

## News Release

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### CURRENT SOCIAL MEDIA DISCUSSIONS SHOW MOST SUPPORT FOR BORIS JOHNSON IN LONDON MAYORAL ELECTION

**Ken and Boris are the most talked-about London Mayoral candidates in social media; Boris is the most controversial candidate but also most likely to generate positive sentiment; the BNP's Richard Barnbrook most likely to generate negative sentiment**

**London – 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2008** – Nielsen Online, a service of The Nielsen Company, today reveals the candidates most talked about in blogs, boards and message groups in relation to the London Mayoral Elections and those generating the most and least favourable comment.

- Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson are dominating social media conversation relating to the London Mayoral election – both accounting for around 40% of comments
- Liberal Democratic candidate Brian Paddick is third with 9% of comments, followed by the Green Party's Sian Berry with just under 4% and the BNP's Richard Barnbrook with 2%

#### London Mayoral Candidates with most 'buzz'

Rank	Candidate	Party	% of all candidate mentions
1	Ken Livingstone	Labour	41.0%
2	Boris Johnson	Conservative	40.3%
3	Brian Paddick	Liberal Democrats	8.9%
4	Sian Berry	Green	3.6%
5	Richard Barnbrook	British National	1.9%
6	Lindsey German	Left List	1.2%
7	Matt O'Connor	English Democrats	0.9%
8	Alan Craig	Christian Peoples Alliance	0.8%
9	Gerard Batten	UK Independence	0.7%
10	Winston McKenzie	Independent	0.6%

Source: Nielsen Online, BuzzMetrics, 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008

E.g. Ken Livingstone accounted for 41% of all London Mayoral candidate mentions in social media in the period measured

Alex Burmaster, Internet Analyst, Nielsen Online: "Ken and Boris are the two leading candidates, neck and neck in the polls and the levels of conversation in the social media space utterly reflect this. If conversation levels were a guide, Ken would narrowly pip Boris to win. However, it's when we look at the sentiment of these conversations that a far more interesting and revealing picture emerges."

**Controversy, positivity, negativity: sentiment towards the five leading candidates in social media**

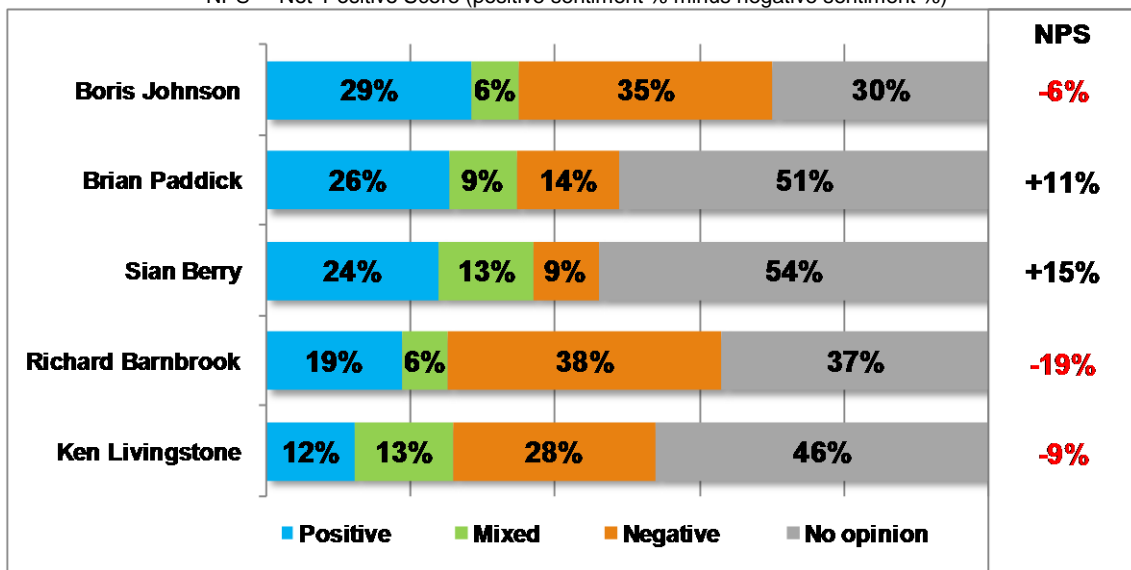
- **Controversy:** Boris is the ‘marmite’ candidate – being the most likely of the top five to generate some form of opinion either way. Only 30% of posts relating to him were of ‘no opinion’

The Green Party’s Sian Berry generates the least controversy / most apathy – having the highest percentage (54%) of ‘no opinion’ posts

- **Positivity:** Whilst Boris is most likely to generate positive sentiment, 29% of posts being ‘positive’ – Sian Berry had the highest overall ‘net’ positive score of 15% (positive sentiment % minus negative sentiment %). Brian Paddick is the only other candidate to come out with a ‘net’ positive score (11%)
- **Negativity:** Richard Barnbrook is most likely to generate negative sentiment, 38% of posts being ‘negative’. He also had the lowest overall ‘net’ positive score of -19%

**‘Buzz’ sentiment for five leading London Mayoral Candidates**

NPS = ‘Net’ Positive Score (positive sentiment % minus negative sentiment %)



Source: Nielsen Online, BuzzMetrics, 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008

E.g. 29% of comments in social media around Boris Johnson in the period measured had a ‘positive’ sentiment. He has a NPS score of -6% (= 29% positive sentiment minus 35% negative sentiment).

“Of the three leading candidates in the polls it’s not surprising that Brian Paddick is the only one to have an overall positive sentiment score in social media. His campaign, involving a US web strategist firm, has focused the most heavily on social media including a pioneering British political use of sites like Twitter, Facebook and UStream.TV – and it certainly seems to have paid dividends.

However, judging from the sheer levels of social media conversation on the election, it may not be enough to grab victory over Boris or Ken. If social media were a crystal ball it might tell us Boris is likely to get more votes than Ken. However, positive comments on Boris more often centre on personality rather than policies and only time will tell if this is a strong enough factor for voters when faced with putting the cross in his box to change the status quo.”

**ENDS**



## EDITOR'S NOTES

### Methodology

1. The Nielsen Online BuzzMetrics service tracks consumer conversations in more than 73 million English-language blogs, 45,000 user groups and 7,000 message boards
2. Nielsen Online measured how many times the London Mayoral candidates were mentioned in online conversations between the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2008 and 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008
3. For the five most-mentioned candidates, a random sample of online posts on each were analysed and the sentiment of the post was defined as either, 'positive', 'negative', 'mixed', or 'no opinion'

Please source all information to [Nielsen Online](#) (*Nielsen Online is the new name for services previously marketed under the Nielsen//NetRatings and Nielsen BuzzMetrics brands*)

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