

Canadians Choose Obama, Jackson, Woods as Biggest Newsmakers of 2009

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Toronto, ON - Reflecting back on 2009, Canadians have chosen the three individuals they consider to be the biggest newsmakers of 2009. Respondents to the Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for Canwest News Service and Global National were given the option of seventeen potential top newsmakers, ranging from Susan Boyle to Prime Minister Harper to Lady Ga Ga, but the results of the top-newsmakers poll revealed a clear winner.

Fully one half (49%) of those polled said that U.S. President Barack Obama was the biggest newsmaker of 2009. Having been sworn in as the first black U.S. President in January, Obama was riding high throughout the first part of the year, but his popularity began to shrink amid concerns over both his domestic healthcare policy and his foreign policy in Afghanistan.

Focusing on President Obama, despite the fact that expectations for him were very high, three quarters (72%) 'agree' (14% strongly/59% somewhat) that President Obama has lived up to their expectations. Conversely, three in ten (28%) 'disagree' (7% strongly/21% somewhat) that he has lived up to their expectations.

Second on the list of top newsmakers for 2009 is Michael Jackson with votes from three in ten (30%) Canadians. The King of Pop died suddenly earlier this year, which sparked a world-wide heartfelt tribute to Jackson and his music, with a memorial service in L.A. that brought tens-of-thousands to mourn the loss of this iconic pop star.

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One in ten (7%) Canadians chose Tiger Woods as the top newsmaker of 2009. Although still ranked as the world's number-one golfer, it's likely that mentions of Tiger Woods were more closely related to the recent scandal involving his admissions of infidelity than any of his achievements on the course this year.

Other individuals chosen by at least one percent of Canadians include Prime Minister Stephen Harper (3%), Susan Boyle (2%), the singer discovered on Britain's Got Talent, former Vice-Presidential candidate Sarah Palin (2%), reality-show stars Kate and Jon (2%), Blackberry billionaire and aspiring NHL hockey-team owner Jim Balsillie (1%) and Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff (1%).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on December 9th and 10th, 2009, on behalf of Canwest News Service and Global National. For this survey, a national sample of 1,038 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

Obamamania...

Fully one half (49%) of Canadians chose Barack Obama as the biggest newsmaker of 2009. In fact, a plurality in every demographic studied and every region of the country named Obama as the top newsmaker of this year.



While expectations for Obama were high at the outset of his administration, three quarters (72%) of Canadians say that President Obama has lived up to their expectations, compared to 28% who disagree that he has. But some are more likely than others to agree that he has lived up to their expectations:

- Quebecers (78%) are most likely to indicate that he has lived up to expectations, followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (75%), British Columbia (73%), Ontario (71%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (67%) and Alberta (62%).
- Women (77%) have a higher propensity than men (67%) to suggest that Obama has lived up to their expectations.

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