

Insight into how accessibility
is discussed online: how, if
at all, has it changed over
2012?

Job Number 12067

23 October 2012

Today's presentation

Note: Plus detailed chart pack (available separately)

Context and Objectives

Methodology

Executive Summary

High-level Findings

Focus on:

Physical Access

Staffing

Information Provision

'How it makes me feel'

Awareness of Network Changes

Facilities

Transport Modes

Recommendations

Appendix

Context and objectives

To enhance understanding and inform legacy reporting

BUSINESS CONTEXT

- TfL wishes to understand how TfL passengers with an accessibility need described their experiences of using the transport network during the Olympics and Paralympics, and to compare this with a recent 'business as usual' period.
- This insight will inform Olympics legacy reporting, and supplement findings from an ethnographic study of TfL passenger experiences of accessibility issues.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Provide insight into the **transport planning and TfL passenger experiences** of people with a **physical or sensory impairment**, and consequent **accessibility need**
 - As expressed first-hand, by a travelling companion or third-party
- Focus on perceived accessibility issues around the **Olympic / Paralympic Games**.
 - Compare with a **'business as usual' period** earlier in 2012
- Scope is **multi-modal**: tube, rail, overground, DLR, bus, river service, taxi, cable car
- **Quantify** which accessibility issues (topics) are discussed, how much and with what sentiment (if any)
- **Qualify** underlying drivers etc., to the extent permitted by data available

Methodology

Core approach and project application

<p>CORE APPROACH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Digital provides rich insight into the digital expression of attitudes, opinions and behaviour, by analysing what people freely express across social media. Our data-set is exclusively user-generated commentary - i.e. content created in a personal, not professional, capacity - and expressed in written, visual or audio form. This content is unmediated and therefore free of any ‘at source’ research bias. Our ethnographic (‘listening’) approach blends quant. and qual. techniques and has been developed in collaboration with social & computer scientists at London School of Economics and Oxford University. 	
<p>TIMEFRAME</p>	<p>PROJECT TIMELINE</p>	<p>July – September 2012</p>
	<p>PERIOD OF ANALYSIS</p>	<p>Business as usual [February – April 2012] Olympics / Paralympics [15 July – 9 September 2012]</p>
<p>CONTENT SELECTION</p>	<p>Keyword searches for transport mode + mobility impairment + access onto transport mode, across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search Engines (Google, Google blogs, Google discussions etc.) Social Networking Platforms (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc.) 	
<p>LANGUAGE</p>	<p>English (primary): Spanish & Portuguese (independent, qualitative sample)</p>	
<p>SAMPLING</p>	<p>487 unique pieces of content, of which <i>167 = BAU; 320 = Olympics / Paralympics (including 38 pieces of commentary written in Spanish / Portuguese)</i></p> <p><i>Each item represents the views of one commentator and may be coded for multiple attributes</i></p> <p><i>Throughout the report, small sample sizes are highlighted and should be interpreted with caution</i></p>	

Executive Summary

Key findings

Overall improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Olympic/Paralympic Games have seen an improvement in how people perceive accessibility across public transport in London compared to earlier in the year.
Tube = most improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Of the 'high frequency' modes of transport, the Tube has seen the most positive change in public opinion. Manual Boarding Ramps (MBRs), staff assistance and station improvements were key drivers of this improvement.
Physical access dominates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By topic, physical access issues dominate online discussion – becoming increasingly mode- and topic-specific: boarding ramps and plans to extend the number of 'step-free' stations are seen as key issues.
Social engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social networking channels appear to be gaining in prominence, with consequences for where, and how most effectively, to engage the target audience.
Sp / Po impressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Foreign commentators (Spanish/Portuguese) tend to compare overall accessibility provision in London favourably with their home cities.
More work required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Despite the progress seen, more improvements are required to maintain, and enhance, the quality of service provision for the access-impaired.

High-level findings

Business as usual vs. Games time

It's mostly about physical access - but a range of issues matter

Changes in ranking (volume) were seen in every topic

Business as Usual

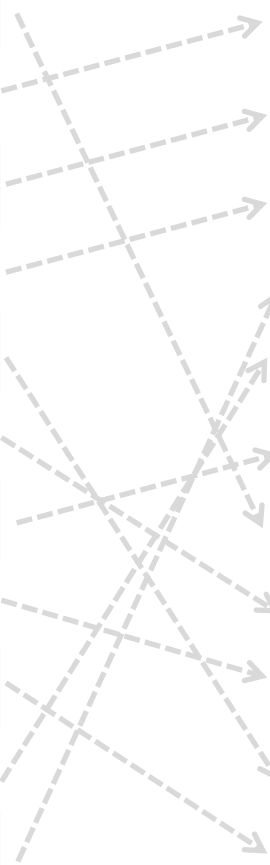
RELATIVE SHARE OF DISCUSSION (RANKED)

Physical Access - General	22%
Physical Access - Vehicle	14%
Physical Access - Station	10%
Staffing - Helpfulness	9%
How travelling makes me feel	9%
Journey Planning	8%
Staffing - Availability	6%
Staffing – Disability Awareness	6%
Signage	5%
Facilities	5%
Awareness of Network Changes	2%

Games Time

RELATIVE SHARE OF DISCUSSION (RANKED)

Physical Access - Vehicle	22%
Physical Access - Station	16%
Staffing - Helpfulness	14%
Awareness of Network Changes	9%
Facilities	9%
Staffing - Availability	6%
Physical Access - General	5%
Journey Planning	5%
Staffing – Disability Awareness	4%
How travelling makes me feel	3%
Signage	2%



In the table above, sample sizes of 6% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

In the table above, sample sizes of 3% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

In the main, people think accessibility provision is getting better

Journey planning and staff disability awareness are not

TOPIC Ranked by volume (Games-time)	VOLUME CHANGE (%) From BAU to Games time*	SENTIMENT CHANGE From BAU to Games time
Physical Access - Vehicle	+8%	Greatly improved
Physical Access - Station	+6%	Greatly improved
Staffing - Helpfulness	+5%	Some improvement
Awareness of Network Changes	+7%	Greatly improved
Facilities	+4%	Some improvement
Staffing - Availability	-1%	Some improvement
Physical Access - General	-16%	Fairly unchanged
Journey Planning	-3%	Some decline
Staffing – Disability Awareness	-2%	Some decline
How travelling makes me feel	-6%	Fairly unchanged
Signage	-3%	Some improvement

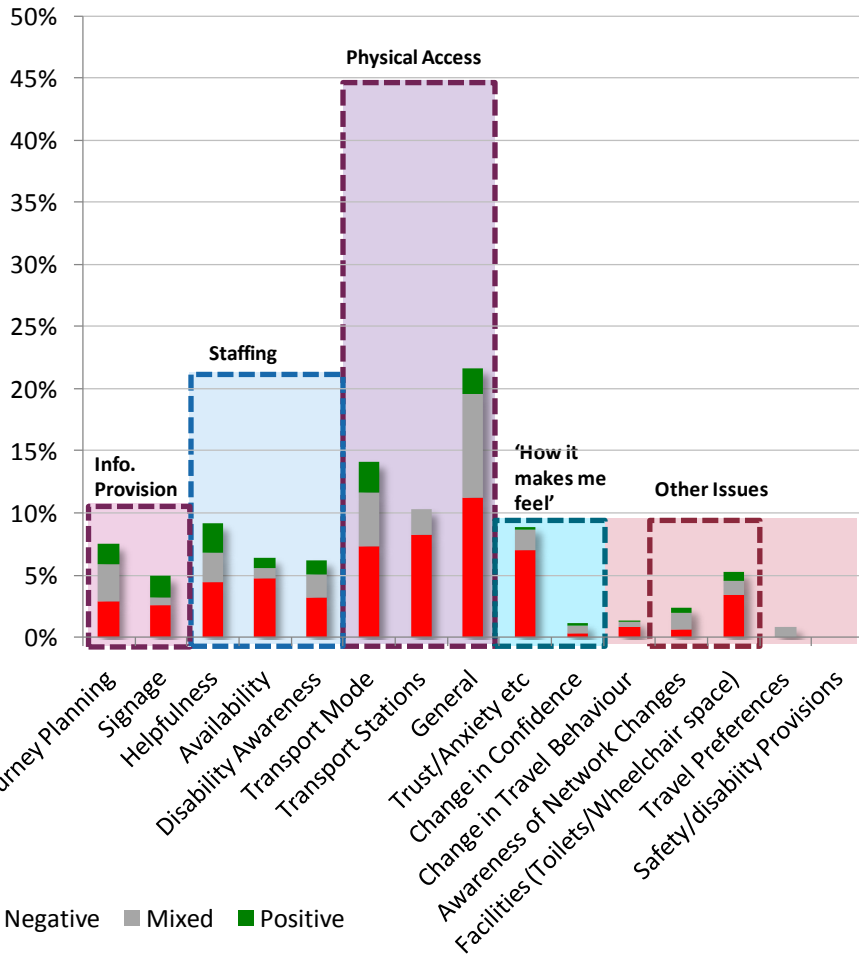
*Relative share of overall conversation, by volume

But there is still clear room for improvement

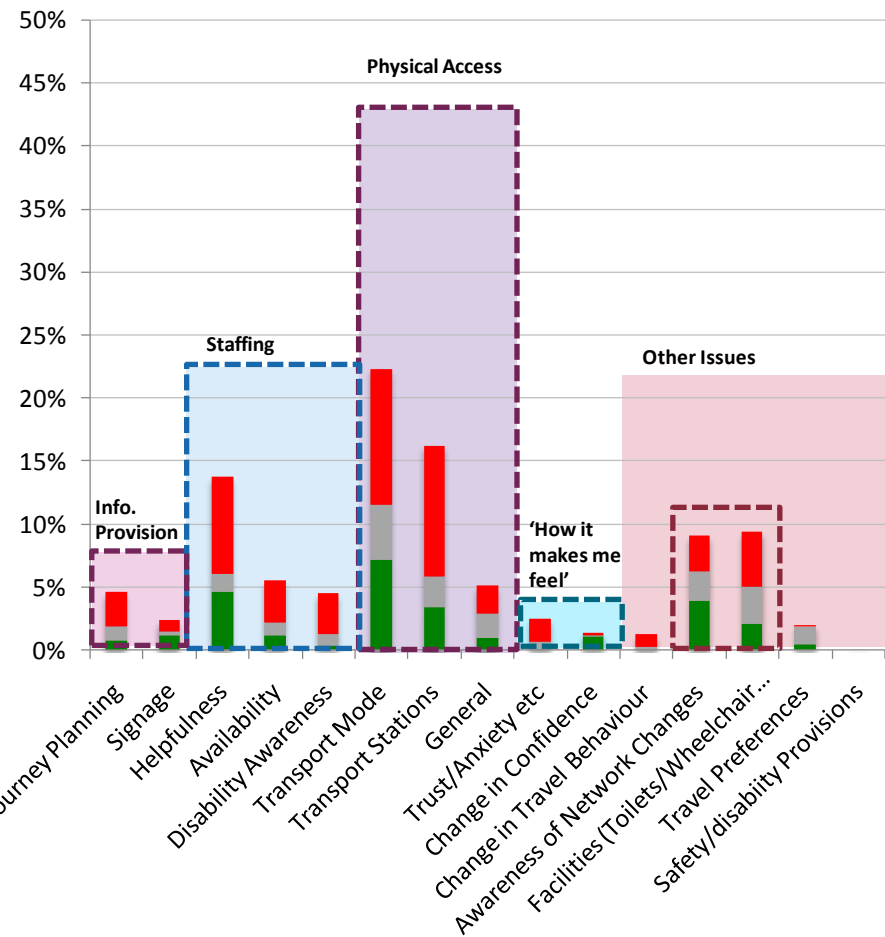
Physical access & network upgrade awareness display most gain

Shaded areas = topic groups

Business as Usual



Games Time

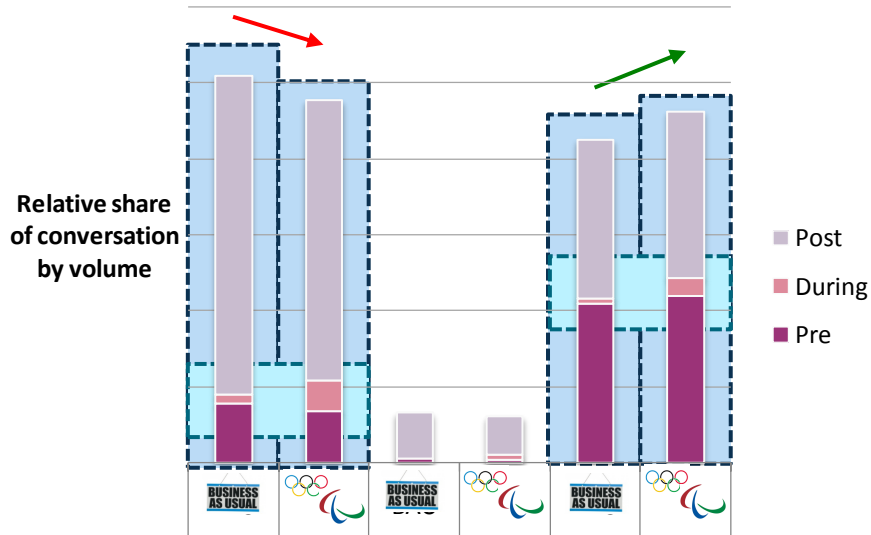


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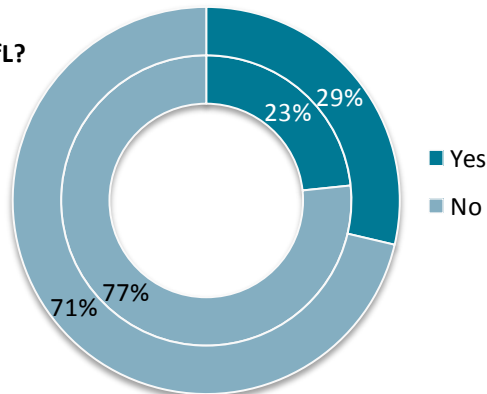
In the table above, sample sizes of 3% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

Who is engaging and when?

More '3rd person' and more 'en-route' commentary



Comments directed at TfL?



Access impaired & '3rd person' dominate

- **Pre Games (BAU):** access impaired & '3rd person'
- **Games time (OP):** less access impaired, more '3rd person' commentators
 - It's topical: increased mainstream media focus on transport accessibility

Mid-journey comments

- Increase in 'en-route' commentary
- Access impaired commentators notably using social networking sites e.g. Twitter to 'tweet' about a journey



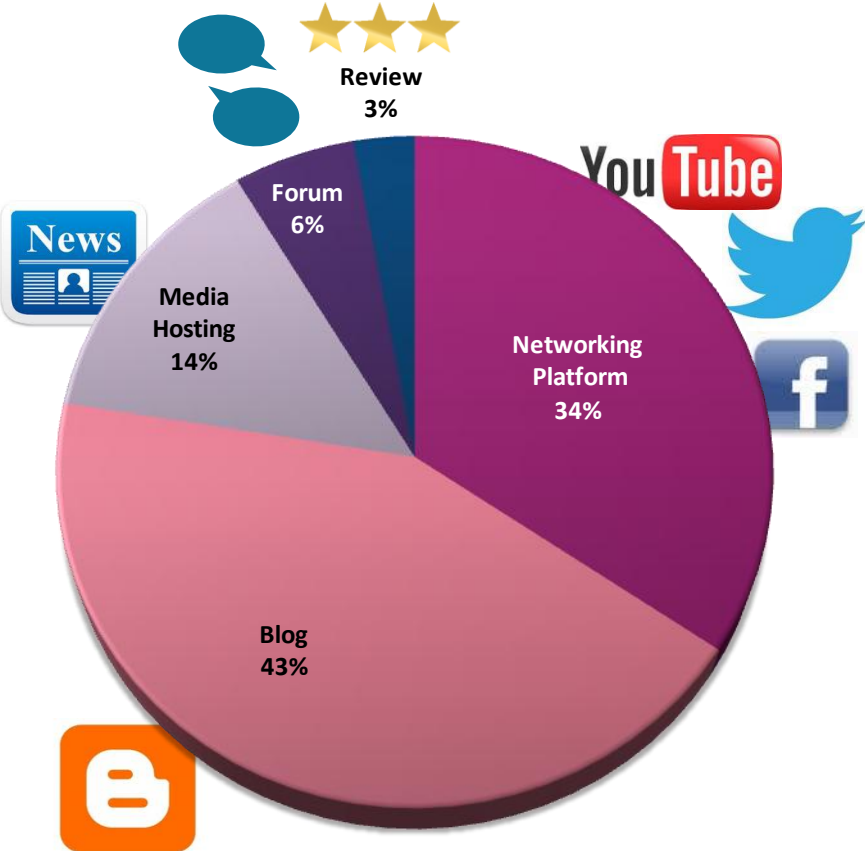
More focus on TfL

- **Pre Games:** less than ¼ directed at TfL
- **Games time:** notable increase in 'directed' comments

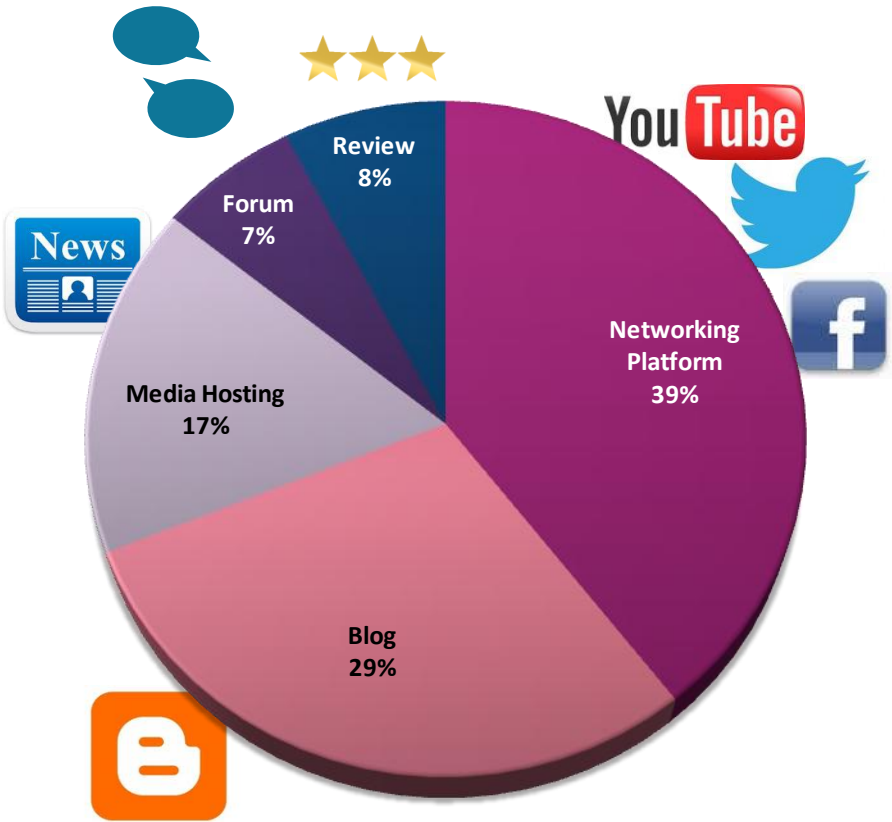
Where? Blogs (pre-) and networking platforms (during) dominate

Underlying motivations - from reflective to 'broadcast'

Business as Usual



Games Time



In the table above, sample sizes of 6% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

In the table above, sample sizes of 3% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

Why? Motivations for engaging via particular channels?

BAU vs. Games-time: channel analysis

Blogs not as favoured

- Pre-Games: detailed commentary e.g.blogs
- Games time: 'quick' (less detailed) comments, often 'knee-jerk'; more interest in **broadcasting**



Social networking = key channel

- Games time = fast moving
- Fast moving = people engage quickly
- Quick/brief comments = social media e.g. Twitter & Facebook...



Media coverage increased

- Games time: more media focus
- More people exposed to the topic of accessibility via newspapers etc.
- More commentary



'Key triggers'

- Profile-raising of online accessibility campaign groups
 - More comments overall
 - More 'directed' in nature ('exposé')



"@transportforall they have NOT addressed how a blind person finds the help point or how a deaf person uses it , lack of thought & planning"
@blindmike47 via Twitter (Social Networking)

PHYSICAL ACCESS

Business as usual vs. Games time

Physical Access: General comments make way for specific

Pre Games, more general comments made. But during...

Vehicle Access



Focus: Manual Boarding Ramps (MBRs)
 Mood: Largely, and increasingly, positive
 Who: Access impaired travellers



Focus: Bus ramps, main focus on gradient, 'lip', and malfunction
 Mood: Mixed. Ramps are good but specific issues remain
 Who: Access impaired commentators: regular users critical via blogs (pre-Games), visitors more positive during Games



Focus: Boarding ramps
 Mood: Slightly less positive during the Games
 'Ramp gradient' highlighted as a particular concern

Station Access

Focus: 'Step-free' station improvements (lifts and walkways)
 Mood: More positive, still not great
 Who: Access impaired & '3rd person', plus Games visitors

Focus: 'Dropped kerbs' and bollards at bus stops
 Mood: Slightly less negative than pre-Games, room for improvement
 Who: Access impaired visitors mainly

Focus: Lack of lifts, poor ramp access & long distances btw. platforms
 Mood: Mixed, less negative by Games
 Who: Access impaired and '3rd person' commentators mainly

STAFFING

Business as usual vs. Games time

Staffing: Not all positive...

Tube staff good, bus drivers less so



Pre-Games

- Main comments (about drivers):
 - refusal to move prams from wheelchair spaces
 - poor attitudes
 - unhelpful driving (pulling close to kerb, or erratic driving)

- Low volume of comments specifically towards Tube staff
- Majority of comments referring to 'TfL' staff, quite negatively

- Main driver of content: availability of staff for assistance with boarding ramps
- Sometimes, access impaired travellers 'left' at platforms

Games Time

- Generally, picture has worsened
- Primary commentators increasingly 'vocal'
- Increase in 'quick-fire' social networking comments to voice concern about bus drivers

- Tube staff are felt to have improved – with positive comments about e.g. drivers, station staff and ambassadors

- Staff availability/assistance still a concern, with some claims of staff being unavailable on arrival despite 'pre-booking'

"When I've taken my mother out via train before (she's in a wheelchair) we've had members of staff running to fetch the ramps or even just not bothering to turn up"

Pre Games Comment in response to Daily Mail article (media host)



INFORMATION PROVISION

Business as usual vs. Games time

Journey information: Okay, but improvement required

Journey planning tools work well, signage is a mixed bag



Journey planning

- Pre Games:
 - It was mainly about maps, with some mention of TfL's 'Journey Planner'
 - Mixed opinion
 - Some difficulty finding information
- Games time:
 - *Get Ahead of the Games* and 'Journey Planner' referenced
 - Discussed less, still with mixed opinion
 - Some 'incorrect' information and 'unclear' maps

"Transport for London has a Step Free Tube Guide which illustrates stations where it is possible to get between the platform and street step-free, or change between lines step-free. Stations where this is not possible are shown in a light grey which is nice, but utterly incomprehensible."

(INFO PROVISION) Games Time Just Urbanism (Review)



Signage



- Pre Games:
 - Fairly negative impression
 - Visual displays not 'updated' quickly, concerns from deaf travellers
 - Audio announcements (particularly on buses) appreciated
- Games time:
 - Less negative commentary from accessibility impaired travellers = improvement
 - 'Magenta' Games signage useful in the main
 - Spanish/Portuguese particularly appreciative of auditory announcements

'HOW IT MAKES ME FEEL'

Business as usual vs. Games time

Comments have become less 'general', more 'operational'



How did people comment more operationally?

Pre-Games



- Sweeping statements about the Tube being largely inaccessible or unfriendly for access impaired travellers
- Some 'how I feel' comments

"public transport is often an utter nightmare (the tube in London is spectacularly inaccessible), and so you need to pay for a car/taxi."
Pre Games 'Inequalities Blog' (blog)

Games Time

- During Games time:
 - More focus on particular issues (see physical access and staffing – already discussed)
 - Still noting accessibility shortfalls, keen to build on successes

"New stations have been built with accessibility in mind and new trains have lower platforms and boarded more easily, but most of London's Tube is unaccessible."
Games Time 'London Slowly' (blog)



Public Transport General

- 'Broad-brush' comments about the public transport network in general were a large flavour of pre-Games commentary

"The attitude in the capital appears to be 'I'm alright Jack.' I certainly would never ask but if the situations were reversed I would be ashamed ! Being disabled in London and trying to get around is no joke."
Pre Games comment via 'BBC 5live' (blog)

- People increasingly focus attention on particular aspects of the transport network, especially when addressing TfL

*"I'm a bit disappointed that there are still only 65 out of 270 tube stations **step-free from street to train**. I hoped that there would be more by the beginning of the Games: a couple of years ago, Transport for London promised more. I hope they keep the mobile boarding ramps that they've installed in the tube for the Games:"*
Games Time '2012Olympic GamesLondon' (blog)

AWARENESS OF NETWORK CHANGES

Business as usual vs. Games time

Network changes appreciated, still room for improvement

Accessibility upgrades on the Tube = primary focus



Games-time changes

- Additional step-free stations
- Platform humps
- Manual Boarding Ramps (MBRs)
- Additional staffing
- Additional signage/information

"Britain will join the euro before it's possible for the mobility impaired to get round the tube. **These ramps are just a tiny drop in an enormous bucket.**"
 GamesTime 'Fodors' (forum)

"It's not perfect but looking at the tube map, TFL seem to have gone to great lengths to promote connectivity between different lines, adapt platforms and all new stations seem appropriately designed."
 GamesTime comment against Guardian article (media hosting)



"25% of London's underground stations have gotten rid of stairs, which is a very good achievement, even though it could have been just an excuse for the Games."
 GamesTime 'Valldigna Accessible' (SPANISH blog)

Response to changes

• Universally welcomed – but more progress still needed

• Some concern that changes are only a 'temporary measure' (risk of back-sliding)

"I'm a bit disappointed that there are still only 65 out of 270 tube stations step-free from street to train. I hoped that there would be more by the beginning of the Games: a couple of years ago, Transport for London promised more. I hope they keep the mobile boarding ramps that they've installed in the tube for the Games."
 GamesTime '2012Olympic GamesLondon' (blog)

"Although the ramp and passenger assistance worked at Earl's Court, I was told the ramps were only a temporary measure, solely valid for the duration of the Games."
 GamesTime comment on 'Wharf' article (media hosting)

Network changes appreciated, still room for improvement

Why did people's opinions change?



Changes for the Games

- Additional staff
- TfL ambassadors
- 'Extra' facilities e.g. disabled toilets at major

"They have got more facilities for disabled, you can see more staff there... people feel more happy"
Comment on 'Impact Jeux Londres' (media hosting)



Perception of changes made

- More positive comments, notably from access impaired travellers and '3rd person' commentators
- Hope that changes endure

"Great to see train ramps in use & accessible toilets open so late. Let's hope post #paralympic London is as friendly to the wheelchair user!"
@dompy via Twitter (social networking)

- Very few accessibility changes made
- (Buses deemed 'accessible' prior to Games time)



- Concern that more changes should have been made for the Games
- Ramps 'should be better'



FACILITIES

Business as usual vs. Games time

Facilities on public transport cause continued concern

Which facilities were highlighted?

Wheelchair space



- Crowding and prams are issues:
- If prams occupy the space, wheelchair users are often refused entry
 - Buses often busy, wheelchair users 'turned away'
 - Space sometimes not sufficient for particular wheelchairs
 - Bus drivers poor at enforcing regulations

Pre-Games: regular users aware, still noted issues with mixed opinion via blogs

Games time: access impaired visitors more negative, issue re-highlighted by regular bus users



Toilets and wheelchair space



- Generally good provision:
- Plenty of space
 - Occasional issues with other passengers placing luggage in wheelchair space
 - Toilets appreciated, especially on newer trains

Pre-Games: regular users satisfied with space and toilets

Games time: similar perception, slightly less negative, accessibility impaired visitors were appreciative

"Trains have good space for wheelchairs and the ramps are very helpful, but the buses are just terrible and drivers are not very helpful at all."
Games Time "Terra Noticias Espana" (SPANISH review)

Some key thoughts from wheelchair users on buses

Wheelchair space is key



Two main thoughts from wheelchair users:

- “does my wheelchair/scooter fit in the space?”
- Is there a buggy/pram already in the space?”



“Double deck buses have so little space downstairs to gather people with disabilities, mothers with buggies and people with heavy luggage. The others are supposed to go upstairs and then try not to get nauseous from the drivers' subtlety and responsible driving”.

GamesTime ‘Un Mundo Perplejo’ (SPANISH blog)



“My experience taking the bus from Earl’s Court to Hammersmith was similarly infuriating. **The driver initially refused me entry because there was a buggy on board.** I pleaded with him, not only because I knew I could fit on board but because it was pouring with rain”

GamesTime ‘Blue Badge Style’ (blog)

“wonder if he was on that scooter tho = cus where would you store that on a bus? Buses are not disabled friendly even in a wheel chair it would be complicated?”













GamesTime Tony Hanselman via Facebook (social networking)

DIFFERENT TRANSPORT MODES

Business as usual vs. Games time

Transport dashboard: most widely discussed

Tube dominates and sentiment has greatly improved














RANK (Games Volume)	TRANSPORT MODE (main drivers)	RELATIVE SHARE OF DISCUSSION, Volume (BAU)*	RELATIVE SHARE OF DISCUSSION, Volume (Games time)**	VOLUME CHANGE (%)	SENTIMENT CHANGE
1.	 	19%	32%	 +13%	Greatly improved
2.	 	20%	24%	 +4%	Some improvement
3.		24%	18%	 -6%	Some decline
4.		10%	6%	 -4%	Fairly unchanged
5.		N/A	N/A	 N/A	Some decline

* In the column above, sample sizes of 6% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions, marked as 'N/A'

** In the column above, sample sizes of 3% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions, marked as 'N/A'

Transport dashboard: infrequently discussed

DLR, Javelin & river services barely feature but are liked

RANK (Games Volume)	TRANSPORT MODE (main drivers)	RELATIVE SHARE OF DISCUSSION, Volume (BAU)*	RELATIVE SHARE OF DISCUSSION, Volume (Games time)**	VOLUME CHANGE (%)	SENTIMENT CHANGE
6.		N/A	N/A	 N/A	Some decline
7.	 	N/A	N/A	 N/A	Greatly improved
8.		N/A	N/A	 N/A	Some decline
9.	 	N/A	N/A	 N/A	Positive response
10.	 	N/A	N/A	 N/A	Greatly improved

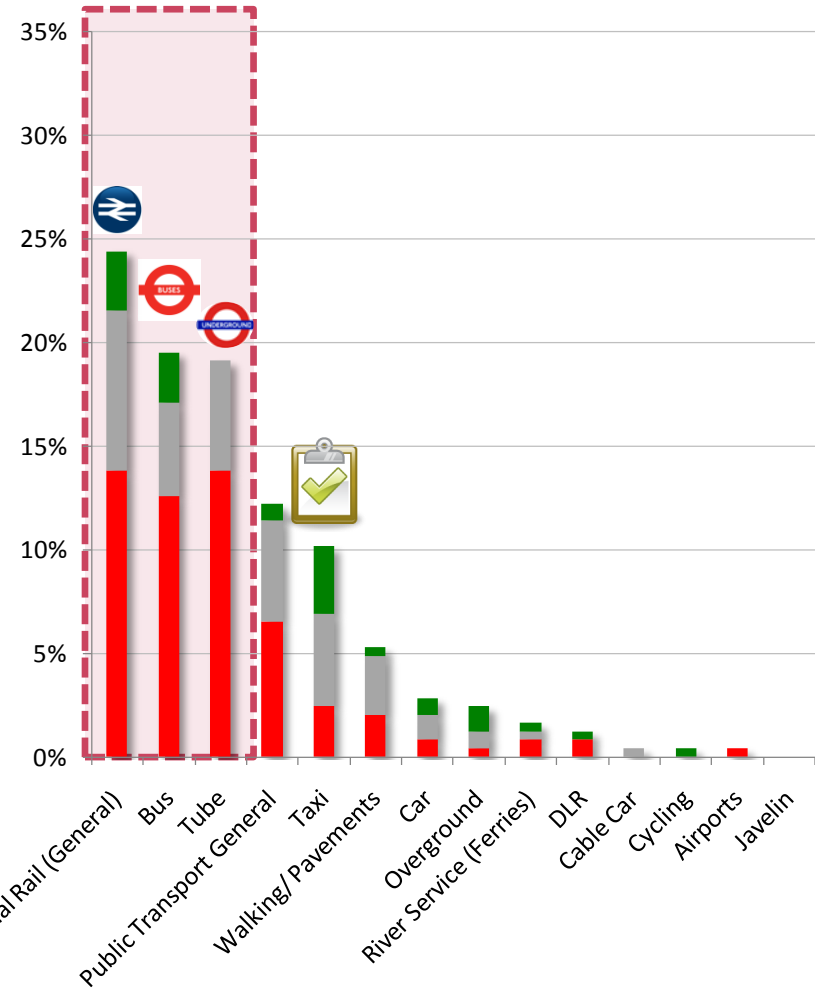
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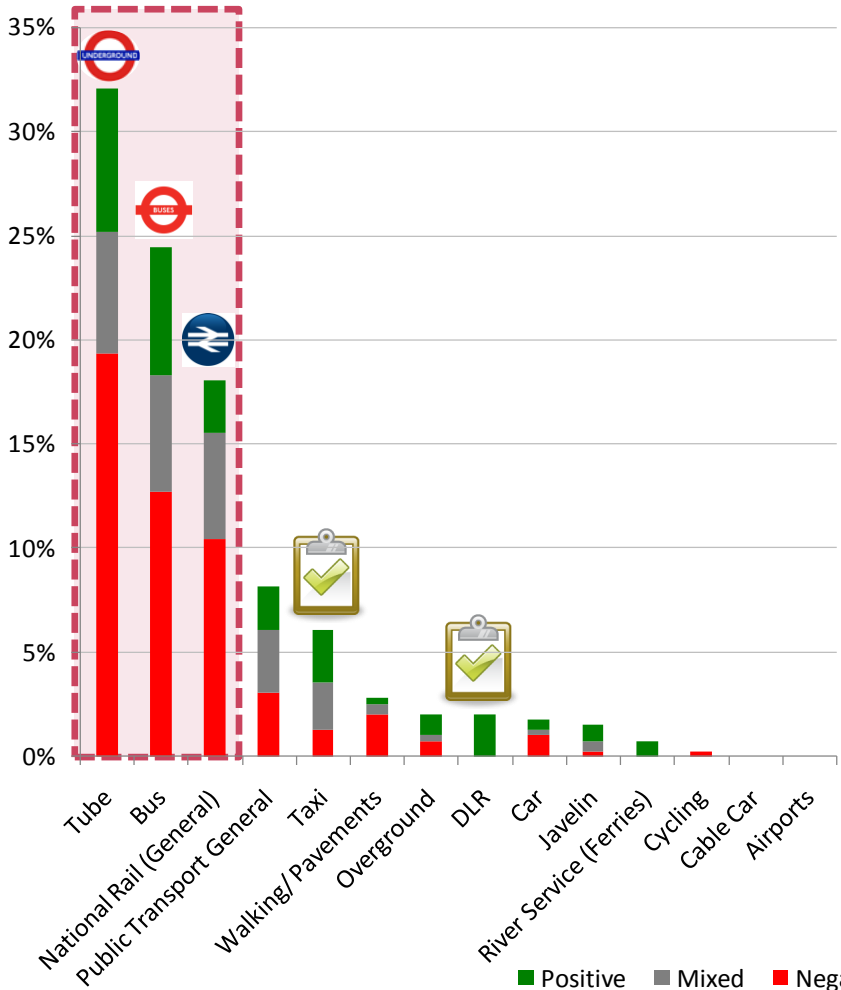
The accessibility big three in London

People interested in the Tube and buses, not trains

Business as Usual 



Games Time 



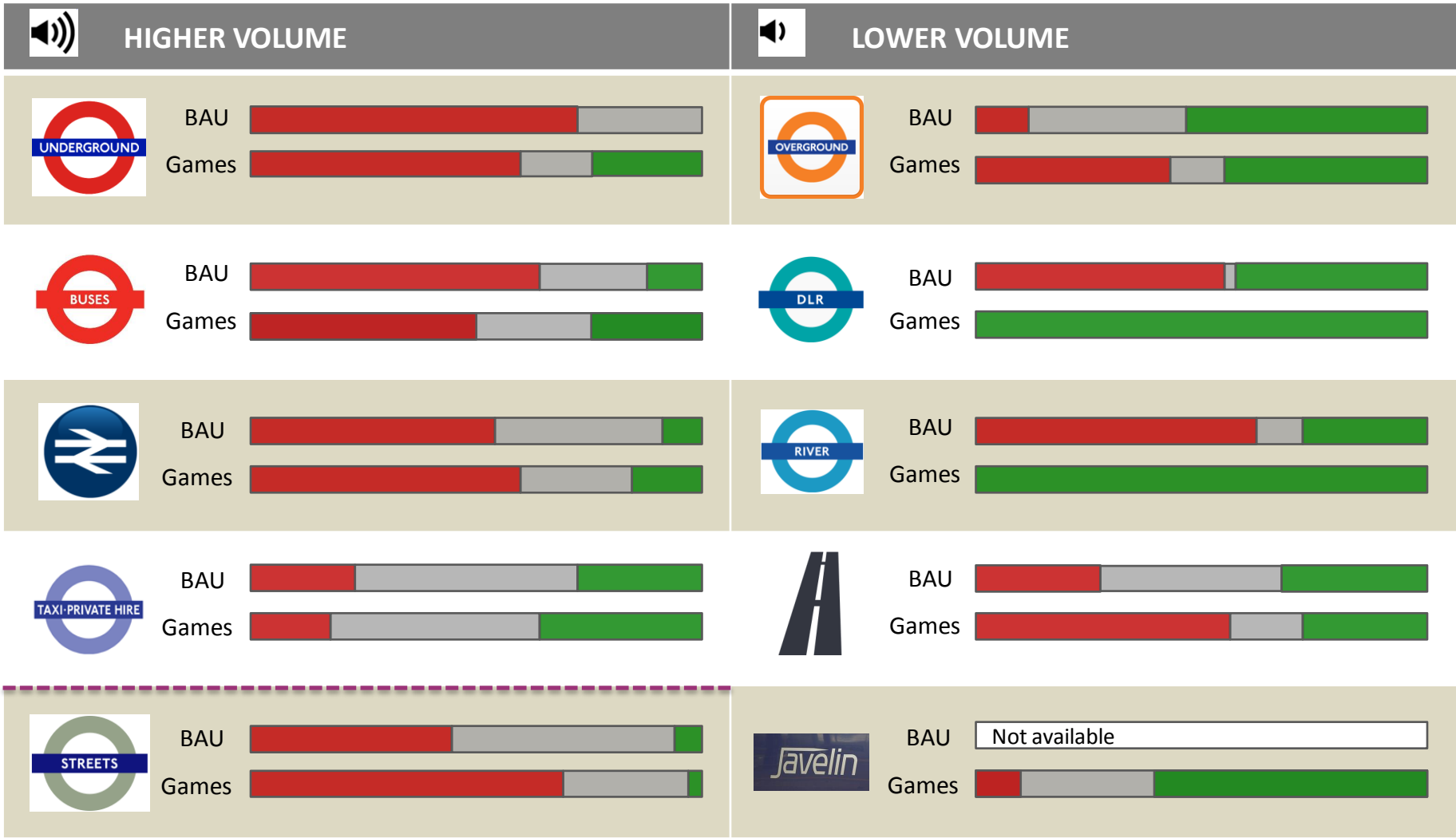
■ Positive ■ Mixed ■ Negative

In the chart above, sample sizes of 6% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

In the chart above, sample sizes of 3% or below are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

Improved perceptions, but (some) enduring concerns

Going by train, road and on foot has worsened



*

*Streets discussion also considered 'low volume' based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

Breakdown of discussion about buses and National Rail

Who and what?

Bus – visitor vs. regular user



- Pre Games:
 - focus from regular bus users
 - Detailed knowledge of particular issues e.g. ramp 'lips', driver behaviour and space availability
- Games time:
 - More focus from Games visitors
 - 'Common knowledge' issues noted more



VS.



VS.

Train – commuter vs. intercity



- Pre Games:
 - Even mix of comments for both 'London services' and 'intercity'
 - London stations most referenced
- Games time:
 - Rail providers referenced e.g. Southern, Virgin etc.
 - 'London services' discussed slightly more

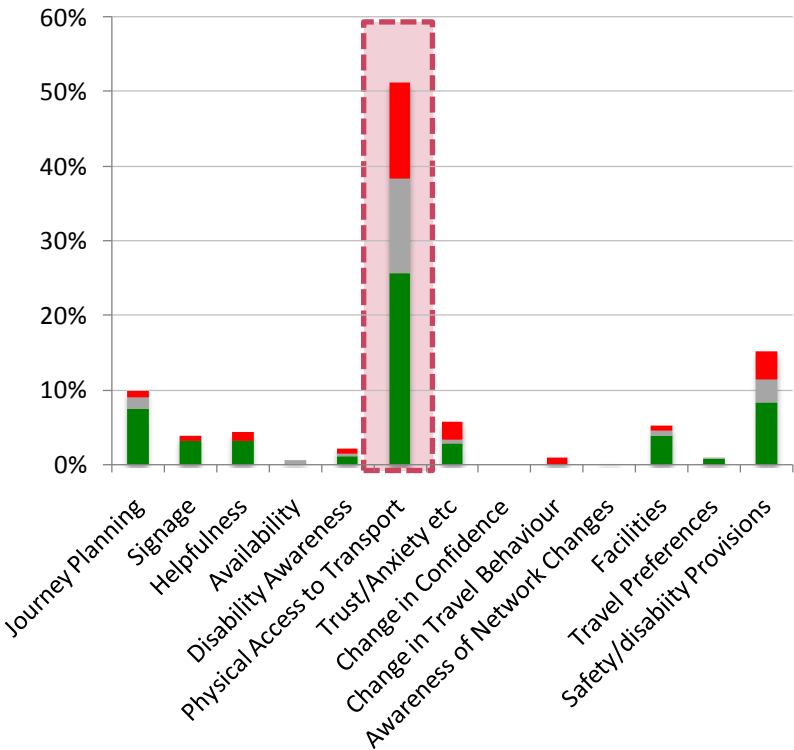


What did Spanish/Portuguese people think?

Similar focus areas, different mode preferred



Games time - Topic & sentiment



Praise on blogs

- Most comments were through blog posts and were highly positive
- Social networks e.g. Twitter used much less



'Physical access' is the focus

- Spanish and Portuguese speakers most involved in 'physical access' discussion
- Even mix of 'vehicle' and 'station' issues highlighted

Not so great for the Tube...

- The **Tube** = poor perceptions, **bus** = appreciated
- General 'London Transport' comments very positive overall
- 'Better than Rio' comments quite popular























In the chart above, all sample sizes below 25% are based on 10 (or fewer) opinions

RECOMMENDATIONS

What has improved the most pre-Games vs. Games time

Chart denotes level of perceived *improvement*

Transport Modes					
Physical Access	Vehicle	 Ramps	 MBRs	 Ramps	
	Stations		 Lifts/ Walkways		
Staffing	Helpfulness	 Drivers	 All Staff		
	Availability				
Perception of Network Changes					
Facilities		 W/chair Space			

Key:  *Greatly improved* perceptions  Some *improvement* in perceptions  Some *decline* in perceptions

Recommendations

To build on existing successes of the Games

- Re-evaluate bus driver 'disability awareness' training and extend performance 'spot-checking'.
- Retain physical access measures introduced for the Games e.g. Manual Boarding Ramps (MBRs).
- Review 'pre-booked' assistance policy on National Rail services to avoid instances where passengers are stranded on a platform/train.
- Adapt Games-time high visibility signage around stations.
- Learn from the perceived accessibility successes of the DLR, river services & Javelin.

APPENDIX

Glossary

Location– Umbrella term for all types of website identified within the relevant Landscape.
Will include:

Blog – Weblog of an individual or collective with limited editorial restrictions

Social Network – Destination or platform designed specifically for social networking

Media Host– News site with commentary enabled against articles

Forum – Online bulletin board

Review Site – Website exclusively dedicated to reviews about products or services

Landscape – Umbrella term for all specified key locations

Tense – What tense the commentary is written in will include:

Pre – Prior to a journey/experience

During – Whilst on a journey/having an experience

Post – After a journey/experience

Commentator Type – One of 3 classifications for the particular commentator dependent on accessibility discussion:

Primary – A mobility/sensory impaired traveller

Secondary – A travel companion of the mobility/sensory impaired traveller

Tertiary – An external commentator, neither the primary nor secondary or unknown

Type of Post – What stage has the comment been introduced to the discussion:

Original Post – Initial engagement in conversation

Audience Reaction – A reactive post to a previous comment

Physical Access - Vehicle: Verbatims



Who said what about vehicle access issues?

Pre-Games

"Just at Waterloo, having difficulty getting on the train at Westminster, the district and circle line I've been told is accessible... did you see the step?"

Pre Games missemilykenn via YouTube (social networking)



UNDERGROUND

"when they say "step free access" they don't really mean step "free": they mean the step is anything from nought to 12 inches...on my scooter I can only do the nought!"

Pre Games comment against BBC article (media hosting)

"London buses and their ramps... the newer buses ramps are easier to use than the older ones. The older ones have a 'lip' at the bottom and do not open out level with the bus frame itself so there's a big 'lip' when you get to the top of the ramp where, on many occasions, I have been stuck, it's not only enormously embarrassing but really annoying."

Pre Games Commentator on 'No Go Britain' page (Facebook)



BUSES

"My powerchair is only capable of safely climbing an 8 degree slope and so it toppled back as I was going up the ramp."

'Latent Existence' (blog)



Games Time

"I fully agree that portable ramps are the answer on London Underground and other light rail systems throughout the country."

Games Time 'Disability Horizons' (blog)

"I was delighted at how much easier it was with the ramps, and felt optimistic about not having to rely on driving to go out."

Games Time 'Disability Horizons' (blog)

"Those ramps seem to have a tendency to get stuck, putting the bus out of service."

Games Time comment against Guardian article (media)

"@GAOTG TFL's clearly prepared well for the paralympics. 3rd time I've seen a wheelchair user denied access to a bus due to faulty ramp"

Games Time @arunhall via Twitter (social networking)

"@nogobritain Clapham Junction impossible gap between train and platform too great for anyone with reduced mobility #nogobritain"

@Gabrielle42 via Twitter (social network)

Physical Access - Station: Verbatims

Who said what about station access issues?



Pre-Games

"Endless winding stairs and corridors, in some cases without lifts, make the journey tiresome for the elderly, young families with pushchairs and, most of all, the disabled."

Pre Games 'Dancing Giraffe' (blog)

"The only problems I've had are that not a lot of London's transport is geared for disabled people or pushchairs, the majority of train stations don't have step-free access."

Pre Games Yahoo (Answers) (forum)

"the largest train station downtown London was not handicapped accessible and had no lift. Probably won't visit again."

Pre Games Commentator on 'No Go Britain' page (Facebook)

"It seems London in general has problems, I have had problems with St Pancras, London Bridge and London Victoria...."

Pre Games Commentator on 'A2B for All' page (Facebook)

UNDERGROUND



Games Time

"If they have bought the ramps already then they should keep them. But the real issue is the stairs in some stations, there are very few lifts, and that will be the biggest problem for disabled people forever as TFL can't possibly install lifts in every station."

Games Time comment on 'Guardian Series' (media hosting)

"On the whole, TfL have done a pretty stellar job. The buses are all accessible via a ramp at the rear doors (more about this in a specific post) and **some tube stations are totally wheelily friendly with lifts to the platform where there are humps enabling level access to the train.**"

Games Time 'Lizzy Ferret' (blog)

"Most stations will have access through stairs only, a big challenge for wheelchair users"

Games Time 'Turismo Adaptado' (**PORTUGUESE** blog)

Staffing: Verbatims

Who said what about staffing issues?



Pre-Games

"If you think the over-rail is fun just try the Tube - I was threatened with arrest by the station manager at Green Park if I dared use his escalator again"

Pre Games comment against Telegraph article (media hosting)

UNDERGROUND

Games Time

"First time as an solo wheelchair user on the tube: @TfLOfficial pat yourself on the back: the accessible stations have FANTASTIC staff!"

Games Time @wheelymedic via Twitter (social networking)

"I have also done the Manual Boarding Ramps on the tube - when forgotten the driver got off to get the ramp. #nogobritain"

Games Time @daddydoink via Twitter (social networking)

"Anyone who's from San Francisco will tell you how rude the Muni drivers can be, especially the bus drivers, so I am feeling right at home in London after being ditched at the curb five times within the past week."

Pre Games 'Rolling Diaries' (blog)

BUSES

*"My experience taking the bus from Earl's Court to Hammersmith was similarly infuriating. **The driver initially refused me entry because there was a buggy on board.** I pleaded with him, not only because I knew I could fit on board but because it was pouring with rain"*

Games Time 'Blue Badge Style' (blog)

"Drivers can be very bolshy about the ramps, and many parents refuse to fold up their buggies to make room. Travelling by bus in a wheelchair in London is very hit-and-miss and occasionally simply horrendous"

Pre Games Liam Squirrelpot via Facebook 'NoGoBritain' page (social networking)

"his experience of bus drivers in south London was excellent, he avoided taking buses in the east, where he said drivers were less helpful."

Games Time 'Turismo Adaptado' (blog)

Verbatims...

What did people say about journey information?

Pre-Games

"Some web information is available, but knowing where to find it and what search strings to use can be a real challenge."

Pre Games 'Care Cure Community' (forum)

"Not a lot of fun being deaf and trying to make sense of on board or platform side announcements when visual announcement boards are not updated quickly. I daresay the partially sighted have a struggle with the smaller departure and arrival screens too."

Pre Games comment against Telegraph article (media hosting)



Games Time

"Coming stops are announced on buses and tube, which is very useful for the visually impaired."

Games Time 'Turismo Adaptado' (**PORTUGUESE** blog)

"#Nogobritain Entered my local station into #London2012 journey planner, selected wheelchair accessible, it told me start somewhere else!"

Games Time @wtbdavidg via Twitter (Social Networking)

"Transport for London has a Step Free Tube Guide which illustrates stations where it is possible to get between the platform and street step-free, or change between lines step-free. Stations where this is not possible are shown in a light grey which is nice, but utterly incomprehensible."

Games Time Just Urbanism (Review)



"There are information signs everywhere on the underground"

Games Time 'Eficiencia Especial' (**PORTUGUESE** blog)

"@transportforall they have NOT addressed how a blind person finds the help point or how a deaf person uses it, lack of thought & planning"

Games Time @blindmike47 via Twitter (Social Networking)

"Visual and auditory information have improved a lot for the Games."

Games Time 'Disfonema' (**SPANISH** blog)

Social networking verbatims

"I have also done the Manual Boarding Ramps on the tube - when forgotten the driver got off to get the ramp. #nogobritain"
GamesTime @daddydoink via Twitter (social networking)

"Impressed how Earl's Court staff helped wheelchair lad onto London tube. Failure is attacked so great job should be acknowledged"
GamesTime @kevin_maguire via Twitter (social networking)

"First time as an solo wheelchair user on the tube: @TfLOfficial pat yourself on the back: the accessible stations have FANTASTIC staff!"
GamesTime @wheelymedic via Twitter (social networking)

"Drivers can be very bolshy about the ramps, and many parents refuse to fold up their buggies to make room. Travelling by bus in a wheelchair in London is very hit-and-miss and occasionally simply horrendous"
Pre Games Liam Squirrelpot via Facebook 'NoGoBritain' page (social networking)

"the ramp was opened against the bus shelter and the driving was so bad that I was flung into the barrier opposite the wheelchair space damaging my wheelchair and my knees..."
Pre Games Commentator on 'A2B for All' page (Facebook)

"Made my way home from North Greenwich...access was fine in NG, had to wait for 2nd train as was v busy, to be expected! #nogobritain"
@thatgirlmathy via Twitter (social networking)

"On an earlier train than usual - station staff helped me on with no complaints at Clacton #nogobritain"
@daddydoink via Twitter (social networking)

"@transportforall they have NOT addressed how a blind person finds the help point or how a deaf person uses it , lack of thought & planning"
(INFO PROVISION) GamesTime @blindmike47 via Twitter (Social Networking)

"#Nogobritain Entered my local station into #London2012 journey planner, selected wheelchair accessible, it told me start somewhere else!"
(INFO PROVISION) GamesTime @wtbdavidg via Twitter (Social Networking)

"Great to see train ramps in use & accessible toilets open so late. Let's hope post #paralympic London is as friendly to the wheelchair user!"
@dumpy via Twitter (social networking)

Awareness of network changes: Verbatims

*"Britain will join the euro before it's possible for the mobility impaired to get round the tube. **These ramps are just a tiny drop in an enormous bucket.**"*

Games Time 'Fodors' (forum)

"It's not perfect but looking at the tube map, TFL seem to have gone to great lengths to promote connectivity between different lines, adapt platforms and all new stations seem appropriately designed."

Games Time comment against Guardian article (media hosting)

"I'm a bit disappointed that there are still only 65 out of 270 tube stations step-free from street to train. I hoped that there would be more by the beginning of the Games: a couple of years ago, Transport for London promised more. I hope they keep the mobile boarding ramps that they've installed in the tube for the Games:"

Games Time '2012Olympic GamesLondon' (blog)

"New stations have been built with accessibility in mind and new trains have lower platforms and boarded more easily, but most of London's Tube is unaccessible."

Games Time 'London Slowly' (blog)

"Although the ramp and passenger assistance worked at Earl's Court, I was told the ramps were only a temporary measure, solely valid for the duration of the Games."

Games Time comment on 'Wharf' article (media hosting)

"Temporary wheelchair ramps are in place at many stations and 66 have step-free access."

Mere News (Review)

"They have got more facilities for disabled, you can see more staff there... people feel more happy"

Comment on 'Impact Jeux Londres' (media hosting)

Staff availability: Verbatims

"@rmtunion Please thank all your members on underground 4 assistance 4 disabled. TFL should not cut staff. We need you"
Pre Games '@adrianpicton' via Twitter (social networking)

"Some web information is available, but knowing where to find it and what search strings to use can be a real challenge."
(INFO PROVISION) 'Care Cure Community' (forum)

"Not a lot of fun being deaf and trying to make sense of on board or platform side announcements when visual announcement boards are not updated quickly. I daresay the partially sighted have a struggle with the smaller departure and arrival screens too."
(INFO PROVISION) **Pre Games** comment against Telegraph article (media hosting)

"Many blind people rely on staff to guide them to platforms, while wheelchair-users often need assistance to board trains safely, and disabled people can also need advice on planning an accessible journey"

Pre Games 'Disabled Go' (blog)

"When I've taken my mother out via train before (she's in a wheelchair) we've had members **of staff running to fetch the ramps or even just not bothering to turn up**"

Comment in response to Daily Mail article (media host)

"Transport for London has a Step Free Tube Guide which illustrates stations where it is possible to get between the platform and street step-free, or change between lines step-free. Stations where this is not possible are shown in a light grey which is nice, but utterly incomprehensible."

(INFO PROVISION) **Games Time** Just Urbanism (Review)

Some verbatims about the Tube

*"the ever so more efficient tube is out of the question for me as
The London Underground is not accessible for wheelchairs"*

Pre Games 'Discover Disability' (blog)

"I fully agree that portable ramps are the answer on London Underground and other light rail systems throughout the country."

Games Time 'Disability Horizons' (blog)

"And strangers, enchanted by my big girl were soon falling over themselves to help us on and off overcrowded carriages, down huge steps and across scary gaps: this underground world not at all wheelchair friendly."

Pre Games 'Text George' (blog)

"public transport is often an utter nightmare (the tube in London is spectacularly inaccessible), and so you need to pay for a car/taxi."

Pre Games 'Inequalities Blog' (blog)

"If they have bought the ramps already then they should keep them. But the real issue is the stairs in some stations, there are very few lifts, and that will be the biggest problem for disabled people forever as TFL cant possibly install lifts in every station."

Games Time comment on 'Guardian Series' (media hosting)

"I was delighted at how much easier it was with the ramps, and felt optimistic about not having to rely on driving to go out."

Games Time 'Disability Horizons' (blog)

"I would go further and say that as a company LUL need more than 2 MBRs per station. Many stations are multilevel and it's going to be near-impossible to drag MBRs up and down escalators. One per functioning platform or per double-sided island platform would be appropriate."

Games Time 'Lizzy Ferret' (blog)

"And there's you thinking you'd get the tube to see the Games! Not if you're in a wheelchair apparently"

Pre Games @1bullstag via Twitter (social networking)

"On the whole, TfL have done a pretty stellar job. The busses are all accessible via a ramp at the rear doors (more about this in a specific post) and some tube stations are totally wheely friendly with lifts to the platform where there are humps enabling level access to the train."

Games Time 'Lizzy Ferret' (blog)

"For me lack of lifts/escalators, overcrowding on buses and tubes, inaccessible bus stops, and lack of any available staff to lend a helping hand make journeys around the capital a drag."

Pre Games 'Experience Lab' (review)

*"To put it bluntly, the **London underground network is almost a no-go area** for prams or disabled passengers"*

Pre Games 'Heathrow2Here' (blog)

Some verbatims about taxis

"All of London's taxis are wheelchair accessible and they can take powered wheelchairs."

Pre Games 'No Go Britain' group (Facebook)

"In London, the **vast majority of our public taxis (i.e. London's famous black cab) are wheelchair accessible**. The easiest way to get one is to usually go to the nearest busy road and flag one down."

'Disability Horizons' (blog)

"The city has the availability of black cabs and **this fleet of cabs are especially modified for wheelchair customers** or for people those who have a limited mobility."

'londonhotels4u' (blog)

"I had to **tell drivers to stop avoiding wheelchair passengers** when I worked at the call centre for a certain taxi company"

'Latent Existence' (blog)

Some verbatims about streets (pavements/walkways)

"If arriving in a wheelchair, please be aware that Covent Garden piazza is cobbled (although there is a paved walkway around most of the perimeter) and also dropped kerbs are lacking in some side streets."

'Access London' (blog)

"#TransportQT returning from QT, me & wheelchair tipped over due to pothole in Euston footway and 2 bus drivers (30 & 149) denied me access!"

@ohnlthornton via Twitter

"some parts are quite steep and there are lots of cobbles making it hard for those in wheelchairs to get around and leading to some bone shaking moments!"

Pre Games 'How accessible is Camden' (Disability Horizons blog)

"there are four pedestrian crossings in our borough that lack any measures, such as audible sounds or tactile indicators, which make them dangerous for blind or partially sighted people to use."

'Shepherds Bush Blogspot' (blog)

Spanish/Portuguese verbatims

"Visual and auditory announcements are very useful."

Viajando (blog)

"There are information signs everywhere on the underground"

GamesTime 'Eficiencia Especial' (blog)

"Coming stops are announced on buses and tube, which is very useful for the visually impaired."

GamesTime 'Turismo Adaptado' (blog)

"How amazing it is that London has got so much accessibility for disable people anywhere you go! Just impressive!"

@monicafaraujo via Twitter

"All London transports are free for the disable and you can almost get everywhere. **Rio 2016 should be inspired by that.**"

EBC (blog)

"The UK really knows how to deal with people with disabilities!"

Dia Nova (blog)

"Why is it so difficult for Brazilians to have a decent and efficient public transport system? It seems that improvements are a distant possibility, **We should take London as an example!**"

Mala de Rodinha (blog)

"Visual and auditory information have improved a lot for the Games."

(INFO PROVISION) GamesTime 'Disfonema' (blog)

"You could see that a lot of money had been invested on transport, but the **facilities for the disable still need a lot of improvement**. There are more steps than lifts and ramps in the stations."

Urbana (blog)

"**The step between the train and the platform is usually quite high, which can be a problem.** If you are traveling by yourself, make sure you go on the first carriage as the conductor can see you and wait until you have got on the train. Also, **be aware that traveling by wheelchair on the tube in peak times can be a big hassle.**"

Visite Londres (review)

"The hardest part for the Brazilian Paralympic athletes after heading back home was to realise how much challenge Rio still needs to overcome regarding accessibility on transports.

London was an example of how accessibility should be dealt with: ramps, wheelchair space and accessible pavement kerbs"

DXT Adaptado (blog)

More verbatims from 'visitors'

"Sounds like London is centuries ahead of Toronto when it comes to accessibility."

[Games Time](#) Toronto Sun CA (media hosting)

"I haven't had any problems in London, my favorite city."

[Games Time](#) Londonist (media hosting)

*"The hardest part for the Brazilian Paralympic athletes after heading back home was to realise how much challenge Rio still needs to overcome regarding accessibility on transports. **London was an example of how accessibility should be dealt with:** ramps, wheelchair space and accessible pavement kerbs"*

[DXT Adaptado](#) (blog)

"When the doors slid open at Green Park Station, he faced a sizable drop from the car onto the platform. Further down the platform was the raised area level with the subway car's doors"

[Games Time](#) 'Metro News CA' (media hosting)

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