

Polis – Phone or email?

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/04/30/phone-or-email/

2007-4-30

It's one of those delicious (and probably fake) debates that gets journalists and New Media folk very excited: What is the fairest and most productive way to carry out an interview? New Media blog champions like Jeff Jarvis at [Buzzmachine](#) and Scott [Rosenberg](#) strongly favour email because it means you can't be misquoted and the interviewee gets the last word. Many journalists, however, say that when you talk to someone on the phone you can hear their tone of voice and have a natural discussion. Of course, as a

former TV News person I would say that best of all is to have the conversation live and in vision so we all share the discussion. But in practice, most journalistic work is done before the final broadcast or printing or posting.

I use both, but increasingly have to get myself and my researchers to pick up a phone. Email is too easy. And when people use email it really is harder to get them to engage with the questions. Too often it turns in to a kind of press release. And the internet itself is too easy. There is a real danger that journalists simply 'Google' someone or something and use that rather than going back to the original source. Having direct contact makes sure that the facts are correct. But it also enables the journalist to move the story on. In the end that can be done clearly and constructively by email as well as by phone. But to say one is better than the other is to deny us all the tools of the trade. And by "us all" I mean the public as well as the hack.

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