

### CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS

#### **HEALTH: Public Option in Health Care**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Senate has rejected the public option in the health care reform bill that would have offered a government-run health insurance option for the public. Why do supporters of the public option believe is so important for health care? What have been the concerns of those who oppose the public option?

**SEARCH TERMS:** public option AND health insurance

#### **ENVIRONMENT: Samoan Earthquake and Tsunami**

**TOPIC:** An offshore earthquake generated a tsunami in the Pacific that swept over American Samoa and Samoa causing widespread destruction of property and numerous deaths. Its effects were felt as far away as Japan and Hawaii. How does the tsunami warning system work? What was the scale of damages done to the two nations? Why was this less powerful than the 2006 tsunami that devastated many Asian nations?

**SEARCH TERMS:** tsunami AND Samoa

#### **ECONOMICS: Toyota Recall**

**TOPIC:** Toyota Motor Corp has issued the largest ever U.S. recall of its vehicles. What is the danger that the company is concerned about? What cars in its product line are impacted by the recall? What affect might this have on sales of their cars?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Toyota AND recall

#### **HEALTH: Swine Flu Vaccine**

**TOPIC:** A single-dose vaccine for the swine flu (H1N1/09) has been recently developed. How many doses are available and how many are needed? How are different places dealing with distribution and regulation of these vaccines? Should everyone get this vaccine?

**SEARCH TERMS:** swine flu AND vaccine

### SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

#### **CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Congressional Protocol**

**TOPIC:** South Carolina Representative Joe Wilson received condemnation from his Congressional peers when he broke protocol with a rude outburst to the President during his address to Congress health care reform. What disciplinary action was taken against Mr. Wilson? What in the health care bill was his remark addressing, and what does the bill actually say?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Joe Wilson AND Obama

#### **CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Ted Kennedy Succession**

**TOPIC:** The Massachusetts Legislature has approved a bill allowing Governor Patrick to name a temporary replacement for the late Senator Ted Kennedy. Who has been suggested as a candidate for this position? What are some processes that have been used in the past to fill the seat, both temporarily and permanently when a government official dies or becomes disabled?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Ted Kennedy AND succession

#### **CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Elections in Germany**

**TOPIC:** Angela Merkel won re-election as Germany's Chancellor, with a new governing coalition partner. What party was her old partner? Why did that partnership perish? What party is the new partner? What position will its leader get in the new government?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Angela Merkel AND Germany

**CRIME AND LAW: Treason Convictions**

**TOPIC:** Germany has overturned Nazi-era treason convictions. Why did the country feel the need to do this? What acts were defined as treason during that time? Is it possible at this date to know how many victims there were?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Germany AND treason

**CRIME AND LAW: ACORN Investigation**

**TOPIC:** The Association for Community Organizations for Reform Now or ACORN has seen a lot of its funding dry up after two activists posing as workers in the sex trade secretly filmed what appear to be ACORN employees advising illegal activity. What is the official function of ACORN? What political controversies has ACORN faced in the past few years?

**SEARCH TERMS:** ACORN AND investigation

**CRIME AND LAW: Terror Plots**

**TOPIC:** Najibullah Zazi has been indicted for conspiracy to detonate bombs in the United States as an act of terrorism. How did the investigation of him work, and what praise and criticism of the investigation has been reported? What are his connections to terrorist organizations?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Zazi AND terrorism

**ECONOMICS: Obama and Wall Street**

**TOPIC:** President Obama gave a strong speech at Federal Hall on Wall Street outlining his policies for tough regulation on bankers and brokers. What are some of the central points of his policies? What has been the reaction on Wall Street to his speech?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Obama AND Wall Street AND policy

**ECONOMICS: The Group of Twenty**

**TOPIC:** The Group of Twenty has supplanted the Group of Eight as the top international organization for economic affairs. Besides the increase in numbers, what is the difference in terms of membership?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Group of Twenty

**EDUCATION: Russian High School Curriculum**

**TOPIC:** Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* has been added to the Russian high school curriculum. What is the topic of this book? What price did Solzhenitsyn pay for writing it? What does its addition to the curriculum say about modern Russia?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Gulag Archipelago

**EDUCATION: Overhaul of the Student Loan Market**

**TOPIC:** Legislation to end private lender involvement in the student loan market is currently being debated in Congress. What are the central points in this legislation? What has been the reaction to it?

**SEARCH TERMS:** student loans

**HISTORY: Anniversary of 9/11**

**TOPIC:** It has been 8 years since the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. What have been the major terrorist attempts on the United States since that time? What is the most current information on the status of Al-Qaeda? How have the victims of the attacks been handling their ongoing grief and anxiety?

**SEARCH TERMS:** 9/11 OR September 11

**HISTORY: Finding of the Staffordshire Hoard**

**TOPIC:** An unemployed man found the largest Anglo-Saxon treasure ever found: The Staffordshire Hoard. What laws govern the finding of treasure in the United Kingdom? What are experts saying about this hoard? What reward will the treasure finder and the landowner split?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Staffordshire Hoard

**SOCIAL ISSUES: Driving Rule Changes in Samoa**

**TOPIC:** Drivers in Samoa moved from the right-hand side of the road to the left-hand side as the government changes the rules of driving. The government claims there are economic reasons for doing so. What are they? What do critics claim the impact will be?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Samoa AND driving

**SOCIAL ISSUES: Bilingual Census**

**TOPIC:** For the first time the U.S. Census will be distributed in two languages, English and Spanish. What is expected to improve with this change? What has been the reaction to this change?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Census AND bilingual

**SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS**

**ENVIRONMENT: Southwest Storms**

**TOPIC:** The Southwest has been hit hard by tropical storms after suffering a summer of severe drought. What has been the damage caused by these storms? What relief efforts have helped aid the victims of this weather?

**SEARCH TERMS:** storms AND floods AND southwest

**ENVIRONMENT: Rainstorms in Manila**

**TOPIC:** A rainstorm dropped more than the monthly average of rain on Manila within a 12 hour period. Thousands became homeless from the resulting floods. What relief efforts are underway? What caused the rain and the floods?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Philippines AND rain

**ENVIRONMENT: Dust Storms in Australia**

**TOPIC:** A massive dust storm hit Sydney, Australia. What caused it? How long did it last? Are there public health implications in events like this, and, if so, what are they?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Sydney AND dust storms

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Potato Genome**

**TOPIC:** Recently an international team of scientists have traced the genome of the potato. What use can be made of this knowledge? What other genome research has been done?

**SEARCH TERMS:** potato AND genome

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: The Cannibal Galaxy**

**TOPIC:** New research has shown that our nearest galactic neighbor, Andromeda, has been absorbing stars and other galaxies. How is this erstwhile cannibalism accomplished? What is the main victim of Andromeda? What was discovered that led to this conclusion?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Andromeda

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Uranium Laboratory in Iran**

**TOPIC:** Iran admitted to having a second uranium enrichment laboratory in the same week it test fired a medium range rocket that can reach Israel. What steps are the rest of the world taking in light of this development? What is the Obama administration doing about it?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Iran AND rockets AND uranium enrichment

## SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS

### **SPORTS: Federer Loses U.S. Open**

**TOPIC:** American tennis star Roger Federer was beaten at this year's U.S. Open by Juan Martin del Porto. What streak did Del Porto's win break for Federer? What are some of Federer's most impressive achievements in tennis?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Roger Federer AND U.S. Open

### **SPORTS: Kim Clijsters**

**TOPIC:** Belgian tennis player Kim Clijsters has won the U.S. Open tennis championship. Where did this win put Ms. Clijsters in the Grand Slam? What distinction does Ms. Clijsters share with Evonne Goolagong regarding the Grand Slam?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Kim Clijsters AND U.S. Open

### **SPORTS: NFL Players Donate Brains to Research**

**TOPIC:** Professional Football players Sean Moray, Matt Birk, and Lofa Tatupu have announced they will donate their brains and spinal cord tissue to Boston University Medical School to further studies on sports brain injuries. What are some common brain injuries in professional sports? How have changes in policy and protective gear helped prevent injuries to the head over the years?

**SEARCH TERMS:** brain injury AND football

### **SPORTS: Formula One Scandal**

**TOPIC:** Renault's Formula One team was given a two-year suspended ban from the sport after it was determined that its team manager ordered a driver to crash in a race to insure that its other driver won. What were the sentences for its former team boss and engineering leader? How did this come to light?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Renault AND Formula One

### **SPORTS: Olympic Host City Selection**

**TOPIC:** The International Olympic Committee votes to award the 2016 Summer Games. Among the cities contending to host the games are Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and Chicago. What are the reasons a city would want to host the games? What are the costs associated with hosting them? What celebrities are supporting Chicago's bid

**SEARCH TERMS:** Olympic Games

## ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS

### **FILM AND TELEVISION: Emmy Awards**

**TOPIC:** The two big winners of this year's Primetime Emmy Awards were *30 Rock* and *Mad Men*. In which categories did these two shows win? What were some of the other winners this year?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Emmy Awards

### **FILM AND TELEVISION: Film Festivals**

**TOPIC:** Both the Toronto and Venice film festivals have recently concluded. What are the differences between the two international events? What films won awards this year at both festivals?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Venice Film Festival OR Toronto Film Festival

### **FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Painting Fraud**

**TOPIC:** Long thought to be a 20<sup>th</sup> Century forgery, a Dutch painting at the Courtauld Institute of Art may in fact have hung in Vermeer's home. Why was it thought to be a fraud? How did its real status get discovered? What is the connection with Vermeer?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Courtauld Institute of Art

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Holocaust Stolen Art**

**TOPIC:** Holocaust survivor Claude Cassirer can continue his lawsuit against the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum to recover an original Pissarro painting that he says the Nazis took from his mother. How did the Nazis get this painting from Mrs. Cassirer? What are the legal implications of this case for other owners of art stolen in World War II?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Cassirer AND Pissarro

**LITERATURE: Hans Magnus Enzensberger**

**TOPIC:** Germany's Hans Magnus Enzensberger has won the Danish 2010 Sonning Prize. What type of works does he write? What is this prize awarded for?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Sonning Prize AND Hans Magnus Enzensberger

**PERFORMING ARTS: VMA Awards**

**TOPIC:** This year's Video Music Awards were led by Beyonce and Lady Gaga. What were some of the other winners of video awards? What controversy was the dominant story to come out of this year's presentation?

**SEARCH TERMS:** VMA Awards

**PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS**

**PEOPLE: William Safire**

**TOPIC:** William Safire was a political columnist, journalist and speechwriter. What did he explore in his popular column "On Language"? For which presidents did he write speeches?

**SEARCH TERMS:** William Safire

**PEOPLE: Norman Borlaug**

**TOPIC:** Norman Borlaug was an agronomist and the man called the "Father of the Green Revolution. What of Borlaug's inventions and discoveries has been credited with saving many lives? What contributions of Borlaug's have given him the nickname "Father of the Green Revolution"?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Norman Borlaug

**PEOPLE: MacArthur Genius Grants**

**TOPIC:** This year 24 new MacArthur Genius Grants have been awarded. Who are some of the recipients and what do they do? What is the history of these awards?

**SEARCH TERMS:** MacArthur Genius Grants

**PEOPLE: Chen Shui-bian**

**TOPIC:** Former President of Taiwan Chen Shui-bian was convicted of corruption and given a life sentence. What was Chen's impact on Taiwanese politics? What are the politics surrounding this event?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Chen Shui-bian