

YouTube is fast becoming one of the go-to platforms for any election. The media loves it as they can find videos of political gaffes caught by members of the public. Parties love it as they can make long, in-depth campaign adverts without having to worry too much about broadcast regulations. Members of the public love it as they get to follow the campaign online without having to be subjected to the traditional media formats.

While all of the parties have been uploading videos to their YouTube account over the past few weeks, with the campaign officially starting this week, both of the two main parties launched their official YouTube campaigns.

Celebrities vs children

The Conservatives have chosen to start off with a focus on the family and children. The tack they seem to have taken is of looking at how the average family wants their children to be treated in the future. All the usual talk of opportunity, jobs, dreams etc is there. All what one would expect in such an advert. What is lacking however are comments and views.

Anyone who has ever used YouTube knows that the comments section is often times like a verbal cesspit where the very worst of humanity lurks. When it comes to political videos, this nastiness often goes all the way up to 11. That being said, I do find it odd that when a party is in campaign mode and thereby seeking to actively engage with the electorate, that they decide to disable the comments section on all of their videos.

I understand why, as an individual, you may turn off comments for some videos, but as the currently largest governing party, I'd have thought they'd have the capacity to endure the trolling comments.

On the same day that the Conservatives posted their first campaign video, Labour did so as well.

The focus of this video is an overall summation of Labour's plan on how they will make Britain better. The obvious thing to point out is them opting to use celebrities to get their message

across. Martin Freeman is a sublime actor and his passionate delivery certainly adds something to the message of the video. His speech being followed by a short voiceover by David Tennant has in part led to a huge view count when compared to the Conservatives video.

In [YouTube terms](#), more than 100,000 views is pretty good going in 24 hours. Less than 5,000 is rather pathetic. Obviously the celebrity factor plays a role in viewing figures, but I think the point still remains.

Another contrast between the two videos is the Labour has allowed comments on all of their videos. Whilst comments such as “So both the Hobbit and Doctor Who are voting Labour. Who have the Tories got? Probably Cruella de Ville and Darth Vader.” aren't particularly helpful or add anything to the conversation, I'd like to think that at least a member of the Labour press team reads through the comments in order to gauge the success of the video.

While the Lib Dems have yet to start their official YouTube campaign, the other week they did show off what they call their “unofficial” anthem

The awful non-singing and staccato delivery aside, mash ups of political speeches to the tune of a recent hit song [are not a new thing](#). They came to prominence during the US 2012 election and since then there have been multiple adopters of this technique. Whilst one can applaud the Lib Dems on trying to have some fun with the campaign and making a half-decent effort at editing, I do think it's best they leave it to the professional speech dubbers. Certainly if the view count and like to dislike ratio is anything to go by.

Best of the rest

The traditional media seeing a popular phenomenon online will always try to jump on the bandwagon. Sky News recently made a short YouTube video of the [major party leaders lip-synching to a All-4-One ballad](#)

. It's not particularly newsworthy or satirical in anyway, but these moments of mirth, (or more cynically, attempts to go viral and get attention), will be much needed in the coming weeks as the news gets further bogged down in the details of each of the parties' policy positions.

Saying that, proper comical satire should be left to the professionals. [Cassetteboy](#), who has [f](#)

[eatured on shows such as Charlie Brooker's 2014 Wipe](#)

, does a superb job tearing apart speeches given by politicians.

It will no doubt be some time before anything other than traditional TV will be the preferred platform for anything substantive to do with elections

But YouTube, as a campaigning tool can allow political parties to reap many benefits. The parties just need to make sure they don't have too much fun and receive thousands more comments along the lines of "This is easily the worst thing I've ever seen, and I saw Vanilla Ice in concert."

Read more <http://theconversation.com/youtube-because-campaign-adverts-on-tv-just-arent-enough-39716>