

How Bebo and Trippi (and you) will change the world

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[Joe Trippi](#), the American guru of politics and the internet was at the Mother Of Parliaments today, as part of a [Bebo](#) event looking at how the web can change society. He warned the assembled MPs that the days of party politics are numbered and that any organisation that wants to survive in the internet age has to realise the power of 'an army of Goliaths'. This is the man who has worked for Ed Kennedy, Mondale, Gephardt, Howard Dean and is now campaign manager for John Edwards. So he knows a lot about losing campaigns but he also knows a lot about how the internet is revolutionising political campaigning. There was too much to report in full but here's a few random points/quotes:

"TV took people out of the political process, the internet can put them back in. You can fake anything on TV, but the internet demands authenticity."

"The internet is creating a nation of Davids so you don't want to be a Goliath. Instead you have to ask, "what slingshots can I prepare for the Davids?"

* The UK will be behind the curve on learning to use the internet in campaigning because we don't have fixed term elections which allow campaigners to build networks and plan towards an end goal: "How can you get people involved in an election when you don't know when it will be?"

* Elections will become less important as 'bottom-up' politics replaces 'Top-down' politics

There were some interesting points by others there:

[Danny Finkelstein](#) of the Times was convinced that it spells the end of the big political parties.

[Stephan Shakespeare](#) of YouGov pointed out the irony of Trippi using 'grass-roots' internet in a campaign to keep 'top people' in power. He predicts that eventually 'bottom-up internet politics will produce its own heroes and presidents

[Andy Reed MP](#) – a pioneer of online politics, welcomed the internet but asked how he was supposed to have a real conversation with 70,000 constituents?

Bebo were launching their [Be Cause](#) scheme which will allow their users to choose a sponsored social change project each month. It is a clever way to engage their vast social network with good causes in a grass-roots way. I suspect that they may have more to say about democracy and the internet over the next few years than the politicians and campaigners.

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