


Politicians fail to use the net, says Brown

Gordon Brown admitted yesterday that politicians had failed to use the mass-communication potential of the internet to win hearts and minds on globalisation, trade and Iraq

[David Charter](#) and Gary Duncan

Saturday January 27 2007, 12.00am GMT, The Times

 Share

 Save

Gordon Brown admitted yesterday that politicians had failed to use the mass-communication potential of the internet to win hearts and minds on globalisation, trade and Iraq.

The Chancellor told yesterday morning's opening session of the World Economic Forum at Davos – entitled “Who Will Shape the Agenda” – that politicians had yet to adjust to the growth of “audience power” through the rise of blogging and the pressure to share more information on the web.

Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, told the session that an explosion in freedom of expression via the internet was driving governments to become more open.

Mr Brown said that politicians were “operating in the slow lane of the information superhighway” because of a failure to respond to fresh demands for involvement in agenda-setting from citizens.

“The issue now is how we are all responding to the explosive power of citizens, consumers, bloggers – audience power,” Mr

Brown said. "I don't think government has caught up with that. As a politician, I and many others are to blame. The failure of politics is, you have got to go out and persuade people. The age of the smoke-filled room is over, both literally and metaphorically. It is whether you can construct big national debates on big issues."

ADVERTISEMENT

Returning to the issue later, he added: "We have not had these debates successfully. Why are we so much on the defensive on globalisation, why have we failed on the trade debate, why haven't we persuaded people of the wisdom of what is being done on Iraq?"

Mr Brown said that the positive aspects of globalisation were not being communicated because voices on the internet focused on job losses and other downsides. It was a similar story on world trade, he added.

"One of the failures on trade is that we have not had the debate and on globalisation that we have not been prepared to have the debate," Mr Brown said.

"People who are the beneficiaries of low interest rates and access to cheaper goods talk about themselves as the victims of globalisation and feel utterly insecure and threatened by globalisation.

"None of us is putting the argument that globalisation is good for the majority of people and can be better in the years to come. That is where we have failed to recognise the power of the internet-active media . . . we have got to find a way of responding to that."

ADVERTISEMENT

Mr Brown said that the way to counteract “6,000 al-Qaeda websites peddling violence” was to engage in open debate to separate moderates from extremists, in the way that the Cold War was eventually won.

Mr Murdoch said that powerful new voices from the internet were “making a very great change” to the way in which the global agenda was set.

He said: “We are seeing an explosion of freedom of expression and we have to take note of that . . . I do believe that government now has to be much more open, but it really has not changed the agenda much. All reasonable governments have always tried to improve the lives of and protect their people and the internet can be seen as something that will help them.”

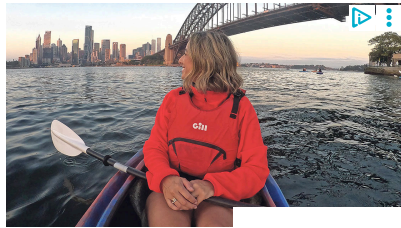
The News Corporation chairman said that world leaders should not be overwhelmed by the clamour from the internet and simply think that whatever was popular online should drive the agenda. “There still has to be leadership, we should not just follow the internet,” he said.

“Obviously if you are in the media, you would like to make a difference by putting forward your opinion. But you are not going to change the world completely by that. We cannot change elections. I think good strong news organisations, by disclosing things, can help shape the agenda, but only in a limited way.”

UK > Politics

Gordon Brown

PROMOTED CONTENT



Top Australian adv the New South Wal

TOURISM AUSTRALIA



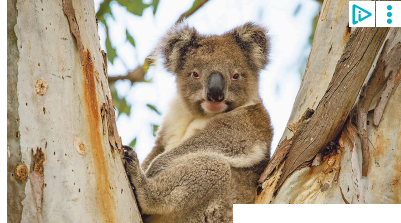
The Iceland tour w photographer

CHECKLIST



Make the first mov for buying a home

HALIFAX



Surf life to wildlife: Australia hotspots

TOURISM AUSTRALIA

Comments for this article have been turned off

Comments are subject to our community guidelines, which can be viewed [here](#).

BACK TO TOP

THE SUNDAY TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Get in touch

About us

Help

The Sunday Times Editorial Complaints

Classified advertising

The Times corrections

Careers

Contact us

The Times Edito

Place an annour

Display advertisi

The Sunday Tim

More from The Times and The Sunday Times

The Times e-paper

The Sunday Times Wine Club

The Times Archive

Sunday Times Driving

[The Sunday Times Rich List](#)

[Good University Guide](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Best Places to Stay](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[Times Luxury](#)

[Best Places to Work](#)

[More from News Corp](#)

[The Australian](#)

[Dow Jones](#)

[Investor's Business Daily](#)

[MarketWatch](#)

[The Sun](#)

[The Wall Street Journal](#)

© Times Media Limited 2025.
Registered in England No. 894646.
Registered office: 1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF.

[Privacy & cookie policy](#)

[Licensing](#)

[Site map](#)

[Topics](#)

[Puzzles Archive](#)

[Authors](#)

[Commissioning terms](#)

[Terms and conditions](#)

