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Meta-Blogging (definition: blogging about blogging) [1]

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Matthew D'Ancona had a piece [3] in *The Guardian* about political blogs and blogging earlier in the week and he asks the interesting question of whether, as, if and when there's a Tory government again whether the current (perceived perhaps) success of the right-wing blogs will give way to one of the left-wing such. The point being that it is both easier (and more fun!) to oppose and also that when in opposition anything which bashes the rulers is helpful, rather than the more controlled message necessary if you're in power and want to stay there.

If we confine ourselves to the nakedly party political blogs I think he might well be right, that there will at least be attempts to control the message. Unlike D'Ancona I think such attempts at control will probably succeed, too, if we again confine ourselves to the nakedly party political blogs. For those who run them are indeed party political animals and will continue to work, as they do now, for the success of their "tribe".

Where I think his ultimate conclusion, that blogs won't be controlled is correct, is with respect to those that lie outside such party limits. For example, Samizdata [4] make no bones about their virulent dislike of Tories, of social authoritarians just as much as economic ones. I've been known to make the same point myself. It's most unlikely that this blog will roll over to have its belly rubbed just because the blue rosettes got into Number 10 either.

For I think there's a fault line that runs through "political blogging" which isn't in fact properly appreciated. There are those who blog for a specific group, for a party, for their tribe. And there are those who blog in support of certain ideas, or ideals. The former group will indeed be liable to capture by the centre ("don't rock the boat old boy, not now we've got back into power again") and the latter will continue to scream for their cherished goals whichever party is in power.

In a way, I think that might be one of the ways in which blogging has and will in fact change politics: it used to be that if you had a cause you had to join a party, a coalition, even for that cause to get a hearing. Now all and any causes can get that hearing which rather diminishes the importance of party politics itself.

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[2] http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5778

[3] http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/dec/10/politicsandthemedia?gusrc=rss&feed=media
[4] http://www.samizdata.net/blog/
[5] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript
[6] http://disqus.com