucks		

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=779]:

Q.40AF1 Looking ahead, what's your best guess... For the country as a whole, do you think that the next decade will be better or worse than the current decade?

Dec 9-13

2009

59	Better
32	Worse
4	Same/No different (VOL.)
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=725]:

Q.41F2 We're interested in your general impression of recent decades in American history. First, is your impression of the [INSERT; DO NOT RANDOMIZE] generally positive, generally negative, or neither in particular? [IF R SAYS THEY WERE NOT ALIVE AT THE TIME, PROMPT WITH "Just your general impression of the [INSERT ITEM]"] How about the [NEXT ITEM]?

		Generally <u>positive</u>	Generally <u>negative</u>	Neither in <u>particular</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.F2	1960s Dec 9-13, 2009	34	15	42	8
b.F2	1970s Dec 9-13, 2009	40	16	37	7
c.F2	1980s Dec 9-13, 2009	56	12	27	5
d.F2	1990s Dec 9-13, 2009	57	19	22	3
e.F2	Current decade, from 2000 through 2009 Dec 9-13, 2009	27	50	21	2

ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

Q.42F2 Which of the following events would you say was the MOST important of the last decade? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

IF ANSWER GIVEN (Q42F2 = 1-7) ASK:

Q.43F2 And which would you say was the SECOND most important event? [READ IN SAME ORDER AS Q.42F2, OMITTING SELECTION IN Q.42F2]

BASED ON TOTAL FORM 2:

<u>1st</u> <u>Choice</u>	<u>2nd</u> <u>Choice</u>	<u>Com-</u> <u>bined</u>	
53	20	73	The nine-eleven terrorist attacks
16	15	30	Barack Obama's election as president
12	20	33	The 2008 financial crisis
6	6	12	George W. Bush's election as president
5	17	22	The war in Iraq
3	15	18	Hurricane Katrina
1	1	1	Other (VOL. DO NOT READ)
3	3		Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]
<u>=</u>	<u>3</u>		<i>No first choice</i>
100	100		

ASK ALL:

Q.44 As I read a list of changes that have taken place, please tell me if you think each one has been a change for the better, a change for the worse, or hasn't made much difference. (First,) Has [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS] been a change for the better, a change for the worse, or hasn't this made much difference? How about... [NEXT ITEM]³

		Change for <u>the better</u>	Change for <u>the worse</u>	Hasn't made <u>much difference</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=779]:					
a.F1	The internet				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	65	16	11	8
	May, 1999	69	18	7	6
b.F1	Handheld devices such as Blackberries and iPhones				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	56	25	12	7
c.F1	Genetic testing				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	53	13	22	13
d.F1	Reality TV shows				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	8	63	22	7
e.F1	Cable news talk and opinion shows				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	34	30	31	5
f.F1	More people getting tattoos				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	7	40	45	8
g.F1	More people having money in the stock market				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	31	34	26	9
h.F1	Increasing racial and ethnic diversity				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	61	9	25	5
i.F1	Increasing surveillance and security measures				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	58	17	21	3

NO ITEM j.**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=725]:**

k.F2	Email				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	65	7	19	9
	May, 1999	71	9	12	8
l.F2	Cellphones				
	Dec 9-13, 2009	69	14	11	5
	May, 1999 ⁴	66	22	10	2

³ In May, 1999 the introduction to this question read: "Now thinking just about the last 10 years or so," and followed a list item about changes that have taken place over the last 100 years.

⁴ In May, 1999 the item asked about: "Cellular phones."

Q.44 CONTINUED...

		<u>Change for the better</u>	<u>Change for the worse</u>	<u>Hasn't made much difference</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
m.F2	Social networking sites such as Facebook Dec 9-13, 2009	35	21	31	12
n.F2	Internet blogs Dec 9-13, 2009	29	21	36	14
o.F2	Online shopping Dec 9-13, 2009	54	15	24	8
p.F2	More choices in news and entertainment Dec 9-13, 2009	54	16	27	3
q.F2	Increasing acceptance of gays and lesbians Dec 9-13, 2009	38	28	28	6
	TREND FOR COMPARISON: May, 1999: <i>Gay rights movement</i>	39	29	22	10
r.F2	Environmentally conscious or "green" products Dec 9-13, 2009	68	7	22	3

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent? **IF ANSWERED 3, 4, 5 OR 9 IN PARTY, ASK:**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean <i>Rep</i>	Lean <i>Dem</i>
Dec 9-13, 2009	25	32	38	2	*	2	14	15
Oct 28-Nov 30, 2009	25	32	33	5	*	5	13	13
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	27	35	32	3	*	2	13	13
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	23	34	37	3	1	3	16	14
Sep 10-15, 2009	23	34	34	4	*	5	13	17
Aug 20-27, 2009	26	32	36	3	*	3	14	16
Aug 11-17, 2009	23	33	38	3	*	3	16	15
Jul 22-26, 2009	22	34	37	5	*	2	15	14
Jun 10-14, 2009	25	34	34	3	*	3	11	16
Apr 28-May 12, 2009	23	39	29	4	*	4	9	14
Mar 31-Apr 21, 2009	22	33	39	3	*	3	13	18
Mar 9-12, 2009	24	34	35	5	*	2	12	17
Feb 4-8, 2009	24	36	34	3	1	2	13	17
Jan 7-11, 2009	25	37	33	3	*	2	11	16
Yearly Totals								
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.3	35.8	31.7	3.8	.3	3.1	10.5	15.4
2007	25.4	32.9	33.7	4.6	.4	3.1	10.7	16.7
2006	27.6	32.8	30.3	5.0	.4	3.9	10.2	14.5
2005	29.2	32.8	30.3	4.5	.3	2.8	10.2	14.9
2004	29.7	33.4	29.8	3.9	.4	2.9	11.7	13.4
2003	29.8	31.4	31.2	4.7	.5	2.5	12.1	13.0
2002	30.3	31.2	30.1	5.1	.7	2.7	12.6	11.6
2001	29.2	33.6	28.9	5.1	.5	2.7	11.7	11.4
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	28.2	34.6	29.5	5.0	.5	2.1	11.7	12.5
2000	27.5	32.5	29.5	5.9	.5	4.0	11.6	11.6
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.5	33.2	31.9	4.6	.4	2.4	11.8	13.5
1997	28.2	33.3	31.9	4.0	.4	2.3	12.3	13.8
1996	29.2	32.7	33.0	5.2	--	--	12.7	15.6
1995	31.4	29.7	33.4	5.4	--	--	14.4	12.9
1994	29.8	31.8	33.8	4.6	--	--	14.3	12.6
1993	27.4	33.8	34.0	4.8	--	--	11.8	14.7
1992	27.7	32.7	35.7	3.9	--	--	13.8	15.8
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	4.5	--	--	14.6	10.8
1990	31.0	33.1	29.1	6.8	--	--	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

Q.50 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED