

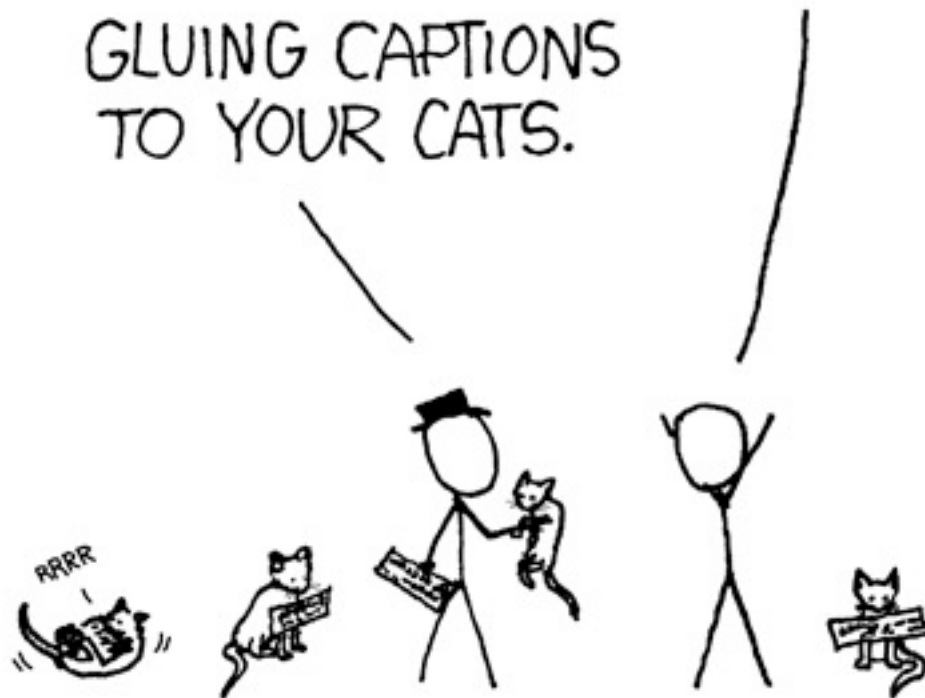
Clicktivism, Churnalism & consequences of the cuteness of cats

twitter.com/smithsam
(will tweet a link to slides afterwards)

OH, HI; I'M HERE
FROM THE INTERNET.

\ WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

GLUING CAPTIONS
TO YOUR CATS.



<http://xkcd.com/262/>

Sunday, 20 March 2011

Hi, I'm Sam from the internet. I do tech stuff in service of the future.

I'm not here to say clicktivism is always bad. It isn't.



Cool it! We're not going to form a new government just to suit 24 hour news

[Wall](#)[Info](#)[Edit Information](#)[Edit Group Settings](#)[Edit Members](#)[Invite People to Join](#)[Create Group Event](#)

Basic Info

Name: Cool it! We're not going to form a new government just to suit 24 hour news

Category: [Common Interest - Current Events](#)

Description: We were always willing to wait a few days for a coalition to take the time it needed to be built, irrespective of how quickly news wanted to have something new to cover.

While rolling news was clamouring for a decision, this group got 3000 people in under an hour, and the parties took the time it needed and made announcements of when their meetings would be, and some wouldn't be for a few days. So 24 hour rolling news took that message on board, and started saying it would take time.

Privacy Type: Closed: Limited public content. Members can see all content.

Contact Info

Website: <http://www.democracyClub.org.uk/>
<http://www.TheyWorkForYou.com/>
<http://www.hearFromYourMP.com/>

Recent News

News: The rolling news channels are trying to make this urgent. It can wait a few days to be done in a stable and longer-term fashion.

Rolling news encourages everything to be seen as urgent and critical, we'd rather they considered it carefully and got it right.

We wanted it done right, not badly+quickly. Give it the time it needs.

The media is no longer panicking that it might take days.

This is good.

<http://bit.ly/coolitcampaign>

The group will stay, for when (if?) rolling news does it next time.

Information

Category: [Common Interest - Current Events](#)

Description: We were always willing to wait a few days for a coalition to take the time it needed to be built, irrespective of how quickly news wanted to have something new to cover.

Sunday, 20 March 2011

Here's a facebook group we created about 2pm the afternoon after the UK election. I invited my friends, went to make a cup of tea, and 3000 people had joined when I got back. Immediate mainstream press attention helped with that.

The whole thing was over in about an hour because the parties issued statements saying that forming a government would take at least the weekend. My job was done. The media and civic discourse was slightly better afterwards.



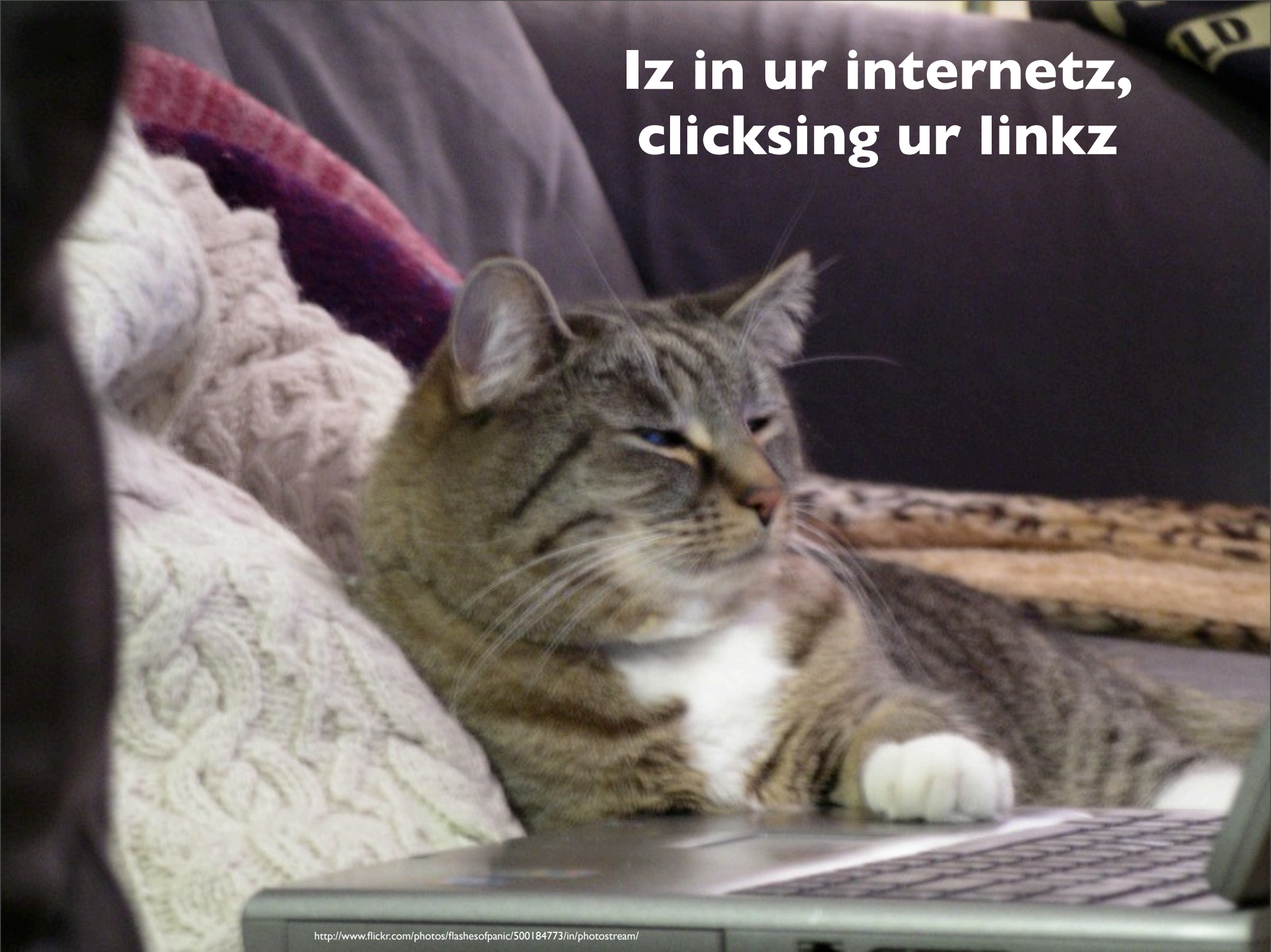
Sunday, 20 March 2011

And, if you're ever in the same position, I'd advise against creating a newsworthy facebook group when you've not slept in 30 hours.

But, in this case, it was the right tool to nudge the narrative of rolling news.

Not flooding people's mailboxes, but a show of interest.

Iz in ur internetz, clicksing ur linkz



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/flashsofpanic/500184773/in/photostream/>

Sunday, 20 March 2011

It was clicktivism in one of it's purest forms.

It matters what you use your chosen tool for, and some of you built the tools and practices others in this room use.

But just as you share good practice and that benefits the person on your left, and the person on your right, anything negative also has an impact on the person in the seat in front of you, and in the seat behind.



Text entered

Chris Atkins churnalism news stunt - 'Free Jo the Cat from Downing Street!'

Web

23 February 2011

2 years ago my aunt margaret adopted a stray cat and called him Jo. She looked after him and he settled in her Bermondsey flat. She fitted a cat flap so he could come and go and they became friends. He cleared up the rat problem in their flats, and wouldn't let anyone hold him - except auntie margaret. Then in October he just vanished and she was really distraught. We all went out looking for him but couldn't find him anywhere.

Then last week she called me up in tears to say that he's moved into DOWNING STREET! He must have ended up in battersea cats home and they gave him to ... [View full text](#)

Latest

Most viewed

Most Rated

- ▶ The Jamie Effect
- ▶ Sainsbury's becomes largest ...
- ▶ More than 80,000 children ...
- ▶ Nine arrested in raids
- ▶ Wear-Tyne derby CCTV appeal
- ▶ BBC wins radio rights to ...
- ▶ Traffic Commissioner warns ...
- ▶ Vending machine thefts
- ▶ Sainsbury's becomes official ...
- ▶ Fatal collision in North Shields

1 news article may be churnalism



Visualisation

Side-by-side



But that's my auntie's cat: Man's claim on 'stray' No 10 ratcatcher (... and there's a Facebook campaign to get him back)

MailOnline, 23 February 2011

34%

cut

34%

pasted

700
characters
overlap



[View](#)

Sunday, 20 March 2011

Here's a little website which shows how much journalists cut and paste what they're sent.

While we all bemoan that when it's from Migration Watch, is it really any better for journalism and democracy when it's from anyone else?



Sunday, 20 March 2011

We all know that getting a message out well is hard.

And picking the right message takes time, and clarity.

That's even harder with the media hordes and the relentless ticking of the news cycle



<http://www.indiatalkies.com/images/snow-avalanche22143d.jpg>

Sunday, 20 March 2011

There's no easy answer, but we do know that the some current methods of what we do are going downhill fast, and there are problems ahead.



Sunday, 20 March 2011

38 degrees explicit tactics and strategy currently takes clicktivism to it's self-destructive end.

It's not engaged activism, it's not engaged anything. It's point, click, and, oh yes, please give 38 degrees some money to do this again. Their stated objective is to get as many people to send letters as possible, so they can write a press release

There's no denying it currently works well for them; but here at ECF, the gathering of the community, we shouldn't just care about them, and we shouldn't just care about now.

red things would never have been right
yellow were wrong when the screenshot was taken

TELL YOUR MP TO STOP THE BBC CUTS

1. Address Information

2. Compose Letter

3. Preview Letter

From [edit] joasd ojas <joajdas@jaosid.com>

To [edit] Anthony Lloyd MP

Subject [edit] No cuts to the BBC

Message [edit] Dear [Insert MP name]

This weekend I noticed the Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt threatening to cut the BBC's licence fee and this worried me greatly. We all know the BBC isn't perfect, but it's worth protecting. I'm worried this government may be putting ideology and the interests of rival media barons like Rupert Murdoch before the interests of ordinary listeners and viewers.

Please will you:

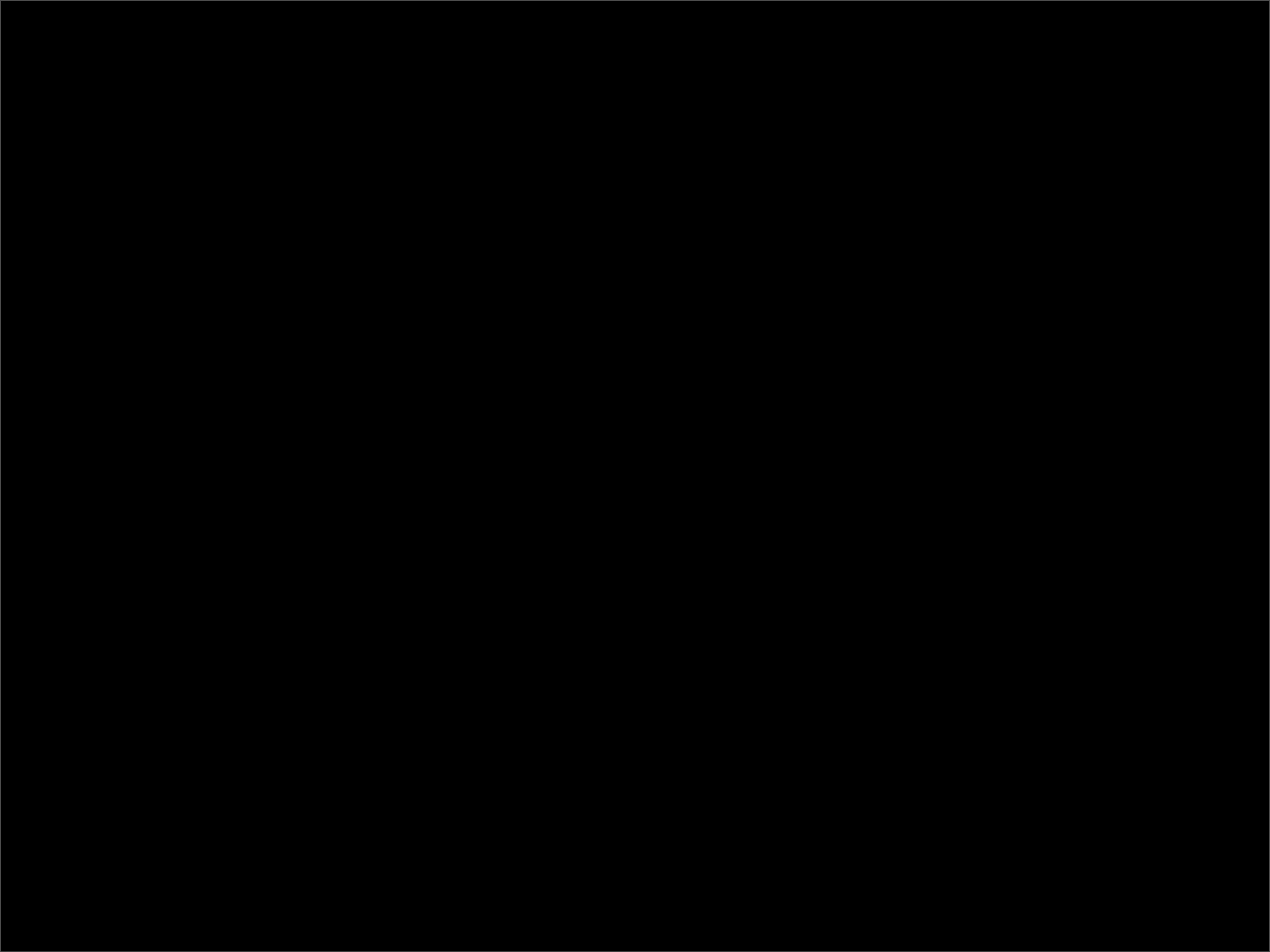
1. Raise my concerns with Jeremy Hunt and tell him I don't want cuts forced on the BBC
2. Tell me what you'll do as my MP to stand up for the BBC and protect it from cuts.

Thanks

full background, correspondence and details: <http://bit.ly/38pollute>

Sunday, 20 March 2011

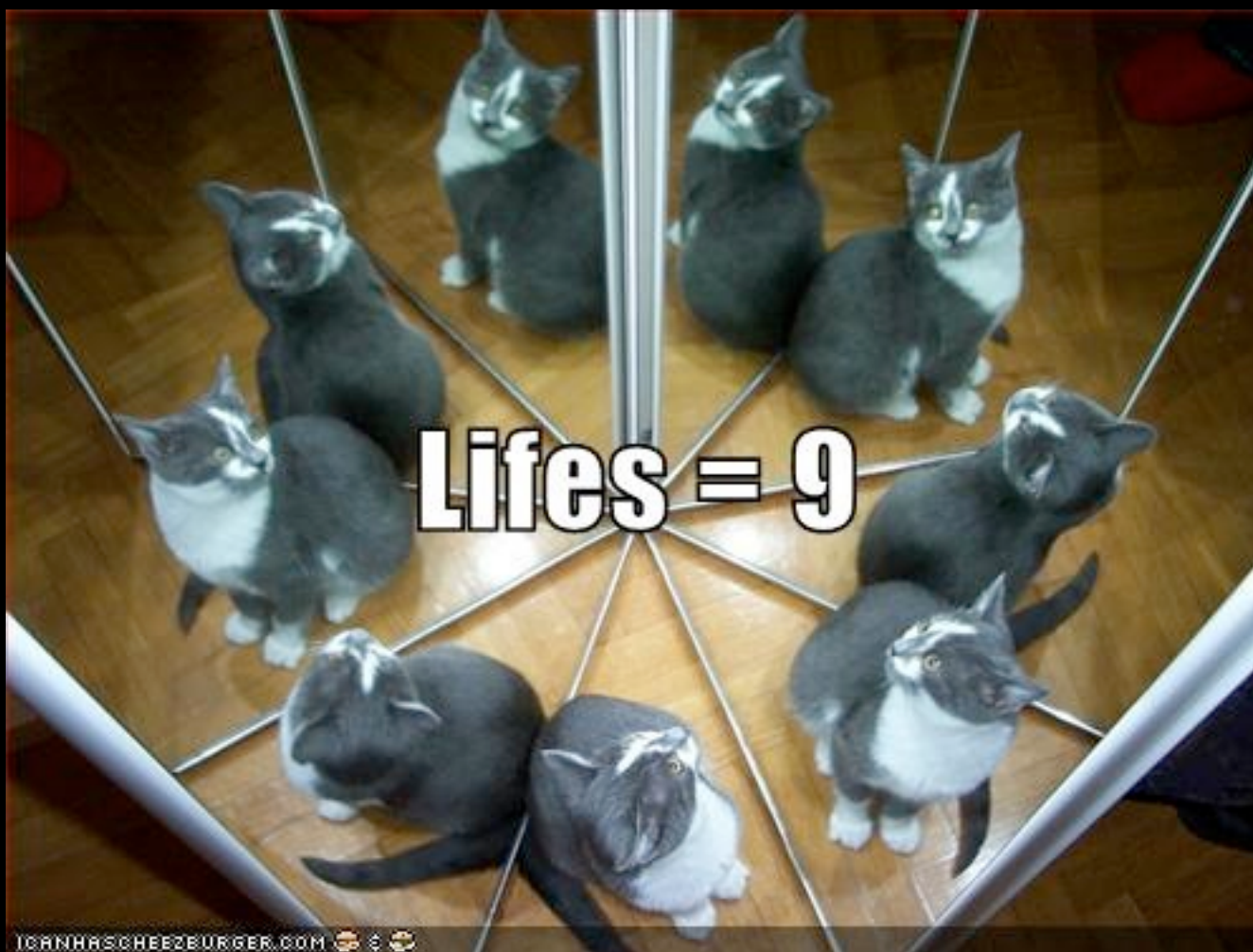
- The objective of this 38 degrees campaign was the press release.
 - When 38 degrees HQ saw this letter (I sent it them), which was addressed to "Insert MP name", and to someone who wasn't my MP, without my name, and sent from an invalid address; they see a good thing because their counter went up by one.
 - They ignore any cost to democracy and engagement.
 - When 38 degrees say that 80% of their emails are customised, they mean that the MPs name might have been added.
- Irrespective of what those changes are; one in every five messages are sent to "Insert MP name" because it makes 38degrees' look better in their press release. Some MPs are getting a little annoyed at that.



Sunday, 20 March 2011

The problem isn't that it doesn't work; like illegal fishing, the problem is that it works for now.

It's ill informed one click petitioning, masquarading as democracy, and giving all online engagement a bad name.



Sunday, 20 March 2011

But when it stops working, and it will stop working for MPs within the lifetime of this Parliament, only the big organisations will be able to afford to run certain types of online campaigns; money will matter more than issues.

I'm quite convinced that's a bad thing.

10:10 LIGHTER LATER

EMAIL YOUR MP

Before you start (click the notes to expand)

Use your own words, keep it brief, and only write to your own MP.

[MORE ►](#)

What to write (click the notes to expand)

1 Tell your MP why you back clock change [MORE ►](#)

2 Ask your MP to write to Jeremy Hunt backing clock change in the tourism strategy [MORE ►](#)

3 What else can I do? [MORE ►](#)

We use the [WriteToThem](#) service to contact your MP. When you press the preview button, a new window will open on the WriteToThem site.

[mysociety.org](#)



John Leech
MP for Manchester, Withington
(Not your MP? [Click here](#))

Dear John Leech,

Yours sincerely,

Sam

Address: *

Town/city: *

County:

Postcode: m20 4pq

Phone:

Almost there...

[PREVIEW YOUR MESSAGE](#)

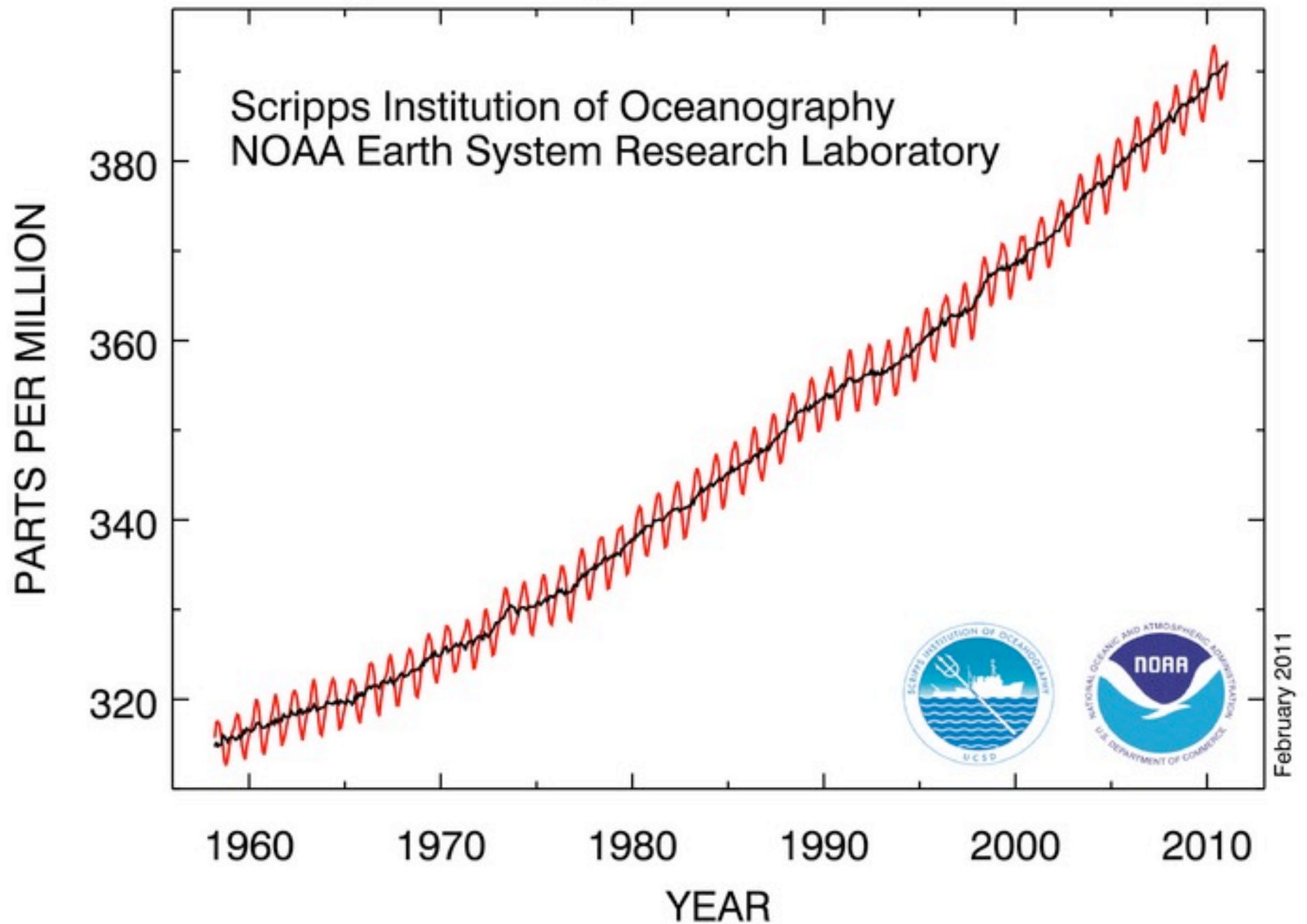
[before sending](#)

Sunday, 20 March 2011

Here's a very different view of MP campaigning. If you think stopping a committed government plan for forests is hard; getting a private members bill to be anything other than dead on arrival is an orders of magnitude harder.

- They managed it using a highly engaged grassroots campaign, with email contacts all uniquely written through that form, and a version that switched to showing the right phone number when email might not get there in time.
- It wasn't easy, and if a 38degrees campaign is the rough equivalent of extracting oil from tar sands; this a semi-magical tree where the leaves are solar panels that generate electricity.

Atmospheric CO₂ at Mauna Loa Observatory



Sunday, 20 March 2011

Is there anyone in this room who thinks that atmospheric carbon dioxide isn't going up?

Just because you don't notice the external pollution you create by a bad campaign, it doesn't mean that it didn't happen, and it doesn't mean there aren't consequences, irrespective of whether you acknowledge the problem or not..



Sunday, 20 March 2011

The mass-click-to-email strategy can look so attractive. Short term measurable outcome, right now: Yay!

It's very tempting to do the campaigning equivalent of a feeding husky dog a large bag of sweets, send lots of junk mail,
...and to do it because the campaign dog is looking at you with the big blue eyes. It'll be good for this campaign right now...



Sunday, 20 March 2011

but everyone who has ever been around a pet, or a baby, knows that if you put something in one end, it'll come out the other.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mborok/3291798379>

Sunday, 20 March 2011

pause

We need nuance, and we need care. Whether or not you define activism as "disturbing the present in service of the future" - we should at least care that what we do in the present doesn't damage our abilities in that future, it's looking hard enough already.

thank you



Sunday, 20 March 2011

thank you.