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## High Speed Rail - Social Mention

1. The High Speed Rail consultation launched on 28th February at 10am. Prior and post launch I used Social Mention <http://www.socialmention.com> to gauge an indication of the reach and sentiment associated with the search term 'HS2'.
2. Social mention is a free social media search and analysis platform that aggregates user generated content from across the web into a single stream of information.
3. Social Mention measures what people are saying about HS2 across the social media landscape in real time. Social Mention spiders channels such as twitter, facebook, YouTube etc.
4. Social Mention is a free tool. This should be noted if used to compare against the results of more powerful paid for tools or services. The results produced should be used as an indication and not an exact measurement.
5. Social mention measures:
  - **Strength:** The likelihood that HS2 is being discussed on social media. Calculated by the number of mentions in the last 24hrs divided by the total possible mentions
  - **Sentiment:** The ratio of HS2 mentions that are generally positive to those that are generally negative
  - **Passion:** A measure of the likelihood that people are talking about HS2 and will do so repeatedly. For example if there is a small group of very passionate advocates people who talk about HS2 all the time there will be a higher passion score. If every mention is written by a different author there will be a lower score. This calculation also includes most frequent used keywords and number of times mentioned and number of mentions by sentiment.
  - **Reach:** A measure of the range of influence. The number of unique authors referencing HS2 divided by the total number of mention of HS2. The more unique authors the higher the percentage will be.
6. The following table shows the results produced at 8am, two hours before consultation launch, 12pm on the day after launch (1<sup>st</sup> March) and 12pm two weeks after launch (14 March):

Rating	Prior to launch	01 March	14 March
Strength	11%	20%	4%
Sentiment	13:1	7:1	17:1
Passion	35%	33%	31%
Reach	25%	31%	26%

7. The following shows a more detailed breakdown of mentions by sentiment. The results were produced at 8am on the day of launch and at 12pm on the following day:

Sentiment	Prior to launch	01 March	14 March
Positive	161	151	137
Neutral	371	445	301
Negative	12	29	8

### Strength

8. Prior to launch there was online buzz about HS2. It was known that the consultation was due to launch on the 28<sup>th</sup> and no surprise that the strength of mention almost doubled from 11% to 20% in the 24 hours following official launch. On twitter alone there were 990 tweets using the hashtag #HS2 during the period 28<sup>th</sup> Feb - 01 March. 78 pre-launch and 912 after. Strength has dipped since launch as the buzz and volume of mentions rescinds.

### Sentiment

9. Sentiment was 13:1 in favour of positive on the morning of launch. This dropped to 7:1 the following day. I suspect this result was influenced by the anti-HS2 campaign groups reacting to the launch and broadcasting negative tweets, blogs, videos etc and rallying against HS2. Sentiment has since risen to 17:1 in favour of positive as a result of pro or neutral to pro HS2 broadcasts. The anti-HS2 groups output has also slowed as they digest the DfT publications, information and data.

### Passion

10. Passion started at 35% and has double dipped to 33% and 31%. Again this can be attributed to the 'calm after the storm' affect following the announcement and consultation launch. The number of unique authors also rose during the 24 period post launch, which for Social Mention analysis, results in a lower percentage.

### Reach

11. The reach of HS2 mentions raised by 6% following the consultation launch. The rise can be attributed to the significant rise in tweets, blogs etc as both anti and pro campaign groups got behind their cause. There has since been a decline in reach as message output has slowed slightly since launch.

## Keywords

12. Social Mention lists the most popular keywords identified from within the results produced. There were no surprises, the keywords were to be expected and were consistent on each of three occasions Social Mention was used. The identification of keywords coupled with the use of Google Insights will assist us with search engine optimisation (SEO) tactics. Examples include:

- High
- Speed
- Rail
- Consultation
- Line
- Birmingham
- London

## Hashtags

13. Social Mention lists the most popular hashtags from within the twitter results produced. The usual suspects appear high up the list and are used when drafting tweets for the DfT twitter handle. Interestingly campaign groups are often using their own hashtags such as #no2hs2 #yestohs2 alongside most popular generic hashtag #HS2 to maximise reach within their own communities and the wider twitter community. Examples include:

- #HS2
- #HSR
- #HighSpeedRail
- #no2hs2
- #yestohs2

## Top users

14. Social Mention lists the most active users from the results it produces. The top result is 'admin' which I suspect is attributed when the author can not be identified. As expected campaign groups feature amongst the top users.

## Conclusion

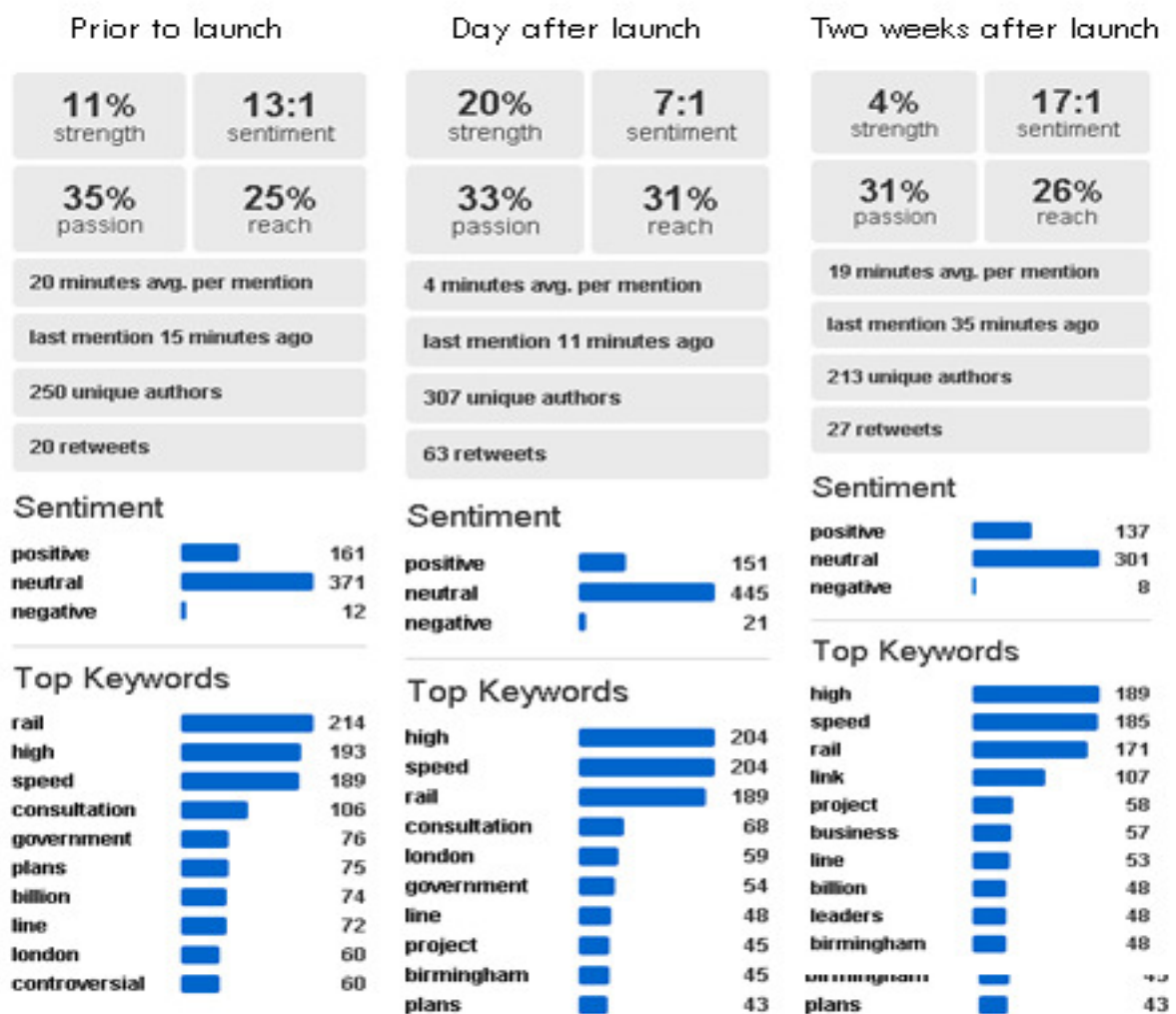
15. As expected there was a spike in measurements in the 24 hours after consultation launch when HS2 was high on the news agenda and campaign groups were very active. This has now tailed off as people mention HS2 less and HS2 drops down the immediate news agenda. Further spikes could be predicted around DfT/HS2 announcements and events. Campaign groups may also mobilise for their respective causes resulting in significant spiking.
16. It's worth while carrying out a similar exercise around the times of known DfT/HS2/campaign group activity, again to gauge reaction and monitor the blogosphere for potential engagement/myth busting exercises. Our media

monitoring dashboard will highlight potential campaign group activity and provide an indication for further Social Mention comparison.

17. The keywords and hastags will be closely monitored and used to indentify any new trends. Any patterns or trends will be fed back to policy divisions to incorporate when drafting new material. The Digital Team will incorporate any patterns or trends into the drafting of new digital content to assist with SEO.
18. The top users will be closely monitored to identify any existing or emerging campaign groups. Those identified will be added to the media monitoring dashboard (if not already featuring). The top users feature can be used for identifying and establishing relationships with pro-HSR groups. This has successfully been put into practice recently when I made contact with the content author for <http://www.yestohs2.co.uk/> and requested that they promote our HSR consultation site and re-tweet our #HS2 tweets which they are now doing.

## Annex A

Screen grab of Social Mention results for the days measured.



## Annex B

Screen grab of Social Mention keywords, users and hashtag results for the days measured.

