


# What can the (UK) news media learn from the Obama campaign?

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 Is there anything that the UK news media can learn from the Obama campaign? This is the question of the month for the collection of US and UK journalist/academic bloggers that make up the [Carnival of Journalism](#).

There is certainly loads that UK politicians could learn. They might try to emulate the way that Obama's team combined ruthless professionalism with social participation. [Jack Lail](#) outlines in his blog entry the clever ways that new technology was exploited to bring in new supporters and then harness their enthusiasm to win the primaries and the Presidential elections. He lists the five elements that worked:

1. mobile text and email strategy
2. YouTube and video
3. customer databases
4. be where the users are
5. enable the community

Jack believes that these principles can be applied to the media as well as the politics. I agree.

But there is more. Obama's online success was driven by a mixture of hard-nosed business acumen and amateurish enthusiasm and idealism. Obama won because he believed in the medium, but also because he had a message.

It is not enough for journalism to just go online. Hillary Clinton and John McCain both had websites and webteams. But they weren't really online. They did not understand the need to let your digital activists have real responsibility. Don't get me wrong. I don't want to overclaim for the political impact of what the online Obama campaign achieved. His machine was still ruthlessly controlled from head office and there were no real policy impacts from his online cheerleaders. But overall it has created a network of people who have invested in his campaign and who will want to continue the relationship.

That is the lesson for UK media. Start the conversation online. But understand that once you take to all these new platforms and make all these new connections, things will change. People will expect more and you have to be ready to share power and deliver new rewards.

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