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John Rentoul

John Rentoul is chief political commentator for *The Independent on Sunday*, and visiting fellow at Queen Mary, University of London, where he teaches contemporary history. Previously he was chief leader writer for *The Independent*. He has written a biography of Tony Blair, whom he admired more at the end of his time in office than he did at the beginning.

You can contact John in the comments area or email him at j.rentoul@independent.co.uk

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Web democracy: a work in progress

Posted by John Rentoul
 Wednesday, 13 May 2009 at 09:00 pm

Stephen Fry **popped up** in black tie on Monday to offer an acid comment on the expenses furore, saying that politicians' decisions about wars were more important than charging the taxpayer to remove their wisteria. He is right, of course, although I may not share the right-on assumptions about military action.

Anyway, he was on camera because he was publicising the launch of **Vote Match**, an admirably-intentioned piece of webocracy designed to help people decide for which party to vote in the European elections on 4 June.

This gives me the chance to obtain the second opinion about which I **wrote recently**, when I tried a similar internet quiz called **EU Profiler**. That one put me closest to the Conservatives; I demanded a recount. Vote Match, on the other hand, points me in the direction of the UK Independence Party.

One reason for the misalignment may be a design flaw common to both marking systems. One of Vote Match's statements is: "All future EU treaties should be subject to a referendum in the UK." I agree with that: I think that if the drafters of what became the Lisbon Treaty had had the democratic discipline of knowing that what they came up with would have to pass the test of referendums in all member states, it would have been a better document.

Apparently that is enough, even though I did not mark it as important, to tip me into the arms of the ridiculous Nigel Farage. And **Vote Match EU**, a similar questionnaire designed to find out which of the European Parliament groupings you are best aligned with, puts me in the ID group, the Independent/Democrat group of which UKIP is the main constituent part.

Internet-assisted democracy: a work in progress.

Tags: [eu profiler](#), [nigel farage](#), [stephen fry](#), [vote match](#)
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Comments

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Socialismo o muerte.

ron_broxted wrote:
 Wednesday, 13 May 2009 at 08:32 pm (UTC)

I came out as a Green but in the absence of a real left wing party that is of interest in itself.

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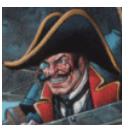


Profiling Rentoul

liam_ohuigin wrote:
 Wednesday, 13 May 2009 at 09:04 pm (UTC)

No computer program would have a prayer of profiling Mr Rentoul, hagiographer extraordinary of Tony Blair. Only a psychiatrist could work that one out.

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matgb wrote:
 Wednesday, 13 May 2009 at 11:26 pm (UTC)

Um, John?

It's given me my parties pretty much bang on the order I'm considering them.

You know that whole "New Labour a bunch of Tories who won't admit it to themselves" meme that keeps going

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around? Maybe you might want to think about it a bit?

I said yes for referendum on the treaties, and UKIP are right down the bottom of my list of matches.

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Vote Match

 peter_facey wrote:

Thursday, 21 May 2009 at 09:50 pm (UTC)

John quiz's like Vote Match are not about telling you who to vote for, simply about giving you information on where the parties stand on a number of questions compared to your own views.

I don't know why you came out UKIP on the test, but I guarantee it will not be because you simply said yes to the question "All future EU treaties should be subject to a referendum in the UK". Why? Because the Conservative Party, Libertas, the Greens and most of the Jury Team candidates also agree with you.

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