Ipsos Public Affairs

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Ipsos Poll conducted for Reuters
DAILY ELECTION TRACKING 10.04.12

These are findings from an Ipsos polls conducted for Thomson Reuters from Sept. 29 – Oct. 3, 2012 (Pre-debate), and Oct. 3-4, 2012 (post-debate). For the survey, samples of 1,830 and 536 American registered voters (age 18 and over) were interviewed online, respectively. The precision of the Reuters/Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the pre-debate poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.6 percentage points for Registered Voters and 2.8 for Likely Voters; the post-debate poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 4.8 percentage points for Registered Voters and 5.2 for Likely Voters.. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.

The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of a per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

DAILY ELECTION TRACKER

Q1. In your opinion, which candidate for President has a better plan, policy or approach to each of the following?

		All Registered Voters (RV)		Democrats (RV)		Republicans (RV)		Independents (RV)	
		Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate
Healthcare	Barack Obama, Democrat	44%	43%	75%	77%	10%	10%	33%	36%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	31%	35%	7%	4%	63%	74%	21%	21%
	None	14%	11%	8%	7%	14%	10%	27%	22%
	Don't know	12%	11%	10%	12%	13%	5%	18%	20%
The war on terror	Barack Obama, Democrat	40%	37%	70%	67%	8%	9%	27%	28%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	27%	30%	6%	6%	55%	62%	18%	22%
	None	17%	12%	8%	9%	19%	11%	31%	23%
	Don't know	17%	21%	16%	18%	18%	18%	24%	28%
Iran	Barack Obama, Democrat	35%	32%	62%	55%	6%	8%	24%	24%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	26%	30%	5%	5%	54%	62%	17%	21%
	None	16%	12%	11%	14%	17%	10%	27%	21%
	Don't know	23%	26%	22%	25%	23%	21%	32%	34%
The US Economy	Barack Obama, Democrat	40%	36%	72%	65%	5%	8%	22%	29%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	35%	40%	7%	9%	72%	80%	32%	25%
	None	13%	11%	9%	9%	11%	8%	29%	23%
	Don't know	13%	13%	13%	17%	11%	4%	18%	23%
Immigration	Barack Obama, Democrat	36%	32%	65%	58%	7%	6%	22%	22%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	29%	35%	6%	9%	59%	68%	21%	24%
	None	16%	14%	10%	10%	15%	14%	32%	24%
	Don't know	19%	20%	19%	23%	19%	12%	25%	30%

Social Security	Barack Obama, Democrat	41%	38%	73%	69%	9%	12%	25%	25%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	28%	33%	4%	5%	61%	67%	21%	25%
	None	15%	12%	8%	7%	15%	13%	32%	24%
	Don't know	15%	17%	15%	20%	16%	9%	22%	26%
Medicare	Barack Obama, Democrat	42%	40%	73%	74%	8%	6%	27%	29%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	29%	37%	4%	9%	61%	77%	24%	21%
	None	15%	10%	10%	6%	14%	8%	27%	21%
	Don't know	15%	13%	13%	12%	16%	8%	22%	30%
Taxes	Barack Obama, Democrat	44%	40%	76%	69%	9%	9%	30%	41%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	31%	36%	7%	4%	67%	76%	19%	23%
	None	13%	11%	6%	9%	13%	10%	31%	18%
	Don't know	12%	13%	11%	18%	11%	5%	19%	18%
Gay marriage	Barack Obama, Democrat	43%	44%	68%	70%	14%	21%	34%	33%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	22%	24%	6%	5%	48%	49%	14%	12%
	None	17%	13%	13%	7%	16%	16%	27%	22%
	Don't know	18%	20%	13%	17%	21%	14%	25%	33%
Jobs and employment	Barack Obama, Democrat	41%	37%	75%	66%	6%	8%	19%	28%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	34%	40%	6%	14%	72%	78%	31%	28%
	None	13%	10%	8%	7%	11%	8%	31%	23%
	Don't know	11%	13%	11%	14%	10%	6%	18%	21%
The federal gov't deficit	Barack Obama, Democrat	33%	32%	61%	60%	4%	9%	17%	18%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	33%	38%	7%	7%	68%	77%	27%	31%
	None	18%	15%	15%	14%	14%	10%	36%	27%
	Don't know	16%	15%	17%	19%	14%	5%	20%	23%

FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Q2. Have you seen, heard or read anything about the Presidential debate on Wednesday, October 3rd?

POST-DEBATE	All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
A great deal	41%	45%	42%	31%
A fair amount	26%	23%	26%	25%
A little bit	24%	22%	24%	25%
Not heard anything at all	9%	10%	8%	19%
Seen, heard or read something	**91%**	**90%**	**92%**	**81%**

Q3. Regardless of which candidate you happen to support, who do you think did the better job in the debate?

POST-DEBATE	All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
Barack Obama, Democrat	28%	52%	7%	20%
Mitt Romney, Republican	50%	24%	78%	43%
Don't know	22%	24%	15%	36%

Q4. And has the debate changed your view of each candidate?

POST-DEBATE		All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
Barack Obama, Democrat	Yes – more positive towards candidate	16%	30%	5%	9%
	Yes – more negative towards candidate	18%	5%	34%	13%
	No – has not changed my view	54%	56%	52%	55%
	Don't know	12%	9%	8%	23%
Mitt Romney, Republican	Yes – more positive towards candidate	27%	9%	48%	20%
	Yes – more negative towards candidate	19%	36%	6%	12%
	No – has not changed my view	40%	41%	39%	43%
	Don't know	15%	15%	8%	25%

Q5. After watching this debate, are you now more or less likely to watch the next Presidential debate, or has it made no difference?

POST-DEBATE	All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
More likely	48%	49%	52%	38%
Less likely	3%	3%	3%	3%
No difference	34%	36%	30%	38%
Didn't watch first debate	15%	13%	15%	22%

Q6. If you had to choose one, which of the following activities would you do?

POST-DEBATE	All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
Watch the Presidential debate	65%	68%	67%	51%
Have a tooth pulled	2%	2%	3%	%
Watch paint dry	10%	7%	12%	17%
Do your taxes	6%	8%	6%	10%
Wait in line at security at the airport	8%	10%	5%	8%
Jury duty	8%	6%	7%	14%

Q7. Would you say you are generally favorable or unfavorable towards these public figures?

		All Registered Voters (RV)		Democrats (RV)		Republicans (RV)		Independents (RV)	
		Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate
Barack Obama, Democrat	Very favorable	32%	31%	62%	60%	3%	7%	10%	18%
	Somewhat favorable	14%	16%	20%	23%	7%	6%	19%	20%
	Lean towards favorable	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	17%	17%
	Lean towards unfavorable	10%	10%	4%	3%	17%	14%	16%	19%
	Somewhat unfavorable	7%	8%	2%	2%	12%	13%	12%	8%
	Very unfavorable	27%	26%	5%	5%	55%	54%	27%	18%
	Total favorable	**56%**	**56%**	**90%**	**90%**	**17%**	**19%**	**46%**	**54%**
	Total unfavorable	**44%**	**44%**	**10%**	**10%**	**83%**	**81%**	**54%**	**46%**
Mitt Romney, Republican	Very favorable	16%	21%	4%	4%	36%	46%	6%	6%
	Somewhat favorable	17%	18%	5%	9%	33%	31%	15%	17%
	Lean towards favorable	13%	12%	8%	8%	16%	14%	23%	21%
	Lean towards unfavorable	15%	16%	20%	23%	7%	3%	21%	27%
	Somewhat unfavorable	9%	11%	13%	15%	3%	5%	12%	7%
	Very unfavorable	30%	22%	50%	41%	5%	2%	23%	23%
	Total favorable	46%	51%	17%	21%	85%	90%	44%	44%
	Total unfavorable	54%	49%	83%	79%	15%	10%	56%	56%

QVI. If the 2012 Presidential Election were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE] Barack Obama for president and Joe Biden for vice president, the Democrats, and Mitt Romney for president and Paul Ryan for vice president, the Republicans [END ROTATE], for whom would you vote?

	All LIKELY Voters (LV)		All Registered Voters (RV)	
	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate	Pre-Debate	Post-Debate
Barack Obama for president and Joe Biden for vice president, the Democrats	48%	48%	47%	47%
Mitt Romney for president and Paul Ryan for vice president, the Republicans	39%	43%	38%	42%
Wouldn't vote	2%	1%	3%	1%
None / Other	4%	4%	5%	4%
Don't know / Refused	7%	4%	8%	6%

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that Y has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter θ\, i.e., Y|θ~Bin(n,θ), where n is the size of our sample. In this setting, Y counts the number of "yes", or "1", observed in the sample, so that the sample mean (y⁻) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion θ. This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian[1] statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one's knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution (π(θ/y)~β(y+a,n-y+b)), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on $\pi(\theta/y)$. Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that $a=1$ and $b=1$ and $y = n/2$. Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \mp \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$$

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For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect 1+L=1.3 to account for complex weighting[2]

Examples of credibility intervals for different base sizes are below.

Sample size	Credibility intervals
2,000	2.5
1,500	2.9
1,000	3.5
750	4.1
500	5.0
350	6.0
200	7.9
100	11.2

[1] *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*

[2] *Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal Pi . Journal of Official, Statistics, 8, 2, 183200.*