

U-turn on MPs' expenses – a victory for internet campaigners?

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The Government's (partial) [u-turn](#) on the disclosure of MPs expenses is being claimed as a victory for Internet campaigners. Bloggers combined with a Facebook group to tweak MPs and the media into action according to Tom [Steinberg](#):

“This is a huge victory not just for transparency, it’s a bellwether for a change in the way politics works. There’s no such thing as a good day to bury bad news any more, the Internet has seen to that. Over 7000 people joined a [Facebook group](#), they sent thousands of emails to over 90% of all MPs. Hundreds of thousands of people found out about the story by visiting [TheyWorkForYou](#) to find something they wanted to know, reading an email alert, or simply discovered what was going on whilst checking their Facebook or Twitter pages. Almost all of this happened, from nowhere, within 48 hours, putting enough pressure on Parliament to force change.”

I think Tom's right. So only 7000 people (only?!) joined the Facebook group but when that is [networked](#) into bloggers and mainstream media it takes on momentum. God Knows why an unpopular Government would want to take a stand on this in the first place, after all the flak they got over this issue before. Perhaps they thought no-one would notice in the midst of the Great Crash.

But they did, and that's the point.

Perhaps the campaign would not have had that effect on a strong, popular administration. But who cares, let's chalk it up to e-democracy. While political parties still fail to mobilise through online networks, civil society groups like Mysociety are taking the lead.

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