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Ref: (Paper)

Date: January 2012

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## High Speed Rail - Social Mention

1. The High speed rail decision document, supporting document and revised maps were published on the DfT website at 9.30am on 11 January 2012. 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. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The table below shows the results produced at 9.30am on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January, 3pm on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> (announcement day) and 3pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>:

Rating	10 <sup>th</sup> Jan	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	12 <sup>th</sup> Jan
Strength	27%	33%	45%
Sentiment	9:1	11:1	4:1
Passion	34%	25%	42%
Reach	35%	41%	25%

6. The table below shows a more detailed breakdown of how Social Mention labelled the mentions it captured. Sentiment comes with a big caveat as robots and algorithms are not intelligent enough to interpret human traits such as irony and sarcasm.

Sentiment	10 <sup>th</sup> Jan	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	12 <sup>th</sup> Jan
Positive	157	204	48
Neutral	386	351	142
Negative	17	19	12

### Strength

7. Prior to launch there was numerous digital activity and online buzz about HS2. The media anticipated the decision was immanent and much of the main stream media outlets e.g. BBC ran stories over the weekend before the announcement. It was no surprise the strength of mention steadily increased over the three day period measured as the announcement was amplified through various media and social media channels. Strength has dipped since launch as the buzz and volume of mentions rescinds.

### Sentiment

8. Sentiment had risen to 11:1 in favour of positive on announcement day and dropped to 4:1 the following day. I suspect this result was influenced by the anti-HS2 campaign groups reacting to the announcement and broadcasting negative tweets, blogs, videos etc and rallying against HS2.

### Passion

9. Passion started at 34%, dipped to 25% and rose again to 42%. I suspect the dip can be attributed to 'neutral reporting' on the decision day and rising again as the pro and anti groups digested the decision and began broadcasting their views and opinions.

### Reach

10. The reach of HS2 mentions raised by 6% post decision. The rise can be attributed to the significant rise in tweets, blog posts etc as the media reporting increased and the pro and anti campaign groups got behind their cause. There has since been a decline in reach as message output has slowed slightly since the announcement.

### Keywords

11. 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
- Line
- Birmingham
- London

## Hashtags

12. 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
- #no2hs2
- #yestohs2

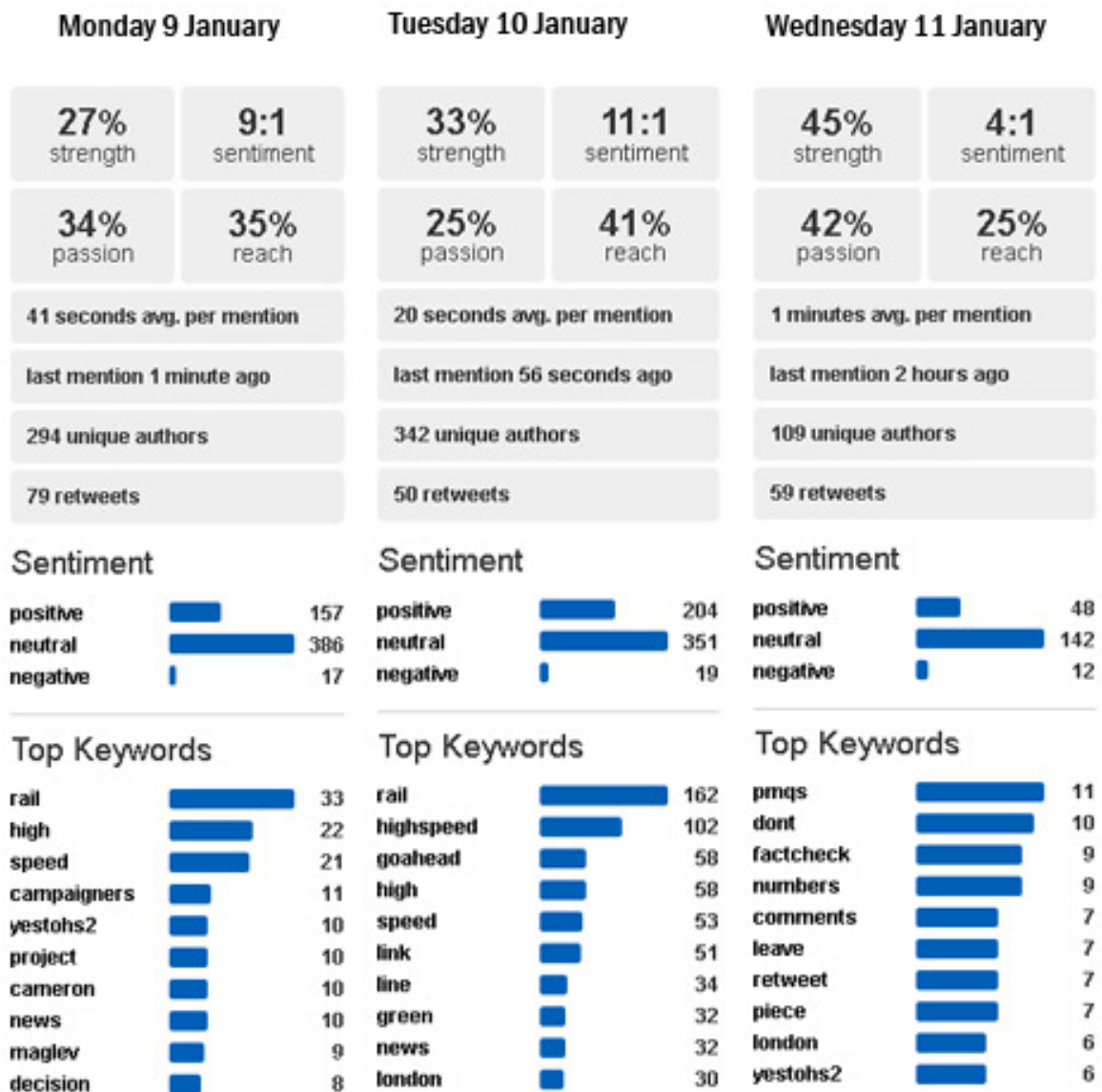
## Conclusion

13. As expected a huge spike in measurements appeared in the immediate days surrounding the decision. 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 Ltd announcements and events. Campaign groups may also mobilise for their respective causes resulting in significant spiking.
14. I propose 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.
15. The keywords and hashtags will be closely monitored and used to identify 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 search engine optimisation (SEO).
16. The top users will be closely monitored to identify any existing or emerging campaign groups and HS2 influencers. Those identified will be added to the

media monitoring dashboard (if not already featuring) and used for identifying and establishing relationships with pro-HSR groups. This has successfully been put into practice with YestoHS2 promoting DfT content more pro-actively.

## 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.

