

# Power In The Pantry: Mumsnet at Polis Summer School (guest-blog)

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This blog is by [Polis Summer School](#) student Kat Bucalina.

When one thinks of the word “mother”, a politically conscious, Internet savvy woman does not usually come to mind. Mums are more likely to represent cookie dough, cough mixture and crocs. But Rowan Davis, campaigns organiser at Mumsnet.com certainly challenged these stereotypes. She made us question what mums are really capable of doing and achieving.



Mumsnet.com started 11 years ago as a forum for parents to voice their worries and advice to other equally stressed and nervous parents. Fast-forward a few years down the line and the website has gained far more pulling power than nappy changes and colicky. With an average of 32 million page views per month and 25000 posts per day, it is evident that no one in fact is keeping mum at all.

Mumsnet.com has developed into a thriving form of new media where women are given a platform to voice their opinions and concerns in an anonymous yet empowered way. Ranging from advice columns, information or live chats, women have been given a technological tool that has profound influence in British society.

These women are outspoken, articulate and above all, hold people accountable for their actions. Who knew that a website for mums could blossom into a social weapon for change, having the ability to hold live chats with British MPs or pursue the reform of Libel Laws.

The site also serves as an example showing that audiences in fact have become producers of media themselves. It is the users of the site that generate the most material on it, thus giving ordinary women a platform to write and inform others.

These women certainly serve as an inspiration as they have built an entire community amongst themselves, which enables them to help each other out. This challenges sceptics who believe that the Internet has abolished the ability for humans to join as one within a community.

Conversely, the women of Mumsnet.com have built a strong, compassionate community who not only support one another but also challenge each other in open debate and criticisms. If liberal democratic ideals of free speech and multiculturalism are the pillars of Western society today, then Mumsnet.com may as well be Britain's technological Acropolis.

As a woman myself, I find this site to be truly encouraging. Despite the vast progress that western society has made in terms of women's rights and societal influence, there is still a gulf between the power of men and women in society.

By no means am I advocating radical feminism, but it is undeniable that I am motivated by the way in which women like those of Mumsnet.com are able to cause a reaction in politicians, established print media and society in general.

The site's most popular page is “Am I being unreasonable?”, which is a perfect example of how women still feel that they need to know whether or not their actions are justifiable. Evidently then, women haven't changed much at all in the way that they remain the more compassionate and considerate of genders.

What Mumsnet.com does, is provide a place in which women don't have to feel like they are being judged. As a

consequence women express their true feelings and concerns on the website which merely gives it more legitimacy and ultimately greater influence. It is amazing to see how informed and more confident women become in their opinions when men are out of the equation.

Mumsnet.com deserves applause for having the capacity to advocate real change. Even more so it should be congratulated for creating a space for women to say it all. In between the 3am bottle feeds and spaghetti meatballs finding their way to the kitchen ceiling, mums in fact are capable of so much more. Under the apron is a woman with intelligence and also a sense of humour which ultimately is more powerful than the spatula.

So here's to the mums who really do know best and to the women who can do it all.

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