

Guido goes mainstream

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Right-wing political blogger Paul Staines aka [Guido Fawkes](#) is our most effective Westminster Internet journalist but now he's crossed over into mainstream commentary. Could it be that his real ambition is a place in the ranks of those professional journalists that he has reviled so bitterly for the last few years? Does he share the ambitions of fellow conservative blogger [Iain Dale](#) to secure a place in the salaried media/political Establishment?

Guido quite rightly claims a significant part in the downfall of Peter Hain. But when he went on last night's [Newsnight](#) it was to discuss political tactics, not the scandal itself, with the arch-professional political insider journalist [Steve Richards](#), from the very mainstream Independent newspaper. Richards gave his usual sophisticated and relatively balanced defence of how politicians act when in the midst of a crisis. It felt rather sympathetic to Brown but it did give insight and detail. Paul Staines was reduced to some mild advice to Brown about 'being seen to be more decisive'. Really? gosh, I am sure no-one in Downing Street had thought of that one.

The point of this is not to question Staines' political nous. He has given political blogging a reason to exist and we need more of it. It's fun to see him engaging with mainstream media and I only wish he could infect it with a bit more of his determination and (often scabulous) investigatory skills. He is a demonstration of how online journalists can use the networking potential of the Internet to do what traditional media can't or won't. But I will be delighted if it turns out that Paul Staines is not a natural TV pundit if that means he will stick to the blogosphere where he probably has more influence on mainstream media and politics than he would on the Newsnight couch next to Kirsty.

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