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New Clarabridge/Harris Poll uses two sources of public opinion to gain a deeper perspective on one of today's most important issues

Online postings more supportive and more optimistic about health care reform than opinions expressed through survey research

New York, N.Y. — December 16, 2009 — While there are many polls being taken to explore Americans' views towards President Obama's health care reform initiative, Harris Interactive is combining new text analytics software from Clarabridge with its popular Harris Poll to gauge the pulse of opinions in two ways: opinions posted on social media and other online sites and public opinion as measured through survey research. This month, the Clarabridge/Harris Poll found through social media analysis that Americans expect health care reform to pass by a 4-to-1 margin, while a public opinion poll shows a 2-to-1 margin believing that reform will pass by the end of next summer. Furthermore a 65% to 35% majority of online postings that express an opinion on health care reform are supportive of it, compared to survey research that is equally split 40% to 41%.

Research results suggest that the month of August, during the height of the town-hall debates, marked a turning point in the public debate around the health care issue. Social media chatter jumped 75% to 79,342 postings in August before leveling off in September. August also saw a cross-over in social media opinions around likelihood of passage – prior to August more postings indicated health care reform was not likely to pass, while after August more indicated a likelihood of passage. This trend accelerated from October to November with 79% of such postings suggesting that reform will pass as compared to 69% in the traditional survey.

Highlighting the differences of opinion between survey research and online traffic, public support for health care reform has declined steadily since August according to the survey data, while social media analysis shows an increasing level of support for healthcare reform over the same period.

The sentiment in online postings related to the highly contested public option was consistently negative for the past six months. Now it has gone down 6.4% since July.

Health Care Reform: Public Opinion

In August, when members of Congress participated in lively town hall meetings in their home districts, public support for reform outweighed opposition (49% vs. 40%) for President Obama's proposals for health care reform according to the Harris Poll. Today, as in October when equal percentages (45%) of Americans supported and opposed his proposals, the nation remains divided (40% vs. 41%). One change that is quite striking involves those Americans who say they are unsure about the issue. In August, September and October, one in ten Americans were unsure (11%, 10% and 11% respectively). Today, the number stands at 18%.

Specific aspects of President Obama's proposals engender substantial concern, however. For instance, nearly two-thirds of Americans (64%) agree that the proposed reforms would result in higher taxes while more than half (54%) agree that health insurance would be too expensive for people to buy if the proposals are passed.

No matter how people may feel about the costs of reform and related issues, it does seem clear that the public expects that health care reform, in some shape or form, will pass. The real question is when, with survey data suggesting that less than one-quarter of Americans (23%) believe it will pass by the end of this year, almost three in five (58%) by next spring, and seven in ten (69%) by the end of next summer.

Health Care Reform – Social Media Analysis

Social media analysis, which collects, integrates and analyzes global content across all platforms in conjunction with analysis of traditional feedback sources, largely tells a similar story, with two comments—one pro, one con—summing up the divergent views of Americans toward health care reform:

Pro: "The truth? We need health care reform now in order to prevent bankruptcy – to control spiraling costs that affect individuals, families, small businesses, and the American economy."

Con: "If Obamacare is passed my dog will have better medical insurance and services than me."

Comments in support of reform derived through social media analysis have exceeded those in opposition for five of the past six months, the lone exception being August, the month when town hall meetings were taking place across America and when the overall number of monthly comments peaked.

Comments suggesting that reform will lead to higher taxes outnumbered those indicating that reform will lower taxes during each of the six months. At the same time, however, comments suggesting that reform will lead to lower costs exceeded those indicating that it will raise costs. One possible interpretation is that the information, on balance, suggests that health care reform will lead to higher taxes but lower costs for individual services, as in nearly every other wealthy, industrialized country.

And do comments suggest that health care reform will pass? In August, September, October and November, the gap between comments suggesting it will pass and those suggesting it will not grew steadily—the gap is wider now than at any time in the past six months. The simple answer is yes.

Integrating Market Research and Social Media Analysis

Because social media sites have become commonplace for expressing public opinion, gathering and analyzing data from them now plays a strong role in supplementing traditional market research and in determining a more in-depth view of public opinion and how it is formed and influenced. The results of the Clarabridge/Harris Poll mark the first of a partnership combining the expertise of Harris Interactive, a leading custom market research firm, and Clarabridge, the leader in text mining technology.

"Opinions that people express on sites such as Twitter, on mainstream media sites or other message boards, and on social networking sites, are fast becoming both an influence on, and a source of, public opinion," stated George Terhanian, President Global Solutions, Harris Interactive. "The Harris Poll, one of the longest-running and most innovative barometers of public opinion in the world, is now measuring these new sources of opinion. This marks our first attempt in the public eye."

"Text analytics enables market research firms like Harris Interactive to provide their clients with a much richer 360 degree perspective on the companies, products, services, and issues they are researching," said Justin Langseth, president and CTO of Clarabridge. "In social media conversations, it is estimated that about 80 percent of the data is non-opinion conversational data but the other 20 percent includes real opinions. Text analytics is

able to separate this out and accurately quantify the positive versus negative comments on the important topics of the day.”

This Clarabridge/ *Harris Poll*[®] surveyed 2,475 adults online between November 19 and 23, 2009 by Harris Interactive and analyzed 239,644 documents representing nearly all of the social media mentions and online postings taken from various sources on the Internet between June 1, 2009 and November 30, 2009, via Clarabridge’s text mining solution.

**TABLE 1 (HARRIS POLL)
SUPPORT OR OPPOSE OBAMA’S REFORM PROPOSALS**

“Even if you don’t know the details of his plan, how do you feel about President Obama’s proposals for health care reforms?”

Base: All Adults

	Jan.	July	August	Sept	Oct.	Nov.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Support (NET)	50	42	49	49	45	40
Support strongly	25	20	24	26	23	23
Support somewhat	26	21	25	23	22	17
Oppose (NET)	20	38	40	41	45	41
Oppose somewhat	9	12	11	13	14	10
Oppose strongly	12	27	29	29	31	31
Not sure	29	20	11	10	11	18

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 2 (HARRIS POLL)
LIKELIHOOD OF HEALTH CARE REFORM BEING PASSED**

“Thinking about the health care debate currently underway in Washington, how likely do you think it is that health care reform will be passed by Congress and signed into law...?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	By end of 2009			By next Spring			By end of next summer		
	Sept	Oct	Nov.	Sept	Oct	Nov.	Sept	Oct	Nov.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
LIKELY (NET)	29	27	23	51	53	58	64	66	69
Very likely	8	7	4	13	14	13	25	27	28
Somewhat likely	22	20	19	38	39	45	38	39	41
NOT LIKELY (NET)	71	73	77	49	47	42	36	34	31
Not that likely	36	27	34	32	29	27	19	17	16
Not at all likely	34	45	43	17	18	15	17	17	15

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3 (HARRIS POLL)
AGREE/DISAGREE WITH SPECIFIC CRITICISMS OF THE PRESIDENT’S PROPOSALS

"These are some of the criticisms that have been made of the president’s health care proposals. Please say for each how strongly you agree or disagree with each."

Base: All Adults

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Totals	
							AGREE	DISAGREE
The proposed reforms would result in higher taxes	%	41	22	9	9	18	64	18
We should reduce the cost of health care before trying to provide insurance for people who don’t have it	%	38	25	10	13	14	63	23
Health insurance would be too expensive for many people to buy	%	32	23	14	15	17	54	29
The proposed reforms would create panels that would decide who should live and who should die	%	19	14	10	37	20	33	47

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 4
AGREEMENT WITH CRITICISMS (HARRIS POLL)

"These are some of the criticism that have been made of the president’s health care proposals. Please say for each how strongly you agree or disagree with each."
Percent saying “Strongly/Somewhat agree”

Base: All Adults

	Oct.	Nov.
	%	%
We should reduce the cost of health care before trying to provide insurance for people who don’t have it	68	63
The proposed reforms would result in higher taxes	67	64
Health insurance would be too expensive for many people to buy	52	54
The proposed reforms would create panels that would decide who should live and who should die	37	33

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 5 (HARRIS POLL)
ATTITUDES TO PROPOSALS OF OBAMA, CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

"Based on what you’re read, seen or heard, how would you rate the health care plans proposed by each of the following?"

Base: All adults

	President Obama		Democrats in Congress		Republicans in Congress	
	Aug.	Nov.	Aug.	Nov.	Aug.	Nov.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
GOOD (NET)	54	50	46	45	31	33
Very good	19	14	6	6	2	3
Somewhat good	35	36	40	40	29	30
BAD (NET)	46	50	54	55	69	67
Somewhat bad	17	18	26	24	42	37
Very bad	29	32	28	31	27	30

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 6
SOCIAL MEDIA: VOLUME OF POSTINGS OVER TIME**

	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Volume of Responses	22,308	45,366	79,342	34,968	32,250	32,382

**TABLE 7
SOCIAL MEDIA SENTIMENT INDEX ON PUBLIC OPTION**

	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Overall sentiment on public option	.47	.47	.46	.46	.46	.44

Note: sentiment index is on a scale of 0 to 1 with 0 being the most negative and 1 being the best sentiment. Clarabridge’s advanced sentiment engine adjusts for nuances of language by taking into account factors such as negation, conditional sentiment, and combinations of words that express sentiment

**TABLE 8
SOCIAL MEDIA OPPOSITION AND SUPPORT OF HEALTHCARE REFORM OVER TIME**

	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Opposition to health care reform	36	49	53	46	39	35	47
Support for health care reform	64	51	47	54	61	65	53

Note: Percentage is of total opposition or support of healthcare reform that month

**TABLE 9
SOCIAL MEDIA LIKELIHOOD OF HEALTHCARE REFORM PASSING OVER TIME**

	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reform is Likely to Pass	32	42	51	58	63	79	60
Reform is not Likely to Pass	68	58	49	42	37	21	40

Note: Percentage is of total conversation about likelihood of healthcare reform passage that month

**TABLE 10
SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGE IN COSTS FROM HEALTHCARE REFORM OVER TIME**

	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reform will Raise Costs	27	29	26	33	31	29	29
Reform will Lower Costs	73	71	74	67	69	71	71

Note: Percentage is of total conversation about changes in costs from healthcare reform that month

**TABLE 11
SOCIAL MEDIA HEALTHCARE REFORM’S IMPACT ON TAXES OVER TIME**

	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reform will Raise Taxes	99	99	99	98	99	99	99
Reform will Lower Taxes	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

Note: Percentage is of healthcare reform’s impact on taxes that month

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States November 19 and 23, 2009 among 2,475 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

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.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

The results of this Harris Poll may not be used in advertising, marketing or promotion without the prior written permission of Harris Interactive.

The Clarabridge analysis was done by analyzing the entire population of social media postings from between June 1 and November 30, 2009. Clarabridge initially gathered healthcare reform relevant data by finding content that mentioned: "healthcare reform", "health care reform", and "obamacare". Clarabridge then applied its advanced natural language processing, classification, sentiment scoring, and analysis engines to reduce the set to 239,644 relevant documents, classify them appropriately, and extract sentiment. Documents analyzed include many media sources including blogs, microblogs (including Twitter), message boards, forums, social networking sites, video/photo sharing sites and wiki sites.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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By George Terhanian, President, Global Solutions and Regina A. Corso, Director, The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us – and our clients – stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

About Clarabridge

Clarabridge is the leading provider of text mining software for customer experience management. Clarabridge provides Global 1000 enterprises an analytical view of text-based verbatims found in voice of the customer feedback channels such as call center notes, qualitative survey feedback, Web 2.0 content, online forums, social media sites, reviews, and customer warranty forms. As a result, businesses can improve marketing, product/service management and customer service delivery. Clarabridge is privately held with headquarters in Reston, Virginia. Clarabridge customers include AOL, Capital One, Choice Hotels, Expedia, Gaylord Hotels, H&R Block, Intuit, Marriott International, Sage North America, United Airlines, Walmart and Walgreens. For more information, visit www.clarabridge.com.

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