

Transport for London

**LU TV Series  
Research Debrief  
11097**

**5<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London



# Contents



Background, objectives and methodology

Headlines from the research

The context

Response to the series

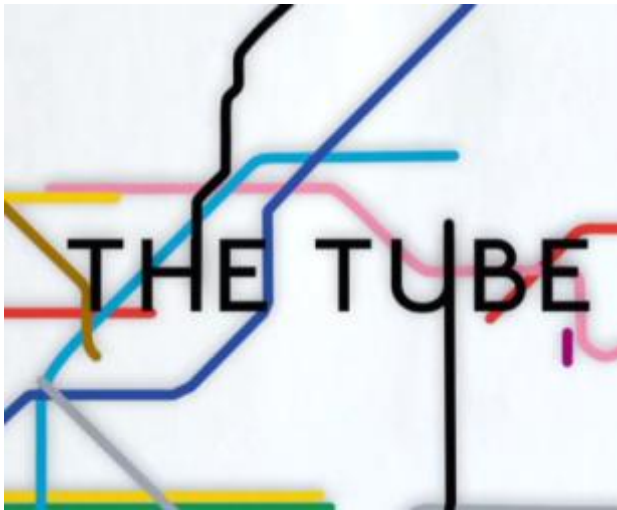
How the series is influencing perceptions of LU

Media discourses around LU

Looking forwards

Appendix

## Background



- A TV series that takes a look behind the scenes at London Underground (LU) has been put together by a production company
- The six part series aired between 20<sup>th</sup> February and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2012 on BBC2
- Transport for London would like to understand customer response to this series and what impact it has on people's perceptions of LU
- Whilst quantitative brand tracking will provide feedback in terms of the impact of the TV series on brand momentum and key programme diagnostics, qualitative research was also required to take a more exploratory and in-depth approach to understanding the impact of the series with customers

# Objectives

## **Overall**

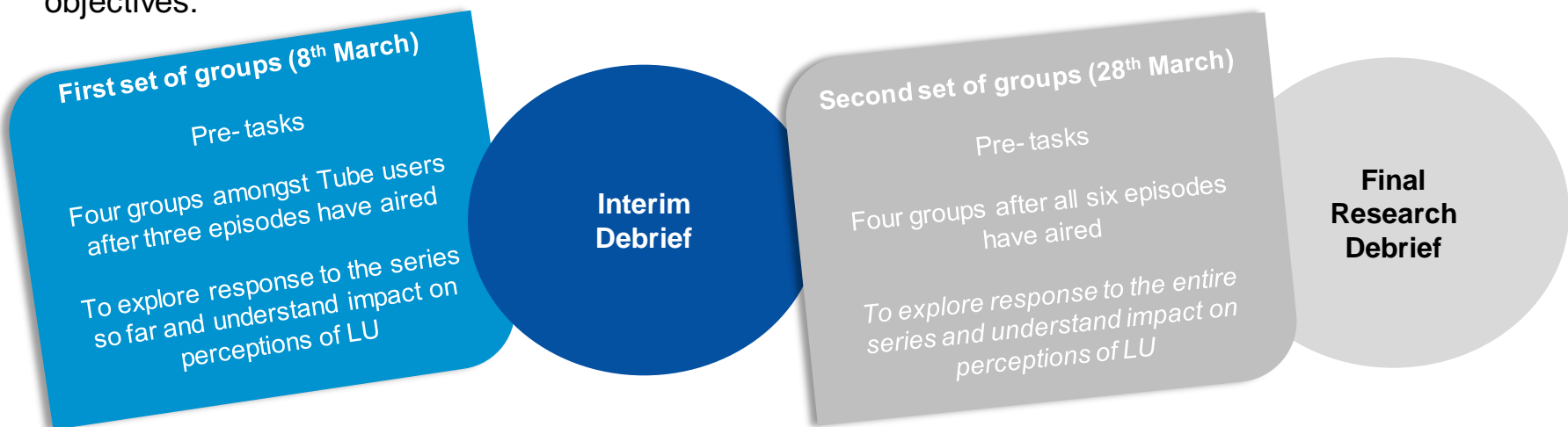
- *To explore customer response to the series*
- *To understand impact of the series on perceptions of LU*

## **Other objectives**

- *To measure sentiment towards LU within media/social media prior to the series and while the show is on air*
- *To measure social media/media buzz around the series while it is being aired, to understand the impact of the series*

## Research approach

- The qualitative approach combined customer research and discourse/social media analysis to meet the objectives:



### Discourse/social media analysis

- To measure sentiment towards LU within media/social media prior to the series and while the show is on air
  - To measure buzz around the series while it is being aired, to understand impact of the series

- Pre-task involved recording advocacy towards LU prior to watching the series, and then recording thoughts about each episode and impact on day to day life
- Research conducted by 2CV in March 2012

## Research sample

- 8 x 1 hour focus groups
- Each group contained a mix of people who felt positively, neutrally and negatively towards LU

### Took place after three episodes

| Group | Lifestage      | Primary journey type |
|-------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1     | Pre-family     | Commuter             |
| 2     | Younger family | Leisure              |
| 3     | Older family   | Commuter             |
| 4     | Post-family    | Leisure              |

### To take place after all six episodes

| Group | Lifestage      | Primary journey type |
|-------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1     | Pre-family     | Leisure              |
| 2     | Younger family | Commuter             |
| 3     | Older family   | Leisure              |
| 4     | Post-family    | Commuter             |

# Headlines from the research

## Headlines from the research

- Customers found the series highly engaging and the overall impact on perceptions of LU has been very positive, helping to build understanding and empathy for LU by:
  - Educating customers about the system and upgrades, and challenges faced
  - Humanising the Tube through the positive portrayal of LU staff and giving LU more of an identity as an organisation
  
- However, there is some evidence that providing customers with more information about the Tube can raise expectations
  - Setting new standards that they expect LU to meet
  - Causing some customers to become more critical
  
- Aspects of the TV series that help to build empathy towards LU should be considered for future LU comms development
  - Treating customers as stakeholders
  - Encouraging customers to be less me-centric and think outside of their own journey



# The context

## Relevant insights from previous Tube research



### *People have a me-centric approach to Tube travel*

- Focus on getting from A to B
- Can be quite closed off from things going on around them



### *Day to day experiences on the Tube have a powerful impact on perceptions of LU*

- Bad experiences can be more easily recalled than good ones
- People want to feel in control and can react badly if they feel out of control



### *Customers want to be treated as stakeholders*

- People have a sense of pride in transport system and enjoy being told about the Tube's heritage
- Appetite for information about the Tube system and TUP – the bigger picture and future plans

*Providing useful context to our exploration of customer response to 'The Tube'*

# Response to the series

# 'The Tube' generated a lot of engagement and positivity

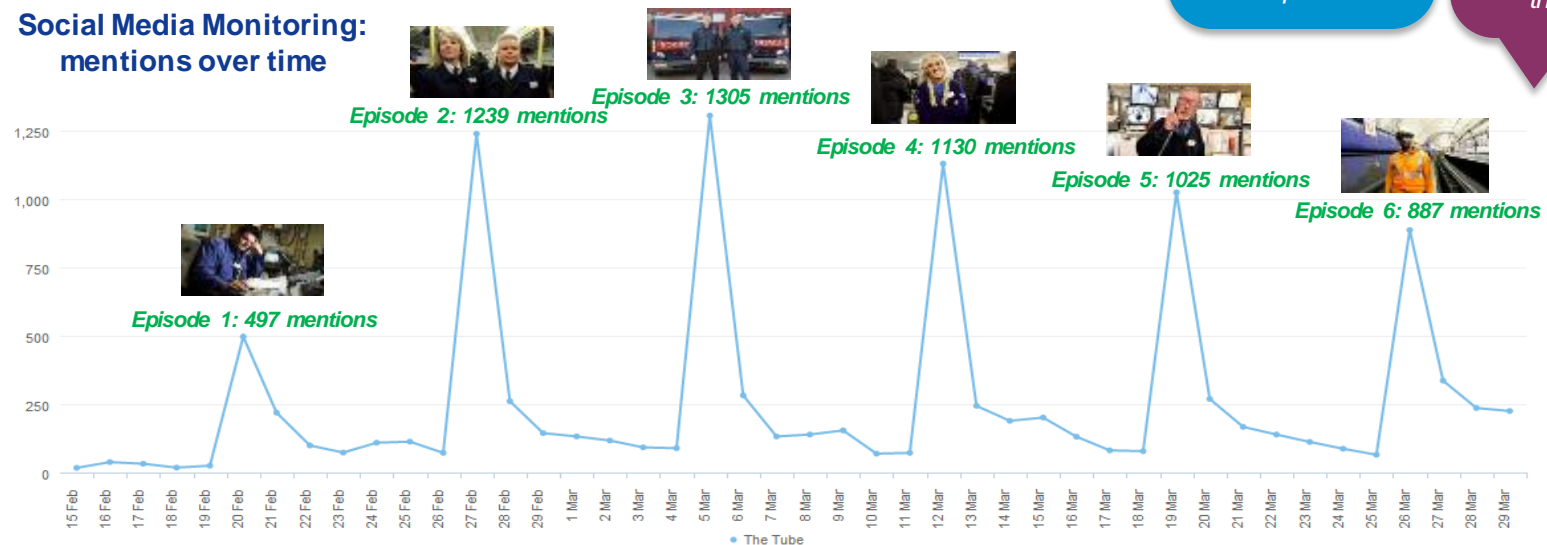
- The show receives a very positive response from customers and the media
  - Seen to be an exciting, informative and revealing behind the scenes documentary series
  - Felt to provide a balanced view so considered to be credible
  - Generates a lot of discussion amongst friends and online (see below)

*I really enjoyed it. I like the way they peel back the layers to tell us more and more about how the Tube works*

*I was really positively surprised... this is way more personable, and entertaining than I expected*

*It's a really insightful look into the Tube and what goes on behind the scenes, I feel like I've been let in on the secrets!*


**Social Media Monitoring: mentions over time**



# Response to TV series on social media reflects this positivity

- Some Tweets about the show:





**Dominic Skuratko**  
 @DominicSkuratko

Busy watching the tube...insightful program and growing appreciation for all the hard work involved. @TfLofficial

9:41 PM - 2 Mar 12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite


---


**Mary Pasquale**  
 @Hosterio

I'm loving the tube on BBC2! Puts my commute into a fresh light! #TheTube

9:40 PM - 19 Mar 12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite


---


**HOF Home Press Team**  
 @hof\_homegit

We watched our first episode of The Tube on BBC iPlayer last night, recommend it for any London commuter, funny and informative #london #tfl

10:36 AM - 21 Mar 12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite


---


**Charlotte Green**  
 @GreenCharl

"@TfLofficial: The final episode of "The Tube" is on BBC2 right now!" Gutted the last episode of my new favourite programme!

9:51 PM - 26 Mar 12 via Twitter for iPhone · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite


---


**Kirsty Philp**  
 @KPGoesnuts

Absolutely loving the BBC2 show about the Tube. Fascinating for those with a fixation about disused tube stations (yes really).

9:17 PM - 26 Mar 12 via Twitter for BlackBerry® · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite


---


**Charlie Bailey**  
 @CharlieLBailey

I'm gonna sound utterly geeky now... but BBC2's 'The Tube' is one of the most interesting things I've seen in a long time.


Retweeted by BagEndBags MaryLewis

---


**Philip Downer**  
 @frontofstore

Riding on the Tube after last night's BBC2 show is, well, thought-provoking at the very least. It's an extraordinary system.


---


**Polly Anna Edwards**  
 @PollyAEdwards

"the tube" is my new favourite program ever ever

9:50 PM - 27 Feb 12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite

---


**Conor Ryan**  
 @Jblazel

Watching the tube on iplayer and I must say it is quite fascinating to see how it all works :)

9:34 PM - 2 Mar 12 via Twitter for iPhone · Embed this Tweet  
 Reply Retweet Favorite

## Four core themes emerged from the series



### 1. People

- *Characters*
- *TfL staff care and passion*
- *Customers' bad behaviours*



### 2. The System/ Organisation

- *The scale of the operation*
- *Heritage/pride*



### 3. Tube Upgrade Programme

- *Communicating the plan*



### 4. Questions about what's not covered

- *Detailed information about TUP investment and ROI*
- *Safety*
- *Political aspects of the Tube*
- *The realities of less helpful staff*

*People in the show are the most talked about element, but other core themes also came through in the social media and customer groups*

# 1. People: the characters are entertaining and draw people in

- Charismatic and caring TfL staff are an extremely engaging element of the show
  - Characters felt to be warm and touching
  - Add humour to the series which is enjoyed
- Characters are a feature of the show that generate the most activity online
  - During episodes characters often 'trend' on social networks eg [#TimPinn](#) and the customer service assistant at [#Morden](#)



*I love the people and the characters are amazing – the counsellor guy was really touching and the guy at Morden was hilarious*

*I think Tim Pinn might cheer me up a bit, it would just add a bit of colour to your journey*

## Tim Pinn's fan page on Facebook



*Characters are a memorable part of the show and have a humanising effect on LU*

# 1. People: TfL staff care and passion surprises people

- The good nature, hard work and pride of TfL staff is also an engaging and often surprising part of the show
  - Ground staff come across as committed employees
  - Senior staff come across as caring and hands on
- The fact that many staff members are long term employees emphasises staff dedication
- As a result of the show some respondents approached staff to greet them and thank them

*When you see how much they care it makes you care a bit more, you think, I generally respect what you are doing*

*They are so brave. That woman at Camden who had to fight off the people trying get into the station, they put themselves on the line in that job*



*I liked David Waboso you could really see he had a stressful job but was doing his best to get it all done, and he loved it*

**Providing insight into the roles of staff members generates respect towards staff and starts to encourage a less me-centric attitude amongst customers**





# 1. People: TfL staff care and passion in the show is a key topic in social media

## tube driver

**Craig Leslie** (@craiglesie) Follow

Loving #thetube tv show on #bbc - really interesting. I might become a tube driver when I grow up if I can ensure I don't have a one under.

**Ian Thompson** (@Toed161) Follow

@AdamRealBuxton i hope you watched The Tube tonight on bbc2. The female Irish tube driver from travelling tales was on it. Amazeballs.

**Louise Inward** (@LouiseInward) Follow

Watching The Tube and feeling for the staff that have to deal with a 'one under' - especially drivers. And for the people who jump.

**Laura Brown** (@cupcake\_lozz) Follow

Watching #thetube on #BBC feel sorry for the drivers who encounter jumpers :( nothing they can do...

## members of staff

**Tracey Lowe** (@tracyanlowe) Follow

I love The Tube documentary series on BBC1. Some absolutely lovely members of staff.

**LondonEats** (@London\_Eats) Follow

The tube staff themselves seem great #TheTube #BBC1

**Keith Ly** (@keithly) Follow

Catching up on 'The Tube' on BBC. Reminds me of the old TfL job back in London. Respect to the 20,000 members of staff on the Tube (Y)

**Whitney Brown** (@\_whitneybrown) Follow

Way past my bedtime, but I absolutely love #TheTube on #BBC2. I have a new found respect for tube staff

## Piccadilly line (driver)

**The Big Sea** (@tovingthetopsea) Follow

@derek\_man #thetube is a great show! That driver was SPOT on about piccadilly line!

**James Taylor** (@jay67199) Follow

This Piccadilly Line driver Dylan is a legend, he should get his own chat show where he's the only guest. #TheTube  
14 Retweeted by Robbie Garret

**Thereminwar** (@thereminwar) Follow

I love the Piccadilly Line train driver. I LOVE HIM!!!! #thetube #bbc

**Tag Bogo** (@tagbogo) Follow

The Driver on #TheTube BBC2 singing the praises of the Piccadilly line. Dissing the Metropolitan line. Describing the Circle as a Librarian.

**Suzanne Trotter** (@STrollerE17) Follow

Loving The Tube on BBC2, the driver's description of his beloved Piccadilly line was poetic. x

## TimPinn

**Alison Battisby** (@Alisonbattisby) Follow

If you are watching #TheTube then be sure to like Tim Pinn (Warwick Ave Tube Legend) on Facebook: [ow.ly/9t5nB](https://ow.ly/9t5nB)

**Lisa** (@l47y\_Lisa) Follow

RT @samjustsamayah: I think Tim Pinn needs a chat show. Call it Timping or something #TimPinn #thetube

**Nic Schofield** (@NicSchofield) Follow

Watching 'The Tube' on BBC1. What a guy Tim Pinn is! Love him! #legendinthemaking

**Ruth Quinn** (@RuthieQuinn) Follow

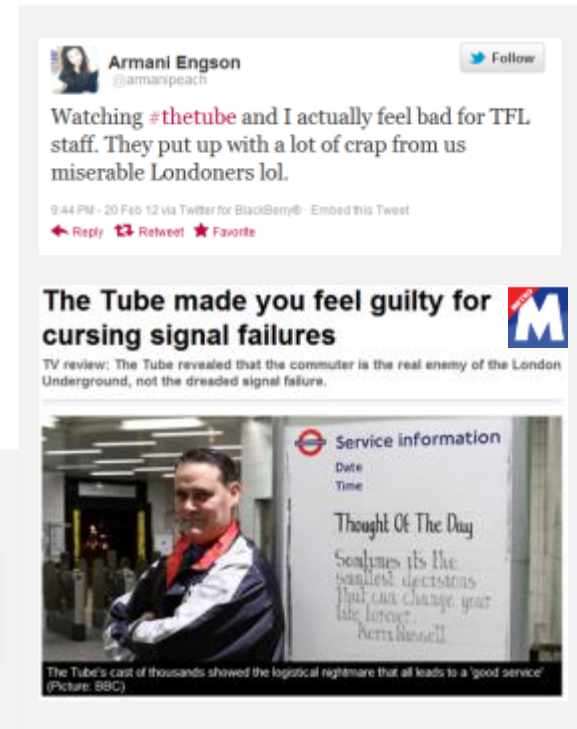
Just watched the tube. Tim Pinn is the ultimate station master! Also made me think of @tommoore82 . All in a name!

# 1. People: customers' bad behaviours shock, prompt self-reflection and increase empathy for staff

- Viewers are shocked by badly behaved members of the general public
  - Being rude to staff, making unreasonable requests, treating them in an unacceptable way
- Many are reminded of occasions when they have behaved badly
  - Show encourages them to reflect on own bad behaviour
- Reinforces positive feelings towards staff who have to deal with these customers on an on-going basis

*The Russian cleaner really stood out to me. She was expecting this wonderful place and then she gets here and sees behaviour in the Tube... 'people become animals'*

*The amount of abuse staff get, you understand why they may get short with you sometimes. They must get it from the public all the time*



*People feel empathetic towards staff members who have to continually put up with rude customers*

# 1. People: customers' bad behaviours in the show talked about in social media



**Jules Foreman**  
@tangledjules



The Tube on BBC2 is certainly insightful. What rude twats commuters can be. I'm one of those rude twats. #notgreat



**Bionic\_Tweets**  
@Bionic\_Tweets



@jamesmoran Didn't think I'd enjoy The Tube as much as I am... but it does show how rude some members of the general public can be :+}



**Andrew Ferrier**  
@andrewferrier



Watching #thetube. Gaining respect for #tfl. The public don't come off well. Inconsiderate people, thieves...



**Alina**  
@LinaLeans



No but someone actually wanted all trains to stop because she dropped her glove on the track lol ohhh humans #thetube #bbc2



**Lex**  
@lexcanroar



watching The Tube is amazing. there are people who have to deal with the awful humans on the underground daily & still do it with a smile.

Retweeted by Melissa Pettit



**Peter Johnson**  
@PAJ85



I watch #thetube every week and I really don't want to be one of those moody commuters but once again #tfl have got right on my tits #grr

Retweeted by Rob Leigh



**Itsmotherswork**  
@itsmotherswork



@GlennyRodge I watched "The Tube" on Iplayer. Am fond of people who are gentle & tolerant even when customers are arseholes. Recommend.



**Simon Chappell**  
@WYBT1



Just watching my recordings of BBC2's the TUBE documentary. Very entertaining, shows how stupid some of the travelling public can be.

7:38 AM - 3 Mar 12 via Twitter for BlackBerry® - Embed this Tweet

Reply Retweet Favorite



**DaveG**  
@Dave\_11\_Green



Just finished watching #TheTube . I feel sorry for the people who have to handle with the crazed customers

10:04 PM - 27 Feb 12 via Twitter for BlackBerry® - Embed this Tweet

Reply Retweet Favorite



## 2. The system/organisation: the scale of the operation impresses people

- People are shocked by the size and complexity of the Tube system
  - Amount of staff and different teams, maintenance, cleaning, monitoring the system etc.
- Impressed by connected nature of system and role staff play within this
  - Especially the Network Operations Centre
- Interested in the detail of how the system works
  - Sense of ownership over transport system they use everyday
  - Appetite for information about how it works

*I didn't know they had a rescue team ....and the ticket officers tracking people and ticketing them, it's absolutely amazing. I didn't know they could do that*



Martin Horfield & Richard Vize  
The Guardian, Saturday 24 March 2012  
Article history

**TV: The Tube**

You'll never force a door open again after watching this fascinating documentary and seeing the knock-on effect (a few seconds' delay for you turns into minutes by the time it gets to the end of the line). Even if you've never considered trainspotting and you hate commuting, there's something compelling about the scale of operations on view in this documentary about the patient staff of London's Underground.

BBC iPlayer

**People enjoy learning new information about the Tube. Providing them with this information can help to put disruptions in context and encourage people to sympathise with the challenges LU face**

## 2. The system/organisation: heritage and pride in the Tube reinforced in the series

- Series showcases rich heritage of the Tube which people enjoy hearing about and feel proud of
  - The history of the Tube, the age of the network
  - Facts and figures interest people
  - Ghost stations and fluffers

*The ghost stations are fascinating, I love hearing about what went on in the war, I can't believe it's all still there!*

*I couldn't believe how many people were there to see the last old Victoria line train and how young those train-spotters were!*



Ali Walker  
@alwalker64



Watching the tube on iplayer making me shamefully emotional, just cried as the last 67 stock rolled out on the Victoria line #thisisalow



### Going Underground's Blog

Monday, March 26, 2012

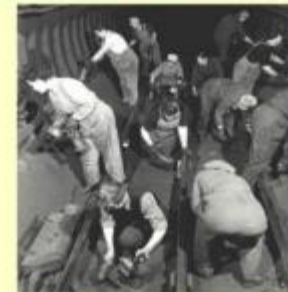
Final episode of BBC2's The Tube Documentary - Fluffers, Ghost Stations & Rats

The soap, and early, final episode of BBC2's documentary on London Underground staff goes 'Down in the Tube Station after Hours' (with snippets to The Jam's 'Songol') and looks at what happens in the four-hour window when the power is off. [The Tube](#), a six part series airing each Monday at 5pm, takes a behind the scenes look at the day-to-day running of the Underground. Tonight's episode focusses on overnight maintenance.



Getty Images/Photo: iStockphoto

The film crew follow a number of Tube workers - from hard-working Bulgarian cleaner Vlastina, who is amazed that the British government pays for people not to work, to 23-year-old Flemish 'fluffer' heading his gang of 'fluffers' getting three and six from the beasts.' 'Fluffing is not what you might be thinking about the more modern day use of the term referring to adult toys, but was (and apparently still is) the name given to people who clean all the fluff from Tube tracks. This was very much a female occupation in the past & they were also known as Fluffers. The picture of the women below was taken in 1952.



*Highlights the Tube's cultural significance and evokes a sense of pride in the Underground*

## 2. The system/organisation: heritage and pride in the Tube discussed in social media



**Richard Truscott**  
@rtruscott



**HeritageBSU**  
@HeritageBSU



**Chris Muddle**  
@ChrisMuddle



Find [#thetube](#) on BBC2 surprisingly moving and gripping, especially this week, & I normally hate reality TV. Also makes me proud of London

BBC [#TheTube](#). Down St station - a heritage project in the making! Tube war HQ, grey room, 'ghost tube stations' - why isn't this a museum!?

Love BBC2's "The Tube" - showing how there's still so much to be proud of in this nation of ours.

10:06 PM - 12 Mar 12 via web - Embed this Tweet  
[← Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#)



**James Moran**  
@jamesmoran



**Keith Stoddart**  
@acidkeith



**Michelle Colville**  
@Book\_Moose



Watching The Tube, getting teary over the last ever 1967 Victoria line train. I didn't even know they existed! Yet I weep!

[↻ Retweeted by Nathaniel Tapley](#)

16 y/o train spotters on BBC2 The Tube . Made me feel wonderfully proud of being British !

10:24 PM - 12 Mar 12 via web - Embed this Tweet  
[← Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#)

Amazing hidden London on BBC2 [#TheTube](#). The history geek in me is itching to visit the ghost stations!



**Saffron Rose**  
@saffydaffyduck



**Therese Grankvist**  
@thereseofficial



**The Messroom**  
@TheMessroom



watching 'the tube' - it's great! makes me proud to be a Londoner :)

1:13 AM - 23 Mar 12 via Twitter for iPhone - Embed this Tweet  
[← Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#)

Watching [#thetube](#) [#BBC](#) makes me proud ., dunno why? wow

10:30 PM - 27 Mar 12 via Twitter for iPhone - Embed this Tweet  
[← Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#)

Caught up with [#TheTube](#) on iplayer earlier. I suspect there was probably a few followers featured on the final 1967 stock service

1:13 AM - 19 Mar 12 via Tweetbot for iOS - Embed this Tweet  
[← Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#)



### 3. Tube Upgrade Programme: communicating the plan engages people

- Series provides people with more information about the TUP than they have previously received
  - Allows big picture and joined up plan to be communicated and explained in detail (TUP comms do well; TV series can communicate more detail)
- Impressed by scale of upgrades and what plan involves
  - New trains and stations are a particular focus
  - Tangible benefits such as air con and Wi-Fi most appealing
- Appetite for information about TUP
  - People want to be treated as stakeholders/investors
- Series also educates customers on harsh realities faced and why upgrades are needed
  - People buy into the TUP narrative and play it back in the groups

*It shows me that it's not just maintenance work that they are doing, it's actually contributing to a bigger plan*

*I love seeing the new trains and what we can expect to see in the near future – I didn't realise all this was going on*



*Provides people with detailed information about the nature of the TUP and why it is necessary, which helps to build tolerance towards delays and closures*



### 3. Tube Upgrade Programme: homework tasks show customer interest in the TUP

**I found it surprising regarding the rejuvenation and growth of the Tottenham Road station and the amazement of what is being carried out by the network to create this amazing new station.**

**It made me have more respect for the capacity of the tube and what the workers and background staff are trying to achieve.**

---

It started as the best episode yet, especially after the sombre feeling throughout last week. It really got down to the details that people want to know and understand; why are there delays, why are stations temporarily closed, why are people held at escalators / gates, etc.  
I wasn't aware of the scale of what was going on at Tottenham Court Road, or indeed the whole network and the massive increases in numbers of people using the Tube all the time.  
Again though, it didn't show the lack of communication skills shown by a number of tube workers who I seem to encounter and only those being generally friendly, polite and who seem to enjoy their jobs.

***One feature in this episode was the pros and cons of the new tubes being brought in to replace the tubes being retired. I've used the new tubes, and was surprised to see the amount of problems that these brought. I've not experienced any problems, but the heated debates between the senior management showed that they exist. I felt sorry for the man in charge of the £10billion budget – he did a lot of work to bring in the new tubes, and was obviously stressed with dealing with the manufacturers who delivered the tubes with problems.***

### 3. Tube Upgrade Programme: topics of conversation in social media

- Social media analysis showing conversation topics linked to the TUP:



*Demonstrating people's interest in information about the TUP*

# 3. Tube Upgrade Programme: topics of conversation in social media

## Tottenham Court Road

**Dominion Theatre** (@DominionTheatre) [Follow](#)

Great insight into Tottenham Court Road tube on #thetube tonight on BBC2 + some great aerial footage of the Dominion (& the crossrail site!)  
 11:10 PM - 12 Mar '12 via Twitter for iPhone · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

**Paul Coets** (@pcoets) [Follow](#)

As I use it daily, it was really interesting watching #thetube to see what they are doing at Tottenham Court Road station. Great TV as ever.  
 10:29 PM - 12 Mar '12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

**Sarah T** (@Sarah\_Spence) [Follow](#)

Watching 'The Tube' - yes I'm a geek - looking forward to the new Tottenham Court Road station! Just another 3-4 years to go! LOL  
 1:28 PM - 13 Mar '12 via Twitter for BlackBerry® · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

## new trains

**Susan Smith** (@susajerct) [Follow](#)

loving the program on the Tube. The new trains with aircon look fab  
 9:27 PM - 27 Feb '12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

**Kat Benjamin** (@KAT1800) [Follow](#)

Did anyone else feel emotional at the arrival of the new train, and sad for the old train being scrapped? No? Just me again. #bbc #thetube  
 9:43 PM - 28 Feb '12 via Twitter for iPhone · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

**Heather** (@Heather1917) [Follow](#)

Watched brand new trains built by #Bombardier being rolled out on #TheTube tonight, BBC2. Made in #derbyuk

**Bethany Greenwood** (@bethg314) [Follow](#)

watching 'The Tube' and wanting to go on one of the new trains #geek  
 8:58 PM - 27 Feb '12 via web · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

## engineering works

**Gabrielle Catlow** (@\_Gabscatgh) [Follow](#)

Watching The Tube episode four. Fascinated by all the engineering of the improved lines etc  
 11:16 PM - 13 Mar '12 via Twitter for BlackBerry® · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

**Mariam Sophia** (@Marianasophia) [Follow](#)

Watching The Tube on bbc2, an amazing programme about the recent underground engineering.. My head is literally bursting with excitement lol  
 9:21 PM - 12 Mar '12 via BlackBerry® · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

**laura johnson** (@HowL\_Potts) [Follow](#)

Watching The Tube on bbc2...engineering geek inside coming out! Amazed at the new tunnels ha :)  
 8:15 PM - 12 Mar '12 via Twitter for iPhone · Embed this Tweet  
[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

## Upgrades

**Tom Martin** (@deplorableword) [Follow](#)

@JZ @jasonfried you guys will like The Tube on BBC [bbc.in/xt4M14](http://bbc.in/xt4M14) Customers + high load + information design + network upgrades

**Phil Holmes** (@philholmes) [Follow](#)

New episode of #TheTube tonight - it's like BBC's Airport, but obviously about the Tube. All the excitement about upgrades and tickets...

**Annie Mole** (@AnnieMole) [Follow](#)

Upgrades: subject of tonight's #TheTube on BBC2 9pm [bit.ly/zWwfcz](http://bit.ly/zWwfcz) @norwegiancheese @geofftech video on Victoria line in my post

**John Monty** (@sondextrafesuk) [Follow](#)

Upgrades feature on 4th episode of BBC2's The Tube: The fourth episode of BBC2's documentary on London Undergro... [bit.ly/zijjSJ](http://bit.ly/zijjSJ)

## 4. However, the series can raise questions about topics not covered

- A lot of detailed information is provided about many aspects of the Tube, which can lead to questions about areas that are not covered, and scepticism around why this has been left out

- **Detailed information about TUP investment and ROI**

- Want to be treated as investors and told the whole story
- There is an appetite for more information about the TUP vision, how fares are being invested and what future plans will be

*(I'd like to know) a bit more detail on how upgrades will benefit you, how you get bang for your money, and exactly where the money is going and how much*

- **Safety**

- 'One under' and people falling onto track discussed but solutions not provided

*What are they going to do about the suicides? Poor drivers, it must be awful for them*

- **The political aspects of the Tube**

- Customers wonder why strikes and unions not mentioned



- **The realities of less helpful staff**

- Scepticism about positivity, staff not always as friendly as they are in the show



*Customers are interested in other topics about the Tube;  
could these information needs be supported?*

**How the series is  
influencing  
perceptions of LU**

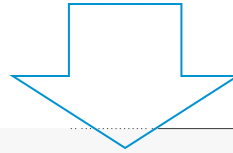
# The series can have a transformative effect on brand perceptions

Before the series starts....

## Task 1: My opinions on the Tube

*Written below are your thoughts on the Tube that you mentioned when speaking to your recruiter. Please feel free to add any additional thoughts that come to mind before you start watching the programme.*

The London underground is busy, we are packed in like sardines and it is very frustrating when you are paying so much money and you don't even get a seat. There is no air con and you can get very hot this needs to be sorted out as you end up getting very stressed before you have even reached your office



After watching the series....

*I've completely changed my views on the tube now having just read my first statement! I'm still looking at alternative routes as still find it too busy and hot but will keep trying it out to see if new trains make a difference and all the work being done on air cons etc.*

*I see it as an institution now, one to be proud of. I even started to enjoy the smell of it now, nostalgic!*

*My partner spoke to another teacher at school who says it has completely changed their views on the tube, much more positive about it now.*

**Series helps to build an understanding and tolerance of the system and TUP**

## Overall, the series has had a positive impact on perceptions of LU



### Humanising the Tube

- Builds an understanding of the roles of staff at all levels, from senior to ground staff
- Reflects on LU as an organisation - gives it more of a personality
- Makes people feel warmer towards LU



### Educating customers

- Provides people with new information about how the holistic system operates and gives customers a detailed picture of the TUP
- With this context, customers are more appreciative of the scale of operations/upgrades and claim to feel more understanding of delays and closures
- Consider what is going on beyond their journey/route



### Generating empathy

- The portrayal of day to day experiences and responsibilities of staff and the scale of operations makes people feel empathetic towards LU
- A greater understanding of what goes on behind the scenes encourages people to make more allowances for disruptions

*The series allows people to understand the bigger picture in terms of the Tube system and upgrade programme, and gives LU more of an identity as an organisation, helping them to empathise with LU*

## However, educating customers can raise expectations around the Tube

- Providing new information about aspects of the Tube can lead to raised expectations and start to set new standards:

*If I'm stuck in a tunnel then why doesn't the man in the network operations office tell me what's going on or warn me before I get on – I know that they're watching*

*I was surprised that it was so organised. Central control unit, its almost like an airport. But I had to wait 10 minutes to hear about a signal failure the other day, surely they knew straight away!*

*Why hasn't anything been done for 40 years in terms of upgrading the Tube? Surely they should have started this sooner*

*It makes you wonder, why can't they have those barriers they have on the jubilee line at every platform, it seems like people under the train is quite common and they shouldn't just let people continue to jump or fall in front of trains*

*Why haven't I heard about the upgrades before? I hope they plan to keep us informed going forwards*

*If they have all those ghost stations not being used but there is overcrowding, why don't they just open them?!*

***While there is an appetite for new information about the Tube, turning people into 'experts' can cause people to become more critical***



# Media discourses around LU



## Blogs continue to celebrate LU's heritage and pride

### Tube is steaming ahead to its 150th anniversary

DRINKERS in west London could be forgiven for thinking they'd had one too many on Saturday night. In scenes that would have had even Sherlock Holmes scratching his head, anyone out and about after lam might have spotted a steam train at Baker Street station. But their eyes were not deceiving them – it was just London Underground gearing up for its 150th anniversary. The company, which reaches the mile-

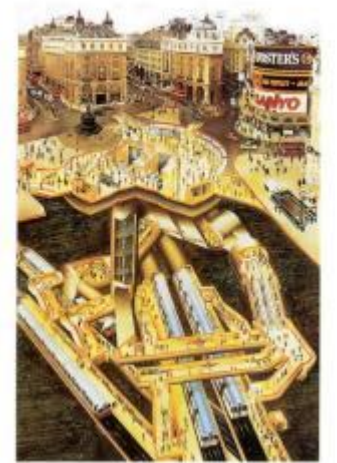
by SONIA ELKS

Baker Street. Modern Tube trains also ran alongside the 1923 locomotive to make sure it would not disrupt normal commuter services. London Underground bosses hope the revival of steam will attract a large number of visitors to the world's oldest underground train network. A first-class carriage from 1892 and a Victorian locomotive are also being in-

- Positive narrative about LU's cultural significance and rich history, primarily on blog sites but also some mainstream media



- Coverage on some blogs has complemented TV series coverage of LU's heritage by adding more detailed information about these aspects of the Tube



*Focus in the media on the cultural importance of the Tube sits alongside coverage of LU's rich heritage on the TV series and reinforces pride around the Tube*

## However, disruptions and delays continue to dominate the news

“Jubilee line hit by failure on eve of new service”

“Tube chaos as Metropolitan line weekend work overruns”

- Media coverage remains largely negative as disruptions and delays dominate headlines about the Tube
  - Service failures, alleged mismanagement and negative incidents are a reoccurring theme in London media
  - Question over whether system will be able to cope during the Olympics
- Blame is placed firmly on TfL, LU management, contractors or even staff

Disruption: Jubilee line commuters

Delays: The Victoria line opened two and a half hours late this morning



*Tens of thousands of commuters suffered major disruption with a huge part of the Victoria line suspended. Services failed to start on time between Brixton and Highbury & Islington after London Underground (LU) night engineering work failed to finish on time*  
 – Evening Standard, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2012

Service update

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Bakerloo           | Severe delays   |
| Central            | Severe delays   |
| Circle             | Severe delays   |
| District           | Severe delays   |
| East London        | Severe delays   |
| Hammersmith & City | Severe delays   |
| Jubilee            | Severe delays   |
| Metropolitan       | Severe delays   |
| Northern           | Severe delays   |
| Piccadilly         | Severe delays   |
| Victoria           | Part suspended  |
| Waterloo & City    | Planned closure |

*Positive image of LU in TV series battling against negative media backdrop*

# The politicised Tube is also a key narrative in media

**“Boris says he will put an end to Tube strikes with driverless trains”**

**“Ken Livingstone plans to open two new Underground lines if elected”**

**“Ken Livingstone promises to lower fares”**

**As long as the technology exists for it to be done safely there is no reason why we shouldn't introduce driverless trains**  
 – BBC News, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2012

- **LU entangled in political discourse around forthcoming elections**
  - **Focus on candidate pledges around the Tube can emphasise present shortcomings**
- **Coverage of strikes and unions depicts a toxic relationship between LU staff and management**
  - **Reflecting badly on LU**

**If we have a 24-hour city, you have to have a transport system to go with that**  
 – Metro, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2012

**We want more! £500 'bribe' given to Tube workers not to strike during Olympics isn't enough, says union**

**Green Party pledge to make third of Tube 'step-free'**

*Political aspects of the Tube put LU in a negative light*

# Looking forwards

## How will the positive influence of the series on perceptions of LU play out in the long term?

- While the show has had an overall positive impact on perceptions of LU in the short term, negative media discourses may cause some of the positivity and empathy felt towards LU to be forgotten
  - Discourses around *delays and disruptions* and *the politicised Tube* dominating the media
  - Day to day media influence impacting customers' attitudes to LU
  
- Day to day experiences on the Tube also have a powerful influence on perceptions of LU, and a bad experience can effect positive attitudes towards LU

The screenshot shows three tweets from Twitter. The first tweet is from Kevin Bakhurst (@kevinbakhurst) who says: "After watching #TheTube on bbc2 last week I had some sympathy for London Underground. After travelling on tube tonight-I don't. Awful." The second tweet is from Mista Zelli (@Corzelli) who says: "After watching #TheTube last night I appreciate London Underground a bit more or at least until the next signal failure.. ;)" and includes a timestamp of 9:04 AM - 28 Feb 12. The third tweet is from sophie gray (@sophieGrray) who says: "After watching #thetube I began to feel sorry for the staff on the underground. Then I had to go to Holborn at six o'clock. Bleugh". Below the tweets is a blue speech bubble containing the text: "I think I'm being a bit less angry about it. I don't think that feeling will last though. I was back to zombie mode as soon as I got on the train, you're more concerned about where your going".

*Negative experiences on the Tube and media discourses around the Tube may erode positivity generated by the series towards LU over time*

## Areas of learning to be considered for future comms

### Treating customers as stakeholders

- There is an appetite for information about the Tube: the Tube's heritage, the TUP vision, challenges faced, future plans
- Telling customers information about the Tube's heritage evokes positive feelings of pride in the Tube
- Involving customers in TUP plans helps to build understanding and increase tolerance for disruptions
- This encourages people to feel more empathetic towards LU

*Now that I know about the details of the plan I'm pleased, it's in tune with our needs. But they should let more people know about this, and I'd like to see more information on their progress, where will they be in a years' time?*

### Encouraging customers to think outside of their journey

- Customers have a me-centric approach to travel on the Tube
- Encouraging them to think about other people (staff, customers) will help to humanise the Tube and encourage self-reflection around their own (bad) behaviour
- Educating them about how the holistic system operates and about the TUP will encourage people to think beyond their own journey and remind them of the bigger picture

*What that station manager at Bank said is so true "most of the people are ordinary nice people, but when you cram them all into the tube they change". It's made me see that we're all in it together and everyone has a destination to get to*



# Appendix

## 'Tube chat': response to the series internally was positive

- LU staff feel the programme is refreshingly positive – shows them a good light unlike some other coverage (news, previous shows)
  - Majority feel series presents a realistic depiction of daily life at LU
  
- Series is having a positive impact on staff
  - Reinforcing staff pride around LU
  - Informing LU staff about other roles, and helping them to see things from customers' point of view
  - Staff noticing positive impact series is having on customers
  
- Many felt BBC should release DVDs and there was large call for a second series

*What a lovely snapshot of this organisation and the dedicated staff who love their job. Another reason to be proud of working for LU. Well done, truly enjoyable!*

*I think it is the best that has been made. It portrays the staff's work life really accurately. I have found it informative for myself regarding teams such as the ERU and Lost Property, to see their side has enhanced my working knowledge. It is unbiased, informative and 'real'*

*The program reflects almost exactly the day to day life on the Underground. My friends have changed their minds about the Underground staff after watching the program. They all now tend to be more lenient and forgivable as they understand how stressful and sometimes dangerous the job can be*

*TV series received positively internally  
and many would like to see more of this kind of coverage of day to day life at LU*

## 'Tube chat': some concerns about representation of staff and their achievements

- Some LU staff feel the series oversimplified the running of the Underground system and leaves some staff unrepresented
  - Some engineering staff feel upgrades are simplified and portrayed in a negative light, belittling their progress
  - There is a feeling that too much attention was given to the NOC, leaving out the efforts of Service Control

*My only gripes are the inaccurate names/job titles mentioned by many and the fact that NOC are incorrectly portrayed as 'running' the railway. It is nice to have a flashy looking control room on telly but what about all the staff who manage to keep London moving, in many cases managing to do so with antique and obsolete equipment?*

*It is a great pity that only negative aspects of the VLU programme were shown and almost nothing said of the benefits of a £1Bn investment. The whole line was not closed "to upgrade 1 signal which then failed the next day". And the sensitive edge issue could have been used to educate the public rather than go on about the £3M modification works; the only time costs were mentioned*

*I've really enjoyed the programme but as a controller it is a little bit irritating that the NOC are portrayed as the ones who are "in charge" of a line and make the operational decisions when the job's up the wall. Individual Line Control rooms, DRMs, DTSM's, station staff and T/Ops will hopefully get more credit in later episodes*

*Important to consider how staff and their job roles are represented for any future documentaries*

# Confidentiality

Please note that the copyright in the attached report is owned by TfL and the provision of information under Freedom of Information Act does not give the recipient a right to re-use the information in a way that would infringe copyright (for example, by publishing and issuing copies to the public).

Brief extracts of the material may be reproduced under the fair dealing provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the purposes of research for non-commercial purposes, private study, criticism, review and news reporting.

Details of the arrangements for reusing the material owned by TfL for any other purpose can be obtained by contacting us at [enquire@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:enquire@tfl.gov.uk).

Research conducted by 2CV