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## News Release

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**84% U.S. CONSUMERS ARE CONFIDENT IN THEIR OWN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS,  
NIELSEN REPORTS**

**Consumer Sentiment Study Also Finds That the Public Expects  
the Economy to Worsen**

NEW YORK, NY – OCTOBER 20, 2008 – As the nation's current financial crisis continues to unfold, the Nielsen Company found that nearly 84 percent of consumers are just as confident, or more so, in their primary financial institution as they were six months ago, and that 95 percent consider the financial assets at their primary bank to be relatively safe.

In a consumer sentiment study by Nielsen Claritas, Nielsen's leading marketing information source, almost 70 percent of consumers also still remain highly concerned over the country's economic woes and nearly as many – about 60 percent – believe the economy will worsen over the next six months.

"With the recent turbulence of the financial markets, it is not surprising that the public is both concerned and pessimistic about the overall economy, but when it comes to their personal situation they have more confidence in their own financial institutions than you might expect," said Nielsen Claritas Vice President Jane Crossan. "This sentiment, however, is encouraging and lends belief that consumers feel the economy tends to be cyclical and that markets will rebound," she added.

Most consumers surveyed are also not planning to make large scale changes to their current banking investments or relationships, at least not in the short term, with 88 percent saying they plan to maintain the status quo. This viewpoint, though, varies based on age, with older consumers less likely to change.

The study showed that consumers were less confident in certain types of banks, but the variability in the survey was not tied to the type or size of institution as much as to the specific institution and the consumer's level of confidence with that institution.

"It was not big versus small or national versus regional, but more about how the consumer felt their particular financial institution performed," said Crossan.

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Consumers are also responding to the financial crisis by tightening their belts. The study showed:

- 71 percent say they have been or are planning to eat less at restaurants
- 69 percent have or will cut back on driving
- 61 percent have or plan to postpone major purchases
- 61 percent did, or expect to, limit leisure travel

The crisis has also affected consumers in other ways, for example:

- 25 percent of the consumers surveyed said they have been affected by significant losses in retirement savings. The loss of retirement savings is more prevalent among consumers 55-plus at 29 percent.
- 19 percent indicated they have increased credit card debt. Increased credit card debt is even more pronounced among younger consumers at 25 percent for those 18-34 years old.

The study's results are based on re-contacting 3,000 Nielsen Claritas Market Audit<sup>®</sup> survey respondents via the Internet. Nielsen Claritas Market Audit is the nation's largest, syndicated database of household financial behavior. It is a comprehensive analysis of what financial products are used, which households use them, what their balances are, and where they have their accounts. The annual survey is conducted among more than 75,000 U.S. households.

Proportion results based on the entire re-contact sample have a maximum margin of error of 1.8 percent with a 95 percent confidence level. As with all opinion polls, sampling error and question wording can introduce additional error or bias into the findings.

#### **About The Nielsen Company**

The Nielsen Company is a global information and media company with leading market positions in marketing and consumer information, television and other media measurement, online intelligence, mobile measurement, trade shows and business publications (Billboard, The Hollywood Reporter, Adweek). The privately held company is active in more than 100 countries, with headquarters in New York, USA. For more information, please visit, [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com).