

Why the Left must learn to love the Net

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/06/16/how-the-left-must-learn-to-love-the-net/

2007-6-16

The veteran socialist and former Labour minister [Tony Benn](#) has coined a great phrase to describe the potential of the internet: “relative ignorance”. He was on the panel for the [debate](#) that I moderated on the future of the UK journalists union, the NUJ. I was surprised at how many left-wingers want to regulate and control the internet. I suppose trade unions want to do it to defend their members, but it took one of the oldest and most ideologically-driven of left-wingers, Tony Benn, to enthuse about its liberating potential. He entirely understand what US Democrat Joe Trippi [described](#) to me as ‘bottom-up’ online politics. Benn said that everyday he wakes up with a billion other people on the internet and thanks to them, by the end of the day he has learnt something. But because many of that billion have added something to the store of knowledge said Benn, “I find that by the evening I am, *relatively speaking*, more ignorant!” . I think the concept of ‘relative ignorance’ is a wonderful way to express the potential of the net and I am delighted that I have at last found something to agree whole-heartedly with Mr Benn about.

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science