## RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title Social Media Monitoring during the Games –

Accessibility

Insight into how accessibility is discussed online: how, if

at all, has it changed over 2012?

**Objective** To understand how disabled customers described their

experience of using the transport network in London during the Olympic and Paralympics, and to compare this with a business as usual period. The insight will inform Games legacy reporting and supplement other studies around

accessibility

Date October 2012 Agency Human Digital

**Methodology** Social media analysis where data is exclusively user

generated commentary. Content was selected using keyword searches around accessibility and transport across search engines and social networking platforms. In total 487 unique pieces of content were analysed of which 167 were in a Business as Usual period (February to April 2012) and 320 were during the Games period (15<sup>th</sup> July to 9<sup>th</sup> September)

## **Abstract**

The Olympic and Paralympic Games have seen an improvement in how people perceive accessibility across public transport in London compared to earlier in the year. The tube has seen the most positive change in public opinion. Manual Boarding Ramps (MBRs), staff assistance and station improvements were the key drivers of this improvement. By topic, physical access issues dominate online discussion.

Social networking channels appear to be gaining prominence, with consequences for where, and how most effectively, to engage the target audience. Despite the progress seen, further improvements are required to maintain and enhance the quality of service provision for disabled people.

## **Key findings**

The majority of content was around physical access in both the business as usual and the Games period. Physical access of the vehicle and stations both saw an increase in volume and the sentiment of the volume was greatly improved. Other areas that saw an improvement in sentiment included staff helpfulness and availability, awareness of network changes, facilities and

signage.

The largest proportion of commentary is from primary users (disabled customers), closely followed by tertiary (e.g. journalists) with a small volume coming from secondary (e.g. a friend of a disabled person). There was an increase in volume of comment from tertiary commentators during the Games.

In the Business as Usual period the largest share of commentary (43%) came from blogs compared to during the Games time when the largest proportion of commentary came from networking platforms such as Twitter or Facebook (39%).

Comparing the content of some of the key themes for the Business as Usual period and Games period it can be seen that:

- Vehicle access LU Manual Boarding Ramps (MBRs) was a focus with commentary being increasingly positive. This compares to the bus ramps where the mood was mixed as ramps are seen as good but specific issues remain
- Station/stop access Step free station improvements were generally
  positive although there were still some negative commentary. Dropped
  kerbs and bollards were also commented upon for buses
- Staffing Tube staff were commented on mainly positively (with an increase in the Games period) compared to bus staff where the picture seems to have worsened slightly during the Games
- Information Journey planning tools had a mix of both positive and negative comments. There was an improvement in signage commentary during the Games with the magenta Games signage proving useful in the main

The key recommendation from the research is to build on the existing successes of the Games. This could include bus driver training, retaining physical access measures, adapting the Games time high visibility signage and learning from the perceived accessibility successes for some areas.

Job number: 12067