

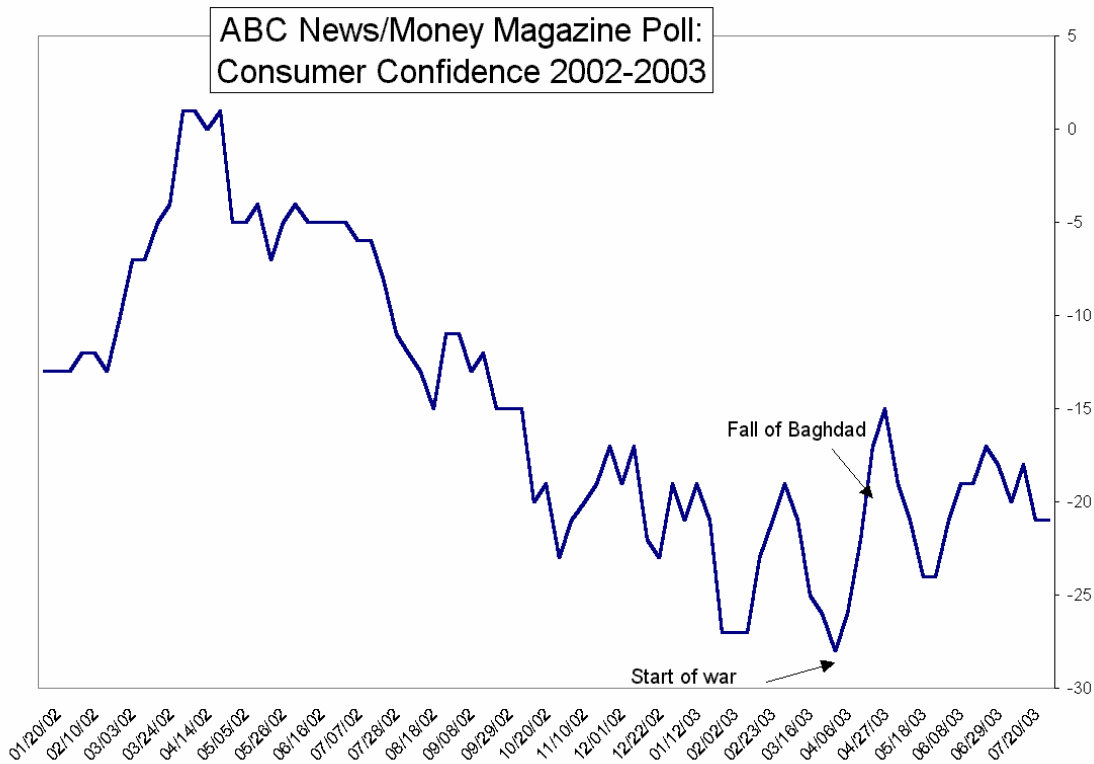
## **Confidence Levels Off, On Pace for 10-Year Low**

Consumer confidence treaded water this week, leveling off after a four-point slide since mid-June and still on pace for its worst annual performance in a decade.

The weekly ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on public views of current economic conditions, stands at -21 on its scale of +100 to -100 for the second straight week, well off its lifetime average of -9 since December 1985.

Consumers offer a mixed review of conditions. The number who call it a good time to spend money has inched up to a new high for the year (39 percent) – but the number who say their own finances are in good shape has inched down to match its low of the year (52 percent).

And just 28 percent say the national economy's in good shape – seven points better than its worst of the year, but still 13 points below the 17-year average.

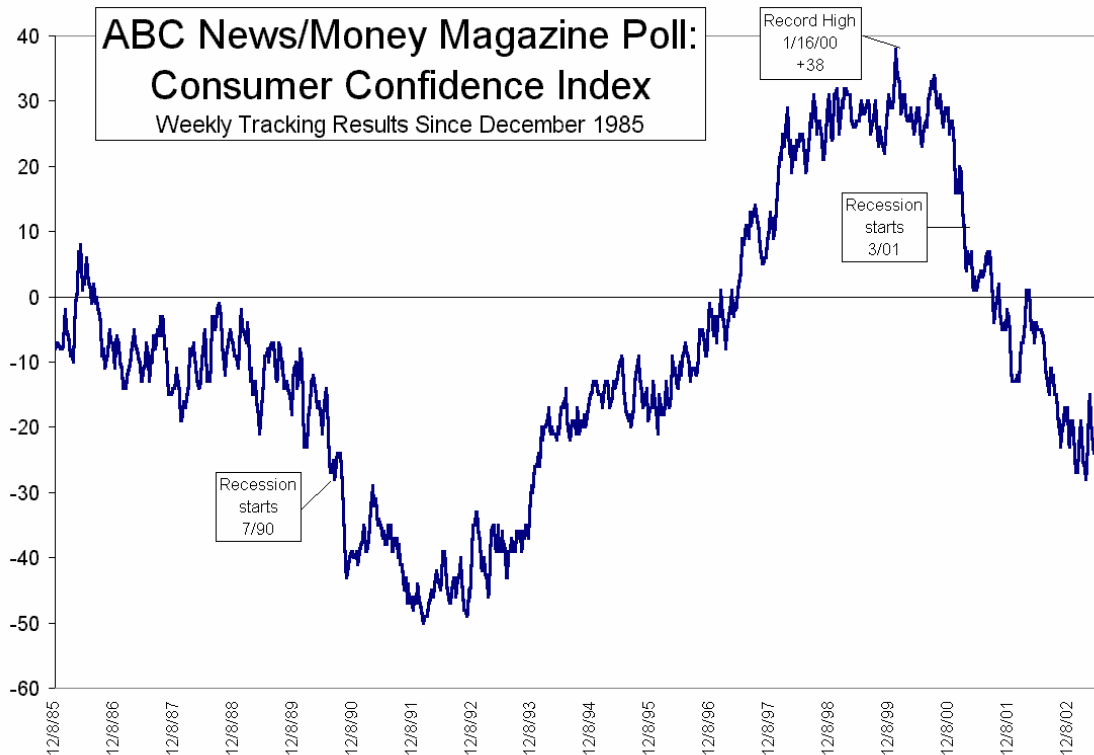


ABC News/Money magazine poll					
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	28%	27	31	21	41
Buying climate	39	37	39	32	39
Personal finances	52	54	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-21	-21	-15	-28	-9

**EXPECTATIONS** – Expectations, measured separately, remain fairly weak: Thirty-seven percent of Americans say the economy’s getting worse, while just 20 percent think it’s improving. But it was far worse early last spring as the country approached war with Iraq.

	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	Difference (better-worse)
7/20/03	20	37	42	-17
6/15/03	25	33	43	- 8
5/11/03	22	36	41	-14
4/13/03	20	37	43	-17
3/16/03	9	52	39	-43

**TREND** – At -21, the index is almost the same as its 2003 average, -22. By contrast it averaged -11 in 2002, +4 in 2001 and +29 in 2000, its best year on average. Indeed it hasn’t been this weak since 1994, when it averaged -19. In its worst year, 1992, it averaged -44.

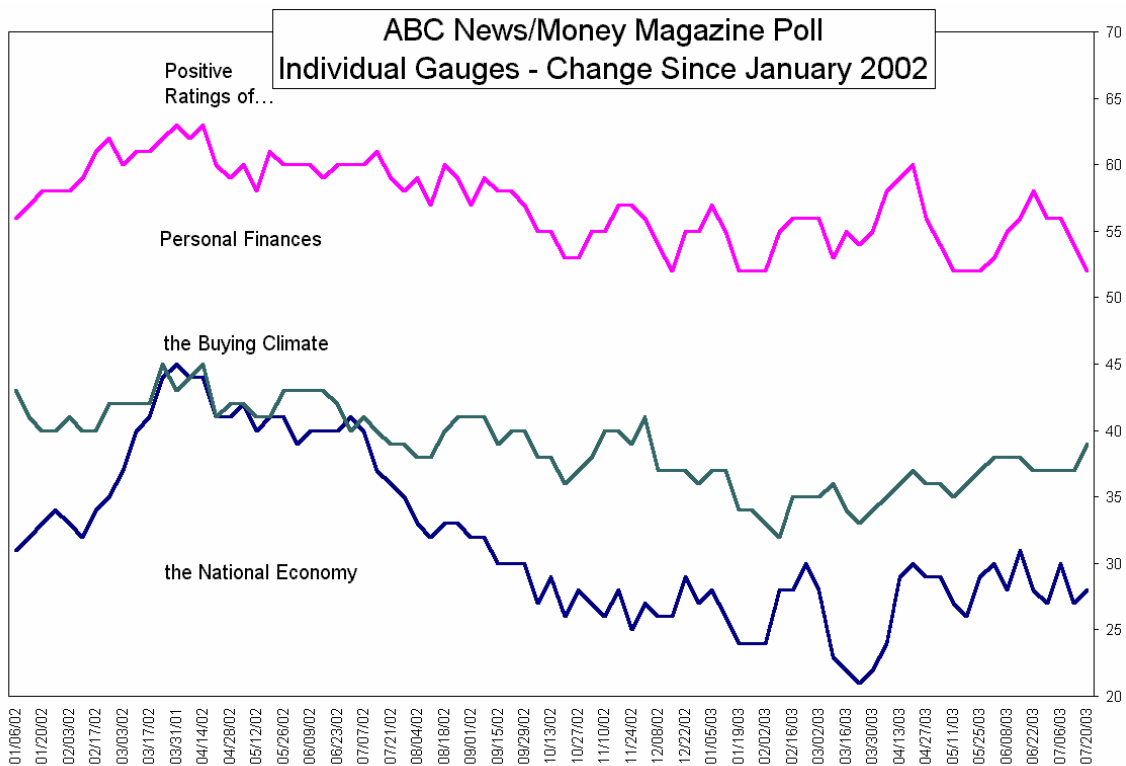


ABC/Money Index

Today	-21	
Recent low	-28	March 2003
Recent high	+1	March, April 2002
2003 average	-22	To date
2002 average	-11	
2001 average	+4	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-9	

GROUPS – Confidence, as usual, is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +6 among people in higher-income households compared to -51 in the lowest. It's -15 among whites compared with -59 among blacks; -13 among men but -27 among women; and +10 among Republicans, while -26 among independents and -37 among Democrats.

The index is better in the West (-15) and Midwest (-17). It's -29 in the Northeast and -21 in the South.



Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Twenty-eight percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 27 percent last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992. For the second



GENERAL POPULATION:

Overall Index	-21	-21	-18	-15	-11	-11	-28	-19
State of Economy	-44	-46	-44	-40	-29	-29	-58	-44
Personal Finances	4	8	16	20	17	20	4	11
Buying Climate	-22	-26	-26	-26	-21	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	-13	-14	-7	-9	-5	-2	-19	-11
Women	-27	-28	-27	-20	-16	-14	-38	-26
Age:								
18 - 34	-21	-17	-15	-5	-7	2	-25	-13
35 - 44	-26	-26	-18	-20	-7	-6	-31	-19
45 - 54	-18	-24	-17	-26	-13	0	-41	-24
55 - 64	-12	-18	-20	-16	-8	-8	-39	-21
65 +	-22	-23	-20	-16	-19	-14	-36	-25
Income:								
Under \$15K	-51	-55	-66	-44	-44	-26	-67	-49
\$15K To \$24.9K	-46	-34	-46	-46	-25	-22	-55	-39
\$25K To \$39.9K	-38	-43	-21	-21	-12	-9	-49	-29
\$40K To \$49.9K	-14	-9	-15	-14	7	7	-32	-16
Over \$50K	6	6	13	7	2	15	-15	3
Region:								
Northeast	-29	-28	-27	-25	-16	-11	-38	-25
Midwest	-17	-20	-24	-12	-18	-6	-34	-19
South	-21	-19	-9	-11	-7	-7	-29	-20
West	-15	-22	-15	-16	-4	9	-34	-14
Race:								
White	-15	-15	-15	-9	-6	-6	-23	-16
Black	-59	-54	-38	-46	-44	-21	-60	-41
Politics:								
Republican	10	7	13	8	11	15	-3	7
Democrat	-37	-37	-28	-37	-25	-23	-46	-35
Independent	-26	-24	-23	-15	-13	-9	-38	-23
Education:								
< High School	-49	-56	-40	-32	-24	-18	-59	-41
High Sch. Grad.	-19	-19	-20	-20	-20	-11	-40	-24
College +	-12	-12	-9	-5	0	0	-18	-8
Home:								
Own	-14	-15	-14	-9	-7	-7	-24	-15
Rent	-42	-43	-27	-31	-19	-9	-43	-29
Marital Status:								
Single	-33	-33	-23	-12	-12	1	-33	-16
Married	-15	-15	-10	-14	-6	-6	-27	-15
Sep/Wid/Div	-31	-36	-35	-21	-24	-21	-52	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-10	-12	-7	-9	-5	-4	-20	-12
Part-Time	-34	-36	-34	-19	-14	3	-40	-22
Not Employed	-31	-31	-26	-21	-19	-19	-40	-29

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	No Opinion
7/20/03	20	37	42	1
6/15/03	25	33	43	0
5/11/03	22	36	41	0
4/13/03	20	37	43	0

3/16/03	9	52	39	0
2/16/03	20	44	36	0
1/19/03	19	43	37	0
12/29/02	16	44	39	1
12/1/02	21	37	42	1
11/3/02	17	38	44	0
10/6/02	14	48	37	1
9/1/02	19	36	44	1
8/4/02	21	43	34	0

Call for full trend.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*