

Al Gore: U.S. Political System, Democracy Have Been Hacked

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1 Comment



Former U.S. VP Al Gore suggested the U.S. political system — our democracy and our constitution — have been hacked, much in the way that the computer underworld can secretly take control of an operating system. Gore made the assertion today while speaking to the [Long Island Association](#) membership. So what was Gore's thesis all about? And is he right?

Gore suggested the political system changed for the worse when the most dominant form of U.S. media shifted from newspapers to television. During the classic age of newspapers, everyone could have a voice, he asserted. Local townspeople could write letters to the editor. And healthy debate could occur

at the local level, empowering politicians to fight for the right causes in Washington, D.C.

Once the power of media shifted to television, the secrets to political success changed, Gore asserted. With TV, it costs millions of dollars for a politician to get face time and get his or her message across to the public. As a result, politicians have to spend far too much time raising money — and they're constantly cutting deals with special interest groups rather than fighting for real causes, he alleged. Is Gore right? Hmm... The VAR Guy rarely dives into political waters. But our resident blogger will offer this observation: Social media, the Internet and long-tail campaign strategies can swing the power back to the people. Bloggers often break the big news these days. And politicians can leverage small donations from thousands of backers over the web, rather than depending on massive donations from a few Big Businesses.

In short, today's politicians simply need to mobilize in different ways. And when it comes to TV face time, perhaps the answer is (A) less advertising and (B) more REAL interviews between politicians and the media. Surely, most major media outlets would welcome extended, genuine sit-downs with political candidates — if only the candidates took the time to grant such interviews rather than hiding behind prepared statements and sound bytes.

Gore was genuine, engaging, humorous — and ok, sometimes longwinded — during today's LIA luncheon. There was no script. LIA President Kevin Law managed a Q&A with Gore for roughly 90 minutes. Law raised real issues. There were hardball questions. In short, Law was prepared for his time with Gore. And Gore was willing to answer the questions — nearly non-stop.

Whether you prefer TV, the Internet or newspapers — the point is this: Real dialog can still happen. If only the media — and our politicians — allowed it to happen.