Ipsos Public Affairs

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Interview dates: Sept 6-10, 2012
Base: 1,434 registered voters (RV)
Base for Voting Intention: 1,182 Likely Voters (LV)

Ipsos Poll conducted for Reuters
DAILY ELECTION TRACKING 09.10.12

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters from Sept 6-10, 2012. For the survey, a sample of 1,434 American registered voters (age 18 and over) was interviewed online. The precision of the Reuters/Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.0 percentage points for all respondents. 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. Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?

	All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
Right direction	31%	56%	9%	19%
Wrong track	59%	28%	88%	68%
Don't know	11%	16%	2%	13%

Q2. 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 [INSERT CANDIDATE BELOW AND ROTATE LIST] 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)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
Barack Obama for president and Joe Biden for vice president, the Democrats	48%	45%	85%	8%	34%
Mitt Romney for president and Paul Ryan for vice president, the Republicans	43%	41%	7%	87%	29%
Wouldn't vote	1%	3%	3%	%	5%
None / Other	2%	3%	1%	1%	8%
Don't know / Refused	7%	9%	4%	4%	23%

Q3. 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)
Healthcare	Barack Obama, Democrat	41%	77%	7%	32%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	32%	6%	69%	19%
	None	14%	9%	13%	26%
	Don't know	13%	8%	11%	24%
The war on terror	Barack Obama, Democrat	39%	68%	11%	32%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	26%	6%	53%	17%
	None	14%	9%	14%	28%
	Don't know	22%	17%	22%	23%
The US Economy	Barack Obama, Democrat	36%	69%	5%	26%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	38%	9%	79%	28%
	None	12%	11%	7%	25%
	Don't know	14%	12%	9%	21%

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		All Registered Voters (RV)	Democrats (RV)	Republicans (RV)	Independents (RV)
Immigration	Barack Obama, Democrat	35%	63%	6%	29%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	32%	8%	66%	18%
	None	14%	12%	12%	26%
	Don't know	20%	17%	15%	27%
Social Security	Barack Obama, Democrat	38%	70%	6%	33%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	31%	5%	68%	17%
	None	14%	12%	12%	26%
	Don't know	17%	13%	14%	24%
Medicare	Barack Obama, Democrat	40%	75%	7%	32%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	32%	6%	67%	23%
	None	13%	11%	13%	20%
	Don't know	15%	8%	14%	24%
Taxes	Barack Obama, Democrat	40%	73%	8%	33%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	33%	8%	68%	18%
	None	13%	9%	12%	27%
	Don't know	14%	10%	12%	21%
Gay marriage	Barack Obama, Democrat	39%	68%	11%	32%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	25%	5%	52%	21%
	None	17%	12%	20%	24%
	Don't know	19%	15%	17%	22%
Jobs and employment	Barack Obama, Democrat	38%	71%	6%	30%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	37%	8%	77%	25%
	None	11%	10%	8%	24%
	Don't know	14%	11%	10%	20%
The federal government deficit	Barack Obama, Democrat	30%	56%	6%	22%
	Mitt Romney, Republican	36%	8%	73%	27%
	None	17%	19%	10%	30%
	Don't know	17%	16%	11%	21%

PARTY ID (REGISTERED VOTERS)

Strong Democrat	15%
Moderate Democrat	21%
Lean Democrat	8%
Lean Republican	8%
Moderate Republican	17%
Strong Republican	14%
Independent	12%
None of these	4%
DK	2%

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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. Ipsos does not publish data for base sizes (sample sizes) below 100.

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.*