

## US marriages slump to record low



Barely half of Americans - a record low - are currently married, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of Census data.

Just 51% of adult Americans are married, compared with 72% in 1960.

The median age of first marriage has also hit a new high, of 26.5 for brides and 28.7 for grooms.

Pew said the number of adults co-habiting, single-person households and single parents had meanwhile increased in recent decades.

The study found that 20% of adults today aged 18 to 29 are married, compared with 59% in 1960.

It is unclear whether they are delaying matrimony or abandoning it altogether.

The analysis also found the number of new marriages in the US had declined by five percentage points between 2009-10.

This may not necessarily have been caused by the economic downturn, since a similar trend has continued in Europe regardless of business cycles.

Pew, a nonpartisan think tank and polling organisation, found the percentage of those Americans who have been married at least once had declined as well - 72% in 2010, from 85% in 1960.

If the trend persists, in a few years less than half of Americans will be married, Pew said.

While Pew did not study reasons for the trend, it noted that the marriage rate for college-educated adults declined "far less" than among the less-educated.

A Pew survey in 2010 found that four out of 10 Americans believed marriage was becoming obsolete, but that 61% people who had never married would like to do so someday.