

How to end election speculation

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So what has been the main story to emerge from this week's [Labour Party Conference](#)? Was it the Foreign Secretary's admissions on Iraq? Was it the new plans for schools? Was it the suggestions of a U-turn on 24 hour drinking? No. The big story was whether we will have an election this autumn. The man who will decide is the Prime Minister and he said not a word about it all week. And yet instead of looking at the policy announcements or the debates, we were subjected to non-stop speculation over election timing.

This media frenzy is in itself an argument for fixed-term elections. If we knew the date of the election we could all get on with the job of real politics until the campaign period. It is a national disgrace that one man can decide when I am allowed to vote. It is also a shame because fixed term elections would allow grass-roots organisations time and predictability to build up a proper long-term strategy for engaging people in the electoral process. Instead of which we might find ourselves stumbling in to a poll in just a month's time.

Despite Gordon Brown's avowed interest in creating a 'new politics' which gives power back to the people, nothing will change. It is simply too useful for the incumbant. So I am afraid that you might as well turn off your TV and radios because for the next six months this is all you will get. Sad political hacks like myself might find it enthralling but I can't believe the public shares the obsession.

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