

# UK parties struggle to turn WhatsApp into campaign weapon | The Guardian

By Jim Waterson

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Political parties are trying to find ways to use WhatsApp as a campaign tool in the general election, but Britons' reluctance to join group chats involving strangers is hindering the effort.

The pro-Labour campaign group Momentum is urging supporters to sign up to its WhatsApp broadcast service to receive messages to forward to their friends, while messages targeting British Hindu voters with fear-mongering claims about a Labour government have been spotted.

But these examples are as yet nothing compared with Indi and Brazil, where WhatsApp has been credited with key roles in both electing political candidates and spreading a rash of misinformation. Hundreds of people can join a single shared chat, which can make WhatsApp an effective medium for sharing viral memes and videos.

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, of the University of Oxford's Reuters Institute, said there may be cultural factors limiting the use of WhatsApp for political campaigning in the UK.

[...]

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