

Tories are offering 'points' for sharing their content online but won't say what they're for

Written by The Conversation

Some say that sharing is caring. But when it comes to party political publications, sharing on social media is careless. No matter how much you agree with Labour's latest poster or the Greens' latest video, bombarding your friends and followers with such literature is ill advised.

It's unlikely that a single picture will change your friends' voting habits, but it is likely that your friends will mock, block or simply baulk at your attempts to get them to vote one way or another. If posting a single picture will gain you derision, then just imagine what [painting your car in a party's colours and logos](#) will get you.

With the risks to individuals who share party political memes running high, there has to be some sort of incentive for people to actually share a party's message. The Conservatives idea for incentives is "points".

By signing up to their website, you can [share their content](#) and earn points every time you do so. You also earn points every time someone clicks on the link or engages with it via a comment or retweet. So yes, that means that even if all of your friends comment "Please stop posting this rubbish", you'll still be earning points.

So what do all these points mean? Well at the moment it's not quite clear. I emailed the Conservative party office to ask what the points were for, but received no response.

All their website states is that:

If you finish in the top 3, you'll receive the top reward. If you just miss out on the top 3, don't worry – everyone on the top 20 leader board also receives a limited edition reward as a thank you.

I'd like to think that the prizes are George Osborne face masks, an Ed Miliband dartboard and a

private seven-course dinner with Cameron himself. But who knows?

Regardless of what people win from this competition, it does seem like something of an underhand tactic to corral Conservative supporters to fight some of the party's [social media war](#) for them.

It's one thing to pay your social media generals such as [Jim Messina](#)

to strategise your online campaign, it's another to induce those sympathetic to your cause to share with vague promises of unspecified prizes.

The Green Party hits a bum note

It was only recently that I wrote that political parties should [leave the making of “humourous” songs to the professionals](#)

. Unfortunately, it seems the Green Party failed to read my article.

I could maybe forgive them if they had made a silly short video that was only released on their YouTube channel. I could even forgive them if they tried to seem cool by butchering one of my favourite songs. What I can't forgive however is them making this their official election broadcast

Despite it receiving a very positive response judging by all the comments and like-to-dislike ratio, I just can't help but watch the video and think "Really? This is your official election broadcast?" Sure, it's different to most party political broadcasts and helps it stand out, but if the Green Party wants to be taken seriously this type of approach isn't going to help. With the Greens' [currently polling at 6%](#) and only being [forecast to win one seat](#), a mock boy-band video isn't going to help their governing credentials.

I believe one of the YouTube comments summed up the video quite nicely with "So this is politics now?"

Sadly yes, this is what politics is now. Rather than wasting time on political boy bands, [celebrity endorsements](#) and

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[squabbling on Twitter](#)

, the parties should focus on answering questions about the [holes and omissions in their manifestos](#)

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