



PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

***The Harris Poll***® PEOPLE

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# A Study About Science and Policy

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Prepared For:

**Research! America**

Prepared By:

**Harris Interactive Inc.  
Public Relations Research**

## ***INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY***

This Science and Policy study was conducted by telephone within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Research! America between May 2 and May 5, 2008 among 1,003 U.S adults ages 18+.

Results were weighted for age, sex, geographic region, and race where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

## **HOW TO READ THE TABLES**

The following pages present the detailed tabulations of survey results. The data are percentaged vertically and, therefore, should be read from top-to-bottom. The total number of interviews, both weighted and unweighted, appears at the top of each column. Percentages are calculated on the weighted bases. Percentages may not add to 100% due to weighting factors or multiple responses. Where an asterisk (\*) appears, it signifies any value of less than one-half percent.

### **Definition of Classification Terms**

The following definitions are provided for some of the standard demographics by which the results are tabulated. Other demographics are self-explanatory.

#### **Income**

The income groupings refer to the total household income for 2007 before taxes.

#### **Metro Size**

Metro --                    In Center City of Metropolitan Area  
                                  Outside Center City, Inside Center City County  
                                  Inside Suburban County of Metropolitan Area  
                                  In Metropolitan Area with No Center City

Non-Metro --            In Non-Metropolitan Area

#### **Children in Household**

None --                    No children under 18 years of age living in household  
Total --                    Have children under 18 years of age living in household  
Under 12 --                Have children under 12 years of age living in household  
12 - 17 --                 Have children ages 12 to 17 living in household

## Geographic Region

The continental states are contained in four geographic regions as follows:

### North East

New England: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut

Middle Atlantic: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania

### North Central

East North Central: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin

West North Central: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas

### South

South Atlantic: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida

East South Central: Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi

West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

### West

Mountain: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada

Pacific: Washington, Oregon, California

## Occupation (Optional)

The occupation classification refers to the occupation of the respondent. The types of positions included in each category are:

Professional/Manager/Owner	-	Executives, Professionals, Technical and Kindred Workers, Managers, Officials, and Proprietors
White Collar - Sales/Clerical	-	Clerical, Office and Secretarial Workers, and Sales Agents and Workers
Blue Collar - Craftsmen/Foremen	-	Craftsmen, Foremen, Kindred Workers, Carpenters, Plumbers, Electricians, Mechanics, and Bakers
Blue Collar - Semi-Skilled/Unskilled	-	Apprentices, Laborers, Assembly Line Workers, Motormen and Fishermen
Service Workers	-	Housekeepers in Private Households, Police, Beauticians, Barbers, Security Guards, Waitresses and Waiter

## Significance Testing

When results from sub-groups of a sample appear in the detailed tabulations, an indicator of statistically significant differences is added to the tables run on our standard demographic banners. The test is performed on percentages as well as mean values. Each sub-sample is assigned a letter. When the percentage of one sub-sample is significantly different from the percentage of another sub-sample, the letter representing one of the two samples appears next to the percentage (or mean) of the other sample.

For instance the percentage of males answering yes to a particular question may be compared to the percentage of females answering yes to the same question. In the example below, the male sample is assigned the letter B, and the female sample is assigned the letter C. Here, respondents were asked whether a certain business practice is acceptable. 67% of women said that it was -- a proportion significantly greater than the 57% of males who believe that the practice is acceptable. To indicate that women are significantly more likely to find the practice acceptable than are men, the letter B -- the letter assigned to the male sub-sample -- appears next to the "67%" in the female column. Similarly, the 37% of men that find the practice unacceptable is significantly greater than the 29% of women who do so and, therefore, the letter C -- the letter assigned to the female sub-sample -- appears next to the "37%" in the male column.

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		Sex	
	Total	Male	Fe-
	(A)	(B)	male
			(C)
Unweighted Total	977	488	489
Weighted Total	967	464	503
Acceptable	611 63%	274 57%	337 67%B
Not Acceptable	319 33%	171 37%C	148 29%
Don't Know	37 4%	18 4%	19 4%

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Significance testing is done to the 95% confidence level. The columns compared are listed at the bottom of each table.

## Posted Topline Data

**Question:**

Total  
%

**How much do you think scientific research  
in the past has contributed to your quality  
of life today?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

Any (Net)	90
A Great Deal/ A Lot (Sub-Net)	67
A great deal	50
A lot	17
Somewhat	23
Not at all	9
Don't know	2

**Question:**

Total  
%

**How much do you think your quality of life in the future will be affected by scientific research today?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

Any (Net)	92
A Great Deal/ A Lot (Sub-Net)	72
A great deal	47
A lot	25
Somewhat	20
Not at all	6
Don't know	2

**Special Table:**

Total  
%

**Impact of Scientific Research on  
Quality of Life**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

	<b><i>Past Research Impact on Today</i></b>	<b><i>Today's Research Impact on the Future</i></b>
Any (Net)	90	92
A Great Deal/ A Lot (Sub-Net)	<b>67</b>	<b>72</b>
A great deal	50	47
A lot	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>
Somewhat	23	20
Not at all	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>
Don't know	2	2

**Question:**

Total  
%

**In which of the following areas of your life, if any, do you think scientific research has played the biggest role?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

Any (Net)	96
Healthcare	44
Communications	20
Economy	6
Education	5
Energy	5
Transportation	5
Food	4
Defense	4
Travel	2
Other	1
None of these	2
Don't know	2

**Question:**

Total  
%

**In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are the most serious long-term issues facing the country?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

Any (Net)	99
Healthcare	76
Alternative energy sources	69
Education	67
National security	61
Global economic competition	55
Global poverty	53
Global climate change	53
Another issue	5
None of these	1
Don't know	1

**Question:**

Total  
%

**How important do you think it is that the presidential candidates talk about how science and scientific research will affect their policy making decisions if they are elected?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

At Least Somewhat Important (Net)	83
Very Important/ Important (Sub-Net)	50
Very important	28
Important	22
Somewhat important	33
Not at all important	15
Don't know	2

**Question:**

Total  
%

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

	<b>Summary of Strongly/ Somewhat Agree (Net)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
The presidential candidates should participate in a debate to discuss key problems facing the United States, such as healthcare, climate change and energy, and how science can help tackle them.	85	56
Scientific innovations are improving our standard of living.	84	43
It is acceptable for elected officials to hold back or alter scientific reports if they conflict with their own views.	19	8

**Question:**

Total  
%

**In general, do you think public policies should be influenced more by elected officials' personal beliefs or by scientific evidence?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

Scientific evidence	67
Personal beliefs	23
Don't know	10

**Question:**

Total  
%

**How much of a conflict do you think exists between science and religion?**

**Base: Adults 18+  
(n= 1,003)**

Any (Net)	83
A Great Deal/ A Lot (Sub-Net)	48
A great deal	31
A lot	17
Somewhat	35
Not at all	15
Don't know	3