Web 2.0: an International Conference

Dr Darren G. Lilleker (University of Bournemouth) (dlilleker@bournemouth.ac.uk)

Nigel Jackson (University of Plymouth) (nigel.jackson@plymouth.ac.uk)

Politicians and Web 2.0: the current bandwagon or changing the mindset?

Abstract

The Internet's history can be traced back to at least the 1960s (Abbate 1999). Although there have been a variety of terms used such as superhighway, cyberspace and cyberway, there was general agreement that the Internet was a single concept. However, O'Reilly (2005) has suggested that the Internet can be divided into two separate approaches: Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. This distinction reflects a growing frustration with how elites have used web technologies. O'Reilly suggests that Web 2.0 is more participative in nature, and therefore in terms of political discourse inherently encourages bottom-up communication. This paper will define Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, the differences between them and how they are and can be used within a political communication context. The increasing move towards professionalism (Negrine 2007) encourages political elites to seek to use new technologies to gain an edge. However, when used by political elites does Web 2.0 reflect technological, psychological or no change? The research data collected will focus on how political elites in the UK (political parties and party leaders) have sought to use Web 2.0 applications to identify whether Web 2.0 is a progression of Web 1.0, or something fundamentally and conceptually different? We will consider whether the content political elites use in their Web 2.0 applications is shovelware and more appropriate for Web 1.0, so considering whether Web 2.0 is something which only the disenfranchised can use? The analysis of political elite's use of Web 2.0 features will determine how effectively these elites are using Web 2.0 and whether we are viewing a shift in the way politicians communicate, or whether the use of tools from Facebook to YouTube represents a mere fad more likely to disappear than become entrenched in practice.

Keywords

Political communication; representation; informational democracy; communities of practice.

Politicians and Web 2.0: the current bandwagon or changing the mindset?

Introduction

It is commonplace to consider that the internet, as it became a medium used by a critical mass of western societies, has revolutionised the way in which people communicate with one another, and with corporate bodies and political organisations. Factors that once limited communication, such as state boundaries, physical distance, time differences or access to technology are reducing and facilitating greater interaction across the boundaries of space, state and time with the potential to redress social and education inequalities (Youngs, 2007). While focus is often at the macro, global level, so discussing the potential impact of an electronic, global world economy "integrated through information systems and technology rather than organisational hierarchies" (Kobrin, 1998: 362); lesser attention is paid to the impact at the level of the individual user. Arguably the current revolution in terms of individual internet use is facilitated by Web 2.0, the key features of which allow, although they may not encourage, greater control over the way individuals communicate, the means of communication and what information is accessed, when and where. Tim O'Reilly (2005) thus argues that Web 2.0 has created an "architecture of participation" which facilitates co-production of information, social networking and offers spaces for individuals to interact for a range of reasons. While there seems little suggestion of this undermining capitalist economics, as left-wing radicals suggest, particularly given the strong corporate presence within Web 2.0 tools, there is a real potential for the creation of not one but several issue and interest based public spheres that can interact with one another and so create the informational democracy Manuel Castells once viewed as only a distant possibility (Castells, 1996: 353).

To interact with the participants utilising Web 2.0 architecture, one almost by definition has to participate. Thus one finds business models and strategies of communication being adapted to incorporate Web 2.0 tools. However, to participate, an organisation wishing to interact with online communities must also adapt to the fundamental shift in thinking demanded by Web 2.0; as Birdsall notes, "A build it and they will come ethos" a thinking that dominated the move to internet based communication over the decade 1995-2005, "is being replaced by one of they will come and build it" (Birdsall, 2007). This automatically implies a change in the power structures and reinforcing Birdsall's conclusion that "The Web is not only a social

creation, as Berners-Lee asserts, it is about power and politics". Thus we find there are two distinct elements at play when considering the social impact of Web 2.0; firstly the concept of an architecture of participation creating an informational democracy from below; secondly the demand for a shift in organisational thinking in terms of wishing to be an equal, non-elite, partner within that democratic structure. The question is whether these two competing forces can actually be reconciled.

It is perhaps politicians who face this problem most within postmodern society. While big brands continue to have a following, though their fortunes and popularity can wax and wane, and political issue and pressure groups can find large followings using social media; traditional electoral politics often appears to be largely off the radar of those people most likely to engage with Web 2.0 tools. However, electoral politics may well be the one aspect of civic life that should welcome the creation of the architecture of participation and offer those same fundamentals as O'Reilly (2005) equates to Web 2.0: a rich user experience, trusting users as co-developers, and harnessing the wisdom of crowds. This may be the factor that has drawn politicians to use social media sites such as Bebo, MySpace and Facebook, create interactive websites, post videos to YouTube and develop their own weblog; alternatively, as we pose in the title, politicians may be jumping onto a bandwagon with little sense of where it may take them. Certainly politicians were criticised for jumping on to the website bandwagon without having a clear communication strategy for their use (Ward and Gibson 1998, Jackson 2003). This paper seeks to make an initial exploration of Web 2.0 tool use by elected politicians; our explicit aim is to assess the extent to which the features of Web 2.0 are embraced and encouraged or whether politicians are fundamentally using a Web 2.0 tool to do the job of a Web 1.0 website because it is an available space to put information. Our findings will assess the potential for re-engagement between politicians and Web 2.0 participants based on the notion of communities of practice (Wenger, 1991). This theory, previously applied to learning but equally applicable to information gathering and gaining political knowledge, posits that the rules of participation within a community, such as Facebook users, will shape responses to non-individual users such as politicians, political organisations or parties and consumer brands when they attempt to enter a community. Hence we will build a specific set of rules that apply to the use of Web 2.0 and then assess how closely elected politicians adhere to these rules.

This paper firstly explores the concepts related to the use of Web 2.0 tools, in particular highlighting the conceptual differences with Web 1.0, in order to define the practice of Web 2.0 communities; we then move to discuss why Web 2.0 could offer value for political communicators; following the development of our conceptual framework the paper offers an outline methodology for the study of politician's use of Web 2.0 prior to comparing community practice with politician's practice in order to draw our conclusions.

Web 1.0 versus Web 2.0

Due to the fast moving nature of technological innovation, every development is greeted with a fanfare and predictions of its revolutionary potential (Norris 2001). This has particularly been the case with information and communication technology or digital technology. Since the shift in use of the internet from being a private tool for communication within the U.S. defence department to a resource connecting organisations and individuals across the globe, academics, business and political strategists have attempted to assess its effects and potential (Winston 1998, Abbate 1999). As Downes and Mui state in their discussion of how businesses can harness cyberspace: "The goal of developing a digital strategy is to turn anxiety into advantage, by replacing current planning and strategic activities with new ones better suited to a business environment populated by killer apps" (Downes & Mui, 2000:11). The search for the killer application (or app) has driven individuals and organisations to explore the potential of every technological development and the ICT industry to continually innovate to match demand. It is within this context that Web 2.0 was conceived and has maybe placed it in a position to replace Web 1.0.

The definition that has become popularised, if somewhat vague and technological, is offered by Tim O'Reilly

> Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices: Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation' and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences (O'Reilly, 2005).

Therefore the key features of Web 2.0 are the ability to build networks that connect individuals and organisations within a community where information is shared and adapted and updated by all members of the community who choose to participate. From an organisational perspective there is talk of the democratisation of information. Whereas within the context of Web 1.0 information was made available to a broader audience; "The idea [of Web 2.0] is to free data from corporate control and allow anyone to assemble and locate content to meet their own needs" (Barsky, 2006a: 7). While Barksy's first article deals solely with the use of really simply syndication, or RSS feeds, which allow users to select the information they access, when it is accessed and choose the information source, his work progresses to talk of weblogs (online diaries) and podcasting to suggest that: "Web 2.0 is about the more human aspects of interactivity on the Web" (Barsky, 2006b: 33). This builds on a more user focused definition of the key aspects of Web 2.0, that it is: "about conversations, interpersonal networking, personalisation and individualism" (Abram, 2005: 44). This definition suggests that those who choose to participate can talk to whoever they like and create a network based on any combination of shared interests and ideals while also being whoever they like and presenting themselves in whichever way they would like to be perceived by those who interface with them.

We thus are offered the distinction that while Web 1.0 was focused on its benefits for commercial organisations, and its ability to transmit information to a wide audience, "Web 2.0 is almost all about people" (Barsky & Purdon, 2006: 65); this informational democracy is not about transparency and availability of information but about the production and sharing of ideas. Web 2.0 allows users to generate and share content with a virtual community "structured to delineate and build on relationships members have with each other by virtue of their being part of that community" (Barsky & Purdon, 2006: 65). The communities thus encourage participation by facilitating "group interaction in a space where individuals can participate, socialize, and set social norms" (Cho, 2007: 19). The social norms draw on the notion of communities of practice. The virtual communities, be they centred upon particular websites, forums or on Web 2.0 itself, develop codes of behaviour that denote true participation, acceptance and inclusion within the community: commonly codes of behaviour centre upon the concepts of collaboration, conversation and interaction leading to shared ownership of anything produced by the community (Barsky & Cho, 2007: 59). Thus then we find that the social norms neatly dovetail with the notion that Web 2.0 participants are a community of practice, while usage of tools may not be restricted, acceptance into a

community may be on the grounds of the extent to which the rules are adhered to or contravened. However, at this stage it is also useful to point out that Web 2.0 poses a problem for organisations; the nature of the philosophy of Web 2.0 means it is very difficult to promote products or individuals within Web 2.0 communities. Thus it may be the case that, at least at the moment, Web 1.0 and 2.0 may co-exist fulfilling distinct communication functions; alternatively there may be some blurring of the 1.0/2.0 boundaries as the philosophy relating to the weblog is used within a website to enable some form of two-way communication alongside promoting the host. However, we get the sense that literature indicates that interactivity should be goal of organisations aiming to build relationships with its consumers, supporters and message audiences (Chaffey et al. 2006, Van Dijk 2006) and this may be particularly the case for electoral political organisations who seek to engage with potential voters.

However interactivity, and enabling two-way or three-way conversation, suggests not only will a conversation take place but that all parties that participate can be influenced. This means that the traditional top-down direction of political communication from parties and government to voters and citizens is replaced by a more horizontal style of communication without a hierarchy. This raises questions both surrounding the tenability and desirability of such a shift in both behaviour and philosophy for a political party. Ferber et al. (2007) raise the question of whether the internet generally offers "opportunities for thoughtful [public] discourse that could provide direction for delegate-style legislators or persuasive argument that might affect the judgement of trustees" (p. 392); in other words does the internet facilitate a shift in power? They conclude that, theoretically, it will produce informed opinion and well-founded arguments… an old diehard trustee-legislator would be hard-pressed simply to dismiss" (p. 399); thus power relations are to be revolutionised within a truly interactive, participatory, informational democracy facilitated through Web 2.0 tools. However there are caveats to this argument and in particular whether such tools are likely to be an embedded feature of all party communication at every level.

It has been suggested within political marketing literature, which is predicated on the notion that party behaviour will be driven by the opinions and attitudes of voter segments whose support the party requires (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005; Lilleker et al. 2006), that this political marketing orientation is most appropriate for opposition parties. Governing parties would be least able to cope with an ongoing dialogue across all areas of policy unless at a very early stage of development, and even then

consultation will be weighted towards the input of professionals and experts not necessarily the general public. Opposition parties have more opportunity to consult in the formation of a manifesto while minor parties (those with little elected representation) or fringe parties (parties who stand for election but fail to make any impact) have the freedom to use interactivity and build a dialogue with their supporters which can contribute to policy design, particularly as there is little chance of that policy being delivered. While the Burkean tradition of MPs as trustees is challenged, it is also recognised that governance cannot just centre on open debate; thus there must be limits to the extent of consultation and interactive dialogue based on the function of communication and the position of the organisation. Therefore, as with any organisation or individual that simply wishes to inform, the one-way nature of the website or email that is associated with Web 1.0, where the organisation is fully in control of the message and its reception and does not seek feedback, may still be seen as relevant for political communication. Alternatively society may well demand access to power, not just information (Dyson et al, 1994; Grossman, 1995; Ferber et al. 2007); however are the uses of Web 2.0 tools meant to offer real interactivity that allows all parties to be influenced or are they used purely to convey the impression of seeking a dialogic relationship with voters. In effect the 'presence' of parties on the internet can act as a safety valve against a wave of public demand for the ability to interact and criticisms of being isolated and out of touch with society. The questions raised here lead us, prior to an exploratory analysis of online political communication, and in particular political ventures into Web 2.0 communities, to explore why political communicators may want to co-produce content and participate within such communities.

Political Communication and the need for interactivity

Early predictions on the potential that the online environment offered to political parties, governments and candidates for election were highly optimistic (Morris 2003, Somner 2003). However, despite pivotal moments when utilisation of online tools appeared to level the electoral playing field, such as the election of former wrestler Jesse Ventura as Governor of Minnesota in 1998 or the ability of Howard Dean to become frontrunner in the 2003 Democratic nominations due to his online fundraising, optimism has waned. Instead of facilitating one-to-one communication between the represented and their representative, it has largely only enhanced communication between parties and supporters as well as the ability to self-publicise activities to the media. While the use of email and websites was quickly incorporated in the political communication tool-kit, and e-newsletters were used by parties

to keep relationships warm (Jackson and Lilleker 2007), there is little evidence to suggest that such tools encouraged floating voters or disengaged voter segments to become more interested in politics or elections.

Perhaps this is unsurprising given the scale of disconnection within many modern democratic societies. Party membership has fallen dramatically over the last four decades (Scarrow, 2000), as has any sense of party loyalty or identification (Stoker, 2006, p. 34). While this does not suggest a lack of interest in politics, or indeed that individuals can no longer be mobilised by major political events; however, and as Stoker notes, "politics is an *ad hoc* activity from which people tune in or tune out according to the circumstances that are confronting them" (Stoker, 2006, p. 35). Elections, campaigning and day-to-day politics and its attendant communication seem unlikely to draw significant interest or encourage greater participation. In simple terms, Stoker's fear that "people perceive the formal system of politics is no longer worth engaging with" may well be a reality that is entrenching itself within society.

One solution offered by Stoker is the creation of a new civic arena (Stoker, 2006, pp. 182-200) and implicitly this involves harnessing new technology to promote and enhance democracy. In many ways this is an obvious conclusion given the weight of work on the facilitation of a new and revived public sphere that is offered via the internet (Cooke 2007, Dahlberg 2007). It is the notion of the internet as enabling the creation of an interactional community (Slevin, 2000) that is of most interest to considerations of the way in which the internet may change political communication. Gillian Youngs (2001) talks of the internet encouraging diverse forms of interactivity and the breaking down of barriers for participation and connectivity (Youngs, 2007). Such evidence links well to those early predictions that the internet "would herald a new era of teledemocracy, political activism and a reinstatement of the collective will into public affairs" (Rushkoff, 2003, p. 51). This suggests that Web 2.0 potentially provides the means for previously disenfranchised groups to have a voice, for example, allowing pressure groups to punch above their weight due to gaining the attention of the public and media through strategic use of the internet. However, this suggestion needs the caveat that offering the potential does not equate to actual use, and particularly not by all the disenfranchised. In reality some may choose Web 2.0 for political participation while others may not and, if they wish to participate at all, will choose how to use the tools they are comfortable with to gain voice.

At the heart of discussions on re-engaging the individual with politics is the notion of interaction. The perceptual disconnection is arguably based on the perceived proximity between the political elite and the mass electorate; in the UK the Westminster village is viewed as an insular community that is remote from the concerns of people's everyday lives. The fact that the internet is argued to facilitate the breaking down of barriers imposed by geography or temporality, means ICT is often heralded as the way forward for political communication. Research on interactivity suggests that conversations lead to relational exchanges and the building of communities (MacDonald, 2003), particularly when interaction is founded upon multi-directional communication between multiple participants where control and power is shared among users. It is these arguments that lead some (Coleman 2005) to suggest that a new participatory and deliberative democracy can be established around the concepts of e-representation and e-democracy.
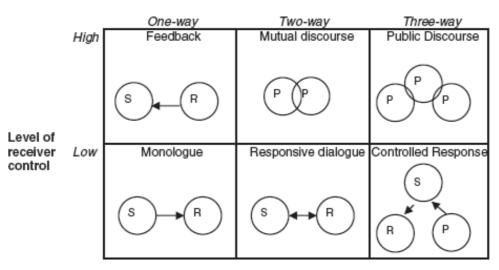
However, rather than transforming electoral politics and intra-state democracies, it is global political activism that has most benefited from new information and communication technology. Jayne Rodgers' (2003) study demonstrates the importance of connectivity to activist groups working on campaigns against genetically modified food and the placement of missile defence installations. Rodgers also demonstrates that the political activism that is encouraged by the internet is increasingly global and a challenge to state boundaries, a point reinforced by Youngs' work (2007), thus arguably changing the nature of politics as well as the nature and focus of activists as they adopt a more global focus (Pickerill, 2001). Thus it is suggested that the internet can have a transformative effect on politics, its organisation, the modes and nature of participation (Bennett, 2003).

The key question, however, is whether the internet can have this transformative role within the sphere of national electoral politics, and can that transformation include a reinvigorated engagement and connectedness between the elected political sphere and the mass of society? It is argued that we live in an era where connectedness is as much governed by emotional reactions, such as feelings of proximity or authenticity, as much as rational evaluations (Richards, 2007, pp. 93-106). However perceptions built from mediated performances are at best peripheral (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996, pp. 255-262), the communication most likely to have an impact on attitudes is face-to-face, relevant to the individual, tailored to their needs and concerns and shaped as a dialogue rather than a monologue. For example, Mutz (2001) suggests that face-to-face interaction is the most effective, a gold standard, because of the use of non-verbal cues (see also Green & Gerber, 2004, pp. 34-8). Despite the best intentions of

an electoral candidate, standing to represent the smallest geographic area, it would be impossible to meet these communication standards; however, it is these standards that can in some way be met by the Web 2.0 environment.

Central to thinking on the potential of the internet for enhancing democracy is the notion of interactivity, defined as "the degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many), both synchronously and asynchronously, and participate in reciprocal message exchanges (third-order dependency). With regard to human users, it additionally refers to their ability to perceive the experience as a simulation of interpersonal communication and increase their awareness of telepresence" (Kiousis 2002: 372). Linking to perceived best practice in public relations (Grunig and Grunig, 1992), Kiousis highlights the centrality of the conversation to online interactivity. Developments of these facets of interactivity online have since allowed the creation of a model that can be used as an analytical tool for understanding the aims of the communicator and receiver (McMillan, 2002) and more recently the promotion of the idea of participants (Fober, Foltz and Pugliese, 2007); see figure 1.

Figure 1: Six-part model of Cyber Interactivity

Web 2.0 tools can be used to allow both low and high levels of receiver control and well as one-way, two-way and multi-directional communication; though perhaps they lend themselves better to high receiver control and the notion of public discourse among participants. The problem for political communication is that historically it has been more
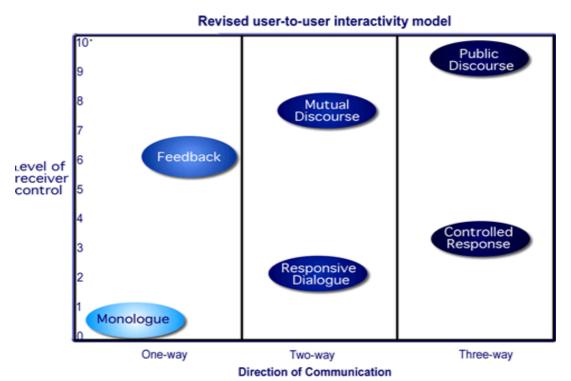
about information provision and persuasive communication than public dialogue within a chaotic open-access environment. The reason is the purpose that drives political communication. It is an accepted notion that "as political parties continue to adapt to changing circumstances – declining members, new leaders, election defeats – or to incorporate new technologies of communication or new persuasion and communication practices, they become transformed, and transform themselves, into vehicles geared up for electoral success" (Negrine, 2007, p. 27). It is surely the case then that parties and candidates are, in the process of becoming geared up for electoral success, harnessing Web 2.0 tools to aid that process. However, a broader question surrounds whether they are transforming themselves in terms of adapting to the rules of the Web 2.0 user community in order to reap the benefits. This research specifically enquires whether such a transformation is taking place, or whether the web 2.0 tools are actually being used for web 1.0 purposes, if the latter predominates it is then worth enquiring whether the practice of the web 2.0 communities can accommodate the use of the community's tools for electoral purposes.

Methodology

Political parties are using a range of electronic communication tools. Those associated with Web 1.0 such as websites and email; Web 2.0 tools such as weblogs and social networking; as well as tools that can be described as hybrid tools, e-newsletters, YouTube or bespoke online video hosting or online television channels. Using major, minor and fringe [1] political parties and their leaders in Britain as a case study, this research will assess the extent to which the normal practice associated with Web 2.0 in relation to a particular electronic communication tool is adhered to or not. This will use an adaptation of content and discourse analysis [2], so looking not solely whether mechanisms are present but at the use of the mechanisms and the extent to which language encourages interaction. While the proposed technique offers a mixture of the quantitative and qualitative, so not simply counting but also assessing the use of language, for ease of analysis and to facilitate a simple scaling of data, the output will be quantitative.

The use of tools will be assessed in relation to the Ferber, Foltz and Pugliese 2007 six-part model of cyber-interactivity as operationalised by Malagon (2008) in figure 2. Using this model it is possible to not only assess where within the six part model any given piece of internet communication rests, but also assess the extent across the scale of receiver control. In

essence, by linking the various elements of Web 2.0 to the central concept of receiver control one can gain a sense of how political communication adheres to the rules of the Web 2.0 user community. The object is to infer whether political communication within a Web 2.0 environment is likely to be overlooked, and so be unsuccessful, due to its adherence to the Web 1.0 style and rules. However, in scaling the degree of interactivity and user and receiver control we also intend to offer some indications of the nature of online political communication, the way that specific tools are used, and some indications of the philosophy behind the communications strategy. Specifically we would like to build some testable assumptions on whether political communicators are simply trying to exploit all communication channels for communication purposes, or whether there is a shift in the nature of political communication as a result of employing Web 2.0 tools.

Figure 2: Operational Model for Web 2.0 analysis

This exploratory research is designed to answer four specific questions:

1. To what extent electoral party political communicators are using the range of available online communication tools;

2. To what extent political communicators are encouraging interaction and public input and participation through their online communicational presence;

3. To ascertain whether we can observe a qualitative or quantitative shift in communication strategy;

4. To evaluate whether Web 2.0 can, in reality, offer the potential for political communicators that the literature suggests and, if so, if it is political communication or the Web 1.0 and 2.0 that is being adapted and transformed.

Using Web 2.0 tools: assessing the participatory architecture

It is firstly important to demonstrate that political parties and their leaders have a significant presence within social networking websites additionally to them using web 2.0 tools within their bespoke websites and e-communication. While parties are not equally represented, we find that of the three major parties the Conservative Party have presences on Bebo and Facebook; Labour offer the same as well as having a profile on MySpace and a YouTube user page; the Liberal Democrats offer Bebo, Facebook and YouTube pages while both they and the Conservatives offer Facebook applications that allow supporters to have a box on their profiles that show party videos and messages. Gordon Brown and David Cameron, respectively Labour and Conservative leaders, have a fansite on Facebook for supporters to sign up to [Brown had 24 fans prior to deletion of the page; Cameron has 1,122 though this was set up by Mike Rouse as an experiment and was not included in the analysis]; in contrast Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg has a personal profile as did his predecessor Sir Menzies Campbell. Minor parties similarly attempt to exploit the interactivity offered by social networking sites: Respect are mainly represented through leader and sole MP George Galloway who has sites across Facebook and MySpace; welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru have Facebook and YouTube profiles; while their Scottish counterparts, (SNP), appear on Bebo, Facebook and MySpace. As a percentage of the overall number, fringe parties are least represented; which is perhaps surprising as such sites offer the potential to redress the imbalance in media exposure. However, the British National Party offer Bebo, Facebook, MySpace and YouTube profiles; leader Nick Griffin also has a Facebook profile; the Communist Party of Great Britain appear on Facebook and MySpace; as do the English Democrat Party and the Green Party; the Monster Raving Loony Party have a Facebook profile and have the most amount of friends [415]; the Scottish Socialist Party appear on Bebo, Facebook and MySpace while the UK Independence Party have a profile on all three sites and offer two YouTube sites, one dedicated to the party's youth supporters.

Despite the level of presence, and adaptation of party communication to Web 2.0, the range of online communication tools used is fairly narrow, and table 1 shows that of the twenty features tested only seven were present in at least 50% of the sample. However, the nature of these seven features indicates that the 'architecture of participation' which O'Reilly (2005) highlighted is present. Six of these seven features specifically offer visitors the opportunity to contribute to the content of the site. For example, the two most popular features 'Ability of all visitors to share information' (88.9%) and 'Ability of all visitors to update information' (84.4%) encourage the visitor to participate. The structural basis for Castells's informational democracy appears to be in place.

Table 1: Frequency of use of Web 2.0 tools and features on party/party leader websites and social network profiles

Feature	Number using feature	%
Contact details	18	40
Search Engine	0	0
Enmeshing	21	46.7
Interactive navigation aids (online help)	10	22.2
Questionnaires	2	4.4
Visitor initiated questionnaires	0	0
Polls	4	8.9
Visitor initiated polls	0	0
Petitions	1	2.2
Flickr	13	28.9
RSS feeds	4	8.9
Twitter	2	4.4
Videos uploaded	28	62.2
Visitors can upload material	33	73.3
Use of networks	24	53.3
Use of fora	35	77.8
Ability of all visitors to share information	40	88.9
Ability of all visitors to update information	38	84.4
Private Conversation	19	42.2
Public Conversations	23	51.1

An assessment of some of the less frequent responses can provide an indication of the limitations under which political parties and party leaders are operating when they venture into Web 2.0. The absence or low level of responses for the presence of opinion polls, petitions and questionnaires probably reflects resource based issues, though in an era of political marketing one would think that some gauge of the opinion of those interested in the party may be seen as invaluable. However, these methods of gaining feedback and

interaction are quite difficult to achieve technically on social networking sites. Only those parties with higher levels of skills and resources might be able to use these tools. The full range of Web 2.0, therefore, is not necessarily available to all political parties.

Concerns of site navigation do not appear to be a major issue. Of the three features which might help the visitor find their way around a site none have a search engine, 22.2% offer interactive navigation aids and 46.7% enmeshing [3] their sites. This might adversely affect the visitor experience if they find it difficult to understand what is going on, however this limited number of responses reflects the fact that social networking sites have a single profile page which can be as simple or as complex as the host requires and so such tools are not easily available within the template.

Table 2: Frequency of use of Web 2.0 tools and features on party/party leader websites and social network profiles by party type

Feature	Fringe Parties using feature (%)	Minor Parties using feature (%) n=17	Major Parties using feature (%) n = 15
Contact details	6 (42.2)	8 (47.1)	5 (33.3)
Search Engine	0 (0)	0	0
Enmeshing	3 (23.1)	7 (41.2)	10 (66.7)
Interactive navigation aids (online help)	2 (15.4)	4 (23.5)	5 (33.3)
Questionnaires	0	0	2 (13.3)
Visitor initiated questionnaires	0	0	0
Polls	2 (15.4)	1 (5.9)	2 (13.3)
Visitor initiated polls	0	0	0
Petitions	0	0	1 (6.7)
Flickr	2 (15.4)	7 (41.2)	3 (20)
RSS feeds	0	2 (11.8)	2 (13.3)
Twitter	0	1 (5.9)	1 (6.7)
Videos uploaded	7 (53.8)	11 (64.7)	10 (66.7)
Visitors can upload material	10 (76.9)	12 (70.6)	10 (66.7)
Use of networks	9 (69.2)	11 (64.7)	7 (46.7)
Use of fora	9 (69.2)	15 (88.2)	11 (73.3)
Ability of all visitors to share information	11 (84.6)	16 (94.1)	12 (80)
Ability of all visitors to update information	10 (76.9)	14 (82.4)	12 (80)
Private Conversation	4 (30.8)	10 (58.8)	6 (40)
Public Conversations	6 (46.2)	9 (52.9)	6 (40)

The presence of the 'architecture of participation' seems to have some relationship to party type, indicating that the size and nature of a party affects the use of Web 2.0 tools. Table 2 shows that minor parties are the most likely to offer those features identified by O'Reilly (2005) as key for offering a Web 2.0 environment. Out of the top seven features of this architecture, minor parties are the most likely to have a feature four times, fringe twice and major once. Fringe and minor parties, with limited access to traditional media, may have a greater need to engage visitors in the hope of informing and persuading them. The fact that it is the former who have more resources than fringe, may explain their greater use of Web 2.0 presence for this purpose; however one could expect those with least access to the media and public would attempt to exploit free channels to a far greater extent.

There is a difference in party type on the presence of some features which appears to be the result of how technically difficult, or easy, such features are to provide. The minor and fringe parties are more likely to use those features which are technically easier to offer on social networking sites. However, the more technically difficult features such as petitions, questionnaires, opinion polls and RSS are more likely to be provided by the major parties on their websites. The three big parties have the necessary resources (staff and finances) and skills to utilise these tools.

The amount, or more accurately absence, of party control of a site has an impact upon which features are available. Table 3 shows that where the community (SMed) and not the party (PSite) has control, visitors are much more likely to find those seven features supporting an 'architecture of participation'. This is equally true for all three party types. Where parties or party leaders seek to control the visitor experience there is less interaction, and hence fewer opportunities for informational democracy.

This indicates that an architecture of participation maybe in the process of being built, but do the current offerings encourage participation in the way that social networking communities and those familiar with the rules of Web 2.0 would expect? While in some cases, particularly the English Democrats, the Monster Raving Loonies and George Galloway, the social networking sites are used in much the same way as other users; these are in the minority. On the whole presences are more consistent with free advertising and the posting of brochure-ware than adapting to the environment of the site. This may mean that their presences are alien to the social networking community and are ignored. Thus those, like George Galloway, who follow the rules of the community and interact gain 4,648 friends they can communicate

with; while Nick Clegg who posts news only and does not offer birthday greetings or send 'hatching eggs' to friends has only 1,330. Thus, we perhaps find that existing supporters will display allegiances by befriending a party leader or party while the wider community will reject them unless there is some sense of them fitting into the community and adhering to its practices and rules.

Table 3: Frequency of use of Web 2.0 tools and features on party/party leader websites and social network profiles by site type

Feature	Fringe Parties using feature		Minor Parties using feature		Major Parties using feature	
Site Type*	PSite	SMed	PSite	SMed	PSite	SMed
Contact details	5	7	1	6	3	5
Search Engine	4	1	1	0	1	0
Enmeshing	0	4	1	7	2	10
Interactive navigation aids (online help)	0	3	0	2	1	6
Questionnaires	0	0	0	0	0	2
Visitor initiated questionnaires	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polls	0	2	0	0	0	2
Visitor initiated polls	0	0	0	0	0	0
Petitions	0	0	2	0	2	1
Flickr	0	3	0	7	0	3
RSS feeds	2	0	2	2	3	3
Twitter	0	0	0	1	0	1
Videos uploaded	2	9	3	9	3	11
Visitors can upload material	2	13	0	10	1	10
Use of networks	1	9	0	8	0	7
Use of fora	2	12	0	13	3	12
Ability of all visitors to share information	2	15	0	14	3	13
Ability of all visitors to update information	2	13	0	13	2	13
Private Conversation	0	4	0	9	1	6
Public Conversations	2	8	0	10	3	7
	N = 7	*N = 17*	*N = 4*	*N = 14*	*N = 3*	*N = 19*

* PSite = personal/party site created bespoke for the party and where all features are controlled by the party; SMed = profile created within a social networking or file sharing site where party or individual adapts to the environment of the site or a weblog which is deemed interactive, often hosted by a weblog site, and following a format determined by the community.

Within the architecture: where graffiti adorns the walls

A website tool, like any other means of communication, or indeed any functional item, is nothing more than an ornament or adornment unless it is used. Use is reliant on fulfilment of

some form of gratification; gaining satisfaction through use is crucial for encouraging actual use, particularly when thinking of using tools or media of communication (Jackson & Lilleker, 2007). Within studies of the internet there is a division in opinion over what encourages interactivity. Technology, and the tools of Web 2.0, can in themselves encourage use, and so interactivity, just by their very existence (Youngs, 2007); in other words offering the potential for a rich user experience can ensure users enjoy that very same rich experience (O'Reilly, 2005). On the other hand, when looking at interactivity as a concept, while the potential to offer information and share material may be attractive in itself, unless a mutual or public discourse occurs then participation may be limited.

The features required to facilitate interactivity are present and, as figures 3 and 4 demonstrates, there are features that facilitate both mutual and public discourse. In particular we find parties of all sizes and capabilities allowing public discourse to take place, on their websites and especially upon their social network presences, which is completely under the control of visitors to their sites.

Our analysis firstly looked at the features offered across the party's and party leader's websites, blogs and presences on social networking sites. We found a total of 408 features present, these features were then assessed for the extent of user control over communication and the direction (as outlined in figure 2). There are several interesting stories to tell here. Firstly all parties are attempting to exploit the free interactive communication means offered by social networking sites; this is usually the 'Bulletin Board' or 'Wall'. This allows any visitor, if on MySpace or Bebo, or friends or group members if on Facebook, to post messages and, in theory anyway, for the host to respond. Such features clearly offer the potential for participation in conversations either on the Wall of the party of leader, or across Walls (so a question can be posted onto the Wall on the Facebook profile of Respect MP George Galloway and he can choose to respond on his own Wall or the Wall on the profile of the person who posed the question). Given the importance of impression as much as actual interactivity, perhaps conversations running as a thread on the parties own profile is most sensible, and largely is the norm.

Social networking sites are not, however, purely a place for conversations. Parties are as likely to post extensive amounts of information about themselves, their policies and update links to favourable news items as they are to allow users to post. Some sites, such as UKIP, offer large amounts of text that replicate material on their homepage; others are briefer.

However there is a logic to this for a political party. While for the average social networker their school, college or university details, plus any comments on likes, dislikes and personality are all that would be essential; a party needs to both inform and interact, particularly given that many who may accidentally visit the profile would have little or no information on the party or be misinformed on its policies or stance on key issues. Similarly, though to a lesser extent, parties are offering a range of features on the websites which both inform and allow interaction suggesting a more interactive mindset is permeating political communication.

To assess simply the level of interaction allowed, figure 3 shows what percentage of features across all the party presences on social networks, and figure 4 of websites, offer interactivity and where that would be placed on the interactivity map (figure 2). Parties are split into types to gain some sense if, as we noted earlier, minor and fringe parties are trying to exploit the free communication tools in order to redress the political balance in their favour. The figures offer a pictorial representation of the way that Web 2.0 tools are offered by the parties.
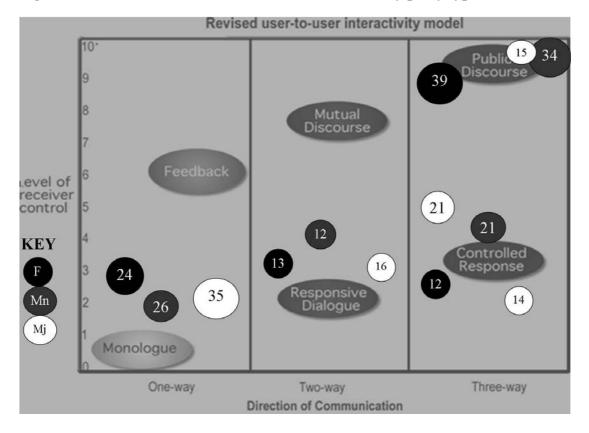
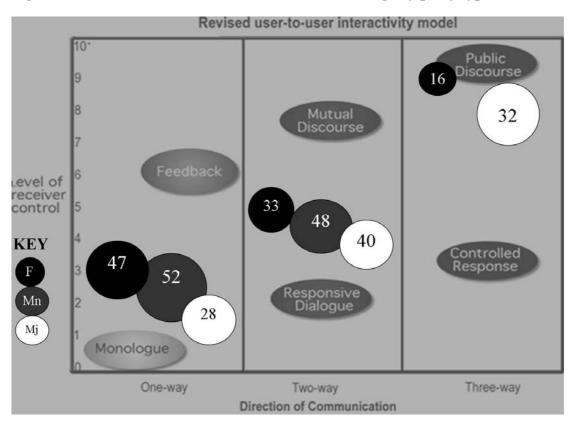**Figure 3: The use of Web 2.0 tools on social networks by party type**

Figure 4: The use of Web 2.0 tools on websites and blogs by party type

Quantitatively, and bearing in mind the observations that parties and their leaders cannot simply have a personal, non-political, profile regardless of the function of the site, it would seem that interactivity and public participation are encouraged throughout their online offerings; however this conclusion masks a less interactive reality. Some parties, such as the English Democrats, engage in extensive debate; albeit in this party's case on the status of Monmouthshire and whether it should be English or Welsh. Equally The Monster Raving Loony Party encourage a lot of suggestions for silly policy proposals. George Galloway's personal weblog on MySpace secures a lot of traffic and he has a great deal of comments which he will, on occasion, reply to; equally Galloway offers a lot of interactivity via Facebook using it in the same way as many regular users; not only posting news items but sending and receiving messages, virtual gifts and starting and contributing to debates on foreign affairs. All of this encourages participation and is evidence of an emergent online political public sphere.

However these are a minority. As noted Nick Clegg's Facebook profile has videos and news items posted by him and visitors, the Wall saw a deluge of good luck messages from his Facebook friends during is successful campaign to be Liberal Democrat leader, but there is no evidence of his input beyond the posting of items; essentially a one-way, top-down

communication device synonymous with Web 1.0. It is this behaviour that leads to the description of many contributions as being graffiti and thus not practicing the rules of the social networking community. The British National Party YouTube site and their Bebo page have critical messages such as 'FASCIST SCUM' posted; there is no response from the party. While they do interact more on their MySpace page, this suggests that visitors are simply acting in the same way as an individual with a spray can defacing the side of their offices or meeting places; it is not wanting to interact but comment anonymously and go. While the graffiti does not have to be critical or attacking, for example the posts to Nick Clegg's Wall, such behaviour does not offer opportunities to participate in a meaningful conversation and thus does not encourage interactivity or public discourse. The question is whether parties can prevent this through their behaviour. George Galloway gets little criticism on any of his sites, but when he does, usually related to his Talk Sport radio show, he answers critics and is happy to debate; this may signal why graffiti artists do not deface his page. A further barrier to participation is the existence of presences that are simply a brochure. UKIP have a presence on every social network, there are no links between the profiles and on Bebo it is simply a long list of the party's aims and a Wall. The Wall has not been used and they only have eight friends. While Galloway is also guilty of this on Bebo, his directs visitors to his other social network sites; but there is a phenomenon of parties and leaders ensuring that they control their name within a social network, but do so probably to prevent cyber-squatting by opponents, not with a view to exploring the network's potential. Thus we currently find that visitors may be encouraged to participate and can enter a dialogue, but it depends very much on which party's profile you visit. Currently the far right fringe parties are the most interactive alongside George Galloway, perhaps representing the left; others are not exploiting the potential and so gaining little of the benefits from having a profiles.

As might be expected, the response from party websites is different to that of social media. As figure 4 shows the most popular cluster of responses is one-way dialogue, consistent with an electronic brochure approach. This might suggest that party websites are essentially being used within Web 1.0, however there is evidence that this is not the full picture. There is a tranche of two-way responses, signifying some level of interaction. Such two-way interaction does not seek to gain useful research data, rather it is of a more personalised nature which encourages direct email, or enabling visitors to select the information of interest

to them via RSS. Therefore, such two-way communication enhances customer service by making the party (and its ideas) more accessible to the visitor.

Perhaps rather surprisingly there is a small cluster of responses within websites of three-way public discourse. Therefore, the websites of four parties - Conservatives, Labour, English Democrats and BNP – are using some aspects of Web 2.0 within what has previously been considered a Web 1.0 communication tool. For example, the Labour Party has two particularly interesting Web 2. 0 features: their Discussion and Labour Central web pages. In the Discussion page a senior Labour politician makes an assessment of a particular issue and visitors can post comments, for example, David Miliband and Douglas Alexander ask for comments on what should be Labour's international priorities. Labour Central is even more interactive in that it enables visitors to upload videos, news stories and blogs. Where party appears to have no relevance to explaining one- and two-way communication, it may in regard to three-way public discourse. The two largest parties may provide such features in order to be seen to be producing high-quality websites. The two fringe parties, English Democrats and BNP, are on the right, which Copsey (2003) has suggested was quick to utilise the Internet as a means of bypassing the media. As a result these two fringe parties may believe that such interaction allows them to get their opinions viewed more easily. The existence of three-way public discourse within websites suggests a blurring in the use of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 tools.

A new direction or just a new means?

While the adventures into Web 2.0 can easily be criticised, this is something that is quite new and which poses serious questions for political parties and candidates. The questions of the shifting power relations and the risk of opening up debate is at the heart perhaps of much of the decision making. Equally important, perhaps, are questions of competence and strategy. So not only are parties asking should we use social networks and Web 2.0 tools but also can we and what will we gain? While the potential is only partially being exploited, these adventures could see a shift not only in the use of communication but also in the style of communication and the relations of power between political representatives and the broader public. Whichever conclusion one wishes to lean towards perhaps depends on the level of optimism possessed and the view one has of the role of the internet as an agent of social change. Firm predictions are perhaps, therefore, impossible; but there are some indications we can take from this.
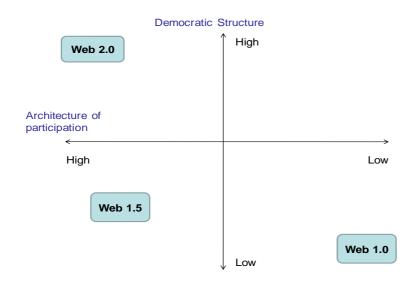
Clearly, when thinking about their communication strategy, Web 2.0 tools and networks are on the radar of political communicators. However currently there seems to be a degree to which they are testing their potential. Parties and their leaders can gain interest from the users of social networks and can get serious participation from users of online forums and weblogs; however participation seems to be linked to the degree to which there is a true attempt at interaction. If parties see a value in the feedback they gain from something as simple as the poll on the Conservatives' Facebook profile asking what colour logo visitors prefer, or more seriously find that input to the Stand Up Speak Out initiative can glean valuable information from which policy directions can be shaped and, perhaps more importantly, a information democracy can be created that offers electoral advantage to parties and candidates. These developments may mean we are on the cusp of a new direction in political communication; one that places interactivity at the heart of communication.

On the other hand if the current offerings are popular with users purely for their novelty value, and interactive fora are hijacked during elections by competitors and opponents, the risk may seen to be too great. While we view user control as being high for websites that allow open participation, weblogs that allow comments and open access Walls on social networks; hosts have the power to delete any user input that they do not wish to remain in the public domain. While deletion of input can not easily be detected without intensive study, it would seem logical that at times of campaigning parties and candidates will be more likely to remove negative graffiti-style comments and, if they find that it becomes a full time job to clean their sites and profiles, a withdrawal from using such tools may take place. The decision to commit fully or to withdraw may be specific to parties, may factor in resources and expertise as well as current and expected value, but the future is definitely uncertain. In addition, there is some evidence that some parties may be moving away from 'too much' interactivity. For example, David Cameron's weblog, Webcameron, in December 2007 stopped the forum where David would respond on a weekly basis to comments left by visitors. Either this took too much of David's time, or the party were concerned that it might lead to statement's that they would later regret. Perhaps then this is a convenient point to evaluate whether Web 2.0 can, in reality, offer the potential for political communicators that the literature suggests and, if so, if it is political communication or the Web 1.0 and 2.0 that is being adapted and transformed.

Change in political communicators or changing Web 2.0?

The data above suggests that political party's forays into social media does build the 'architecture of participation' O'Reilly (2005) identifies: the ability to share information, create networks and interaction exists. However, whilst the architecture is in place, there is no evidence of a significant shift in organisational thinking. Political parties still seek to try to control the communication process. As a result, in only a limited number of social media sites can we identify politicians joining in with these new interactive communities of practice (Wenger 1991), rather the conditioning of the Westminster community, where a more Burkean, top-down communicative strategy prevails, seems to dominate behaviour. It thus seems that political parties are trying to shape Web 2.0 to their own needs and cultural norms, by asking social media users to join their (the party) community, not the other way round. O'Reilly's analysis implies that political communication using Web 2.0 will take the shape of a rational, considered and positive debate, and unless this is facilitated graffiti is just as, if not more likely, to be present. The role of party social media sites appears to be as a cyber safety valve, not necessarily to encourage the discussion and development of ideas but to ensure opponents do not steal their name. Parties are not using Web 2.0 to create an informational democracy (Castells 1996) nor as part of a new civic arena (Stoker 2006).

However, this does not mean that there has been no change. Party political communication appears to be adapting social media to meet its own needs, creating a hybrid of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Figure 5 shows that when both access to an architecture of participation and the democratic structure of the community are high, we should find use of Web 2.0 tools. Conversely, where both concepts are low, political communication will remain within the realm of Web 1.0. But we also note a third position, that of Web 1.5 which appears to be where political parties use Web 2.0 tools. This reflects a high use of the architecture of participation, but a much lower use of the community's democratic structure. This is clearly a hybrid or even bastardisation of Web 2.0 for promotional and marketing purposes, but it appears that is the way that political parties are adapting the concepts of Web 2.0 for their own purposes. Web 1.5 does not fit with the existing literature's (O'Reilly 2005, Barsky 2006b, Birdsall 2007) view of Web 2.0, but it is, we would suggest, as far as political parties are currently willing to go in using new technologies. Underpinning their decision is the failure to adopt a new, interactive mindset; instead of adopting Web 2.0 political parties have created their own approach: Web 1.5.

Figure 5: The use of Web 2.0 features by political parties

The existing literature (Barsky 2006a, Barsky and Cho 2007, Birdsall 2007) suggests that there is either Web 1.0 or Web 2.0, in other words there is essentially a debate over whether Web 1.0 or Web 2.0 is best and for what purpose, with little common ground. Such a clear divide does not always exist with political parties' use of Web 2.0 communication channels such as social media sites, and Web 1.0 channels such as websites. Rather, most Web 2.0 channels used by political parties also include one-way monologue to reinforce messages, and some Web 1.0 channels use three-way public discourse to engage with the visitor. Although slowly coming to terms with a new technology, and adapting to its own specific needs, parties have not yet discarded their top-down one-way communication approach. Rather it runs parallel with, and at the same time as, a more interactive mindset.

Conclusion

Political parties are using a fairly narrow range of the online political communication tools that Web 2.0 potentially offers them. This may be primarily due to the application of limited resources in terms of staffing time and skills to maximising their use, or due to hesitancy over a move towards interactivity. A similar slow trend was detected when parties first started to use websites (Gibson & Ward 1998). However, there is evidence that key elements of an architecture of participation are present. Moreover, there appears to be some slight differences in approach to this architecture depending on the size of the party, with minor

parties the most likely to have this architecture present. This probably reflects the fact that they view Web 2.0 as a useful means for bypassing the media and building relationships but also see this as a means for increasing their power base.

The cornerstone of this new architecture is, for the social media sites, the Wall, though obviously there need be no obvious evidence that the host has actually listened to, let alone responded, to comments posted. However, perhaps this is problematic. Given that communities such as Facebook and Bebo work around notions of interactivity and conversations between friends, if all the communication is one-way, from the politician down and by visitors via the wall, with no sense of one responding to the other it breaches the rules of the community and offers the perception that the profile is purely for promotional purposes and not to enhance the representative capacity of the individual or organisation or level of engagement between them and the public. Although Web 2.0 may be enhancing the flow of information, there is also evidence that political parties use Web 2.0 as a means of allowing members of the public to let off steam; or they find this is an unavoidable by-product of allowing visitor input. Hence, for political parties Web 2.0 acts as a useful safety valve by encouraging graffiti. As a result there is no clear evidence of a shift in power between political parties and citizens online. Rather, the evidence is that political parties are experimenting with this new media as a means of perhaps promoting their messages more effectively. Yet, at the same time, the parties appear nervous that their social media sites could be hijacked by opponents, and therefore, whilst the architecture of participation exists, the level of engagement with the democratic structure of Web 2.0 communities does not.

As a result, parties appear to have sought to adapt Web 2.0 to their needs, rather than changing their modus operandi to meet the cultural norms of Web 2.0. Parties appear to have recognised the limitations and weaknesses of Web 1.0 tools, but do not appear prepared or able to adopt Web 2.0. Rather, they have developed their own approach, Web 1.5, as a compromise solution. They recognise the important of allowing citizens the opportunity to have their say, but they wish to be able to control the structure in which this occurs. Therefore, Web 1.5 includes an element of interactivity, but it also includes one-way monologue at the same time. Political parties have jumped on to the Web 2.0 bandwagon, but they are using both the breaks and the reigns to steer the vehicle onto a route they feel more comfortable with.

Footnotes

(1) We have used the typology of party size provided by Jackson (2006), where major parties are the three main parties, minor are the other parties with elected representation in parliament, and fringe are those parties with a national organisation structure, some local elected representation. Jackson also identified a fourth category, hopeful, of those parties with little or no chance of winning elected representation. However, the Internet presence of these parties was generally a static website, and it was felt their inclusion could adversely influence the overall results.

(2) Data was collected from 45 social networking sites, 14 party websites and the weblogs of two party leaders.

(3) Enmeshing is another way of directing the visitor and making it easier for them to navigate by linking pages within your website (Ollier, A., 1998 *The webfactory guide to marketing on the Internet,* London: Aurelian, p133). Enmeshing uses hyperlinks but they are within the website, rather than to other websites.

Bibliography

Abbate, J., (1999) *Inventing the Internet,* MIT.

Abram, S. (2005) 'Web 2.0 – Huh? Library 2.0, Librarian 2.0', *Information Outlook*, 9 (12): 44-5.

Barsky, E. (2006a) 'Introducing Web 2.0: RSS trends for health librarians' *Journal of the Canadian Health Librarians Association*, 27 (1), 7-8.

Barsky, E. (2006b) 'Introducing Web 2.0: weblogs and podcasting for health librarians' *Journal of the Canadian Health Librarians Association*, 27 (2), 33-34.

Barsky, E., & Cho, A. (2007) 'Introducing Web 2.0: social search for health librarians' *Journal of the Canadian Health Librarians Association*, 28 (3), 59-61.

Barsky, E., & Purdon, M. (2006) 'Introducing Web 2.0: social networking and social bookmarking for health librarians' *Journal of the Canadian Health Librarians Association*, 27 (3), 65-67.

Bennett, W. Lance (2003) 'Communicating Global Activism: Strengths and vulnerabilities of networked politics', *Information, Communication & Society*, Vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 143-168.

Birdsall, W. F. (2007) 'Web 2.0 as a Social Movement', *Webology*, 4 (2); http://www.webology.ir/2007/v4n2/a40.html accessed 30 September 2007.

Castells, M (1996) *The information Age: Economy. Society and Culture, Vol. 1: The Rise of the Network Society*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Chaffey, D. Ellis-Chadwick, F. Johnston, K. Mayer, R (2006) *Internet Marketing: strategy, implementation and practice* Harlow: Prentice Hall

Cho, A. (2007) 'An introduction to mashups for health librarians' *Journal of the Canadian Health Librarians Association*, 28 (1), 19-22.

Coleman, S., (2005) Direct *Representation: towards a conversational democracy*, London: IPPR ExchangeNew mediation and direct representation: reconceptualising representation in the digital age *New Media and Society,* 7 (2) pp177-198.

Cooke, L., (2007) Controlling the net: European approaches to content and access regulation, *Journal of Information Science* 33(3) pp360-376.

Copsey, N., (2003) Extremism on the net: the extreme right and the value of the Internet, <u>In</u> Gibson, R. Nixon, P. Ward, S. (eds) *Political Parties and the Internet: net gain?* London: Routledge.

Dahlberg, L (2007) Rethinking the fragmentation of the cyberpublic: from consensus to contestation, *New Media & Society* 9 (5) pp827-847.

Downes, L., & Mui, C. (2000) *Unleashing the Killer App: digital strategies for market dominance*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Dyson, E., Gilder, G., Keyworth, G., and Toffler, A. (1994) *Cyberspace and the American Dream: A Magna Carta for the Knowledge Age*, www.pff.org/position.html accessed 23 January 2008.

Ferber, P., Foltz, F. and Pugliese, R. (2007) Cyberdemocracy and Online Politics: A New Model of Interactivity. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, Vol. 27, No. 5, pp. 391-400

Gibson, R, and Ward, S., (1998) UK Political Parties and the Internet: Politics as Usual in the New Media in *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics,* 3 (3) pp14-38.

Graham, P. (2005) *Web 2.0*, www.paulgraham.com/web20.html accessed 2 October 2007.

Green, D. P., and Gerber, A. S. (2004) *Get Out The Vote: How to increase voter increase*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Grossman, L. (1995) *The Electronic Republic: Reshaping American Democracy in the Information Age*, New York: Viking.

Jackson, N., (2003) MPs and Web Technologies: an untapped opportunity? *Journal of Public Affairs*, 3 (2) pp124-137

Jackson, N., (2006) Banking Online: the use of the Internet by political parties to build relationships with voters <u>In</u> Lilleker, D. Jackson, N. Scullion, R., (2006) *The Marketing of British Politics: political marketing at the 2005 General Election*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Jackson, N. and Lilleker, D., (2007) 'Information, input and the desire to find out what the opposition is doing: the uses and gratifications of political parties e-newsletters' *Information Communication and Society,* 10 (2) pp 242-264.

Kiousis, S. (2002). Interactivity: A concept explication. *New Media & Society*, Vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 355-383

Kobrin, S (1998) 'The MAI and the clash of globalisation' *Foreign Policy*, (Fall) 97-109.

Lees-Marshment, J. (2001) *Political Marketing and British Political Parties*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lilleker, D., and Lees-Marshment, J. (2005) *Political Marketing A Comparative Perspective*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lilleker, D., Jackson, N., and Scullion, R. (2006) *The Marketing of Political Parties*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Malagon, C. (2008) Levels of Interactivity in the 2007 French Presidential Candidates' Websites, MA Dissertation, Bournemouth University.

McMillan, S. J. (2002). Exploring models of interactivity from multiple research traditions: Users, documents, and systems, in S.Livingstone, (ed) *The handbook of new media*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.163–182

Morris, D., (2003) The Future of Political Campaigning: the American example *Journal of Public Affairs,* 3(1) pp14-20.

Mutz, D., (2001) The Future of Political Communication Research: reflections on the occasion of Steve Chaffee's retirement from Stanford University *Political Communication,* 18 pp231-236.

Negrine, R. (2007) 'The Professionalisation of Political Communication in Europe', in R. Negrine, P. Mancini, C. Holtz-Bacha & S. Papathanassopoulos (eds) *The Professionalisation of Political Communication*, Bristol: Intellect, pp. 27-46.

Norris, P., (2001) *Digital Divide – civic engagement, information poverty and the Internet worldwide,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Reilly, T (2005) 'What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next generation of Software', www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html accessed 1 October 2007.

Petty, R. E., and Cacioppo, J. T. (1996) *Attitudes and Persuasion: Classic and Contemporary Approaches*, Boulder: Westview.

Pickerill, J. (2001) 'Weaving a green web: environmental protest and computer-mediated communication in Britain', in F. Webster (ed) *Culture and Politics in the Information Age*, London: Routledge, pp. 142-166.

Richards, B. (2007) *Emotional Governance: politics, media and terror*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Rushkoff, D. (2003) *Open Source Democracy: How online communication is changing offline politics*, London: Demos.

Scarrow, S. (2000) 'Parties without members? Party organisation in a changing electoral environment', in R. Dalton & M. Wattenberg (eds), *Parties without Partisans*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 79-101.

Slevin, J. (2000) *The Internet and Society*, Cambridge: Polity

Sommer, M., (2003) Key Developments in American E-Politics and E-Activism: from fundraising to getting out the vote, paper delivered to the Political Marketing Conference, Middlesex University 18-20th September.

Stoker, G. (2006) *Why Politics Matters: making democracy work*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Van Dijk, J. (2006) *The Network Society*, second edition, London: Sage

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, London: Cambridge University Press.

Winston, B (1998) *Media Technology and Society: a history from the Telegraph to the Internet* London: Routledge.

Youngs, G. (2001) 'Globalization, Communication and Technology: Making the Democratic Link', *Politica Internazionale*, Vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 217-226.

Youngs, G. (2007) *Global Political economy in the Information Age: power and inequality*, London: Routledge.