

Polis – China coverage

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The China quake story is awesome in scale and dramatic in detail. The only people pleased about it happening must be the Burmese generals.

The meta-narratives around Chinese politics have been similar to those around the Olympics. This is a human disaster of incomprehensible proportions but analysts have been quick to look for signs of what it tells us about the Chinese government, too. It is clear that the Chinese authorities have learnt lessons in openness and visibility from the Tibet story.

New Media has played a significant role in communicating events to the outside world as this article from [Slate](#) shows:

*Peter Scoble of **Scobleizer** fame may have indeed [broken](#) the story: “I reported the major quake to my followers on Twitter before the USGS Website had a report up and about an hour before CNN or major press started talking about it. Now there’s lots of info over on Google News. How did I do that? Well, I was watching Twitter on Google Talk. Several people in China reported to me they felt the quake WHILE IT WAS GOING ON!!!”*

This kind of geeky enthusiasm for the medium instead of the message verges upon the tasteless, but it does show how China is now very much part of an online, networked world.

What impact does the coverage have on you? Does this feel different to disasters such as the Asian Tsunami? [BBC’s Newsnight](#) is debating this online now.

What struck me was the number of Westerners in the region on holiday or business who are reporting back via the media.

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