

Board Meeting  
21.03.23

LONDON  
TRAVELWATCH

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## Communications Report

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Agenda item: LTW706

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### Media

Since the last Board meeting, London TravelWatch has featured in news publications including the Evening Standard, Yahoo!, The i, My London, OnLondon and Cities Today. Trade press publications such as Rail Business Daily and Coach and Bus Week have also featured LTW.

We have continued to comment on a number of topical issues including:

- TfL fares increase announcement of 5.9%
- The national rail fares increase of 5.9%
- The potential end of return ticketing and wider industry reforms on fares

### Social media

Our social media activity has continued apace this period, supporting LTW's wider campaigns and advocacy work. Top three tweets:

1. How 20mph roads have improved safety in London
2. Fares on TfL services will rise by 5.9%
3. On how funding for London Underground works versus other major cities

No.1 was our most popular tweet of all time, generating 135,000 impressions.

- Total Impressions = 199,354 (+157%)
- Follower Growth = 63 (+75%)

We also posted updates on a number of other topical issues including:

- National rail fares increase, TfL fares increases, strike action across different modes of transport, service disruption and overcrowding at London Bridge after the introduction of the new Southeastern timetable in December.

We shared travel info and updates on our channels around strikes, engineering work and other general travel disruption.

We continue to use LinkedIn as a channel for engagement with corporate stakeholders and industry partners.

## **Digital**

We issued our first newsletter to our digital community since May 2022. The open rate = 45.5% versus peers' average performance = 35%.

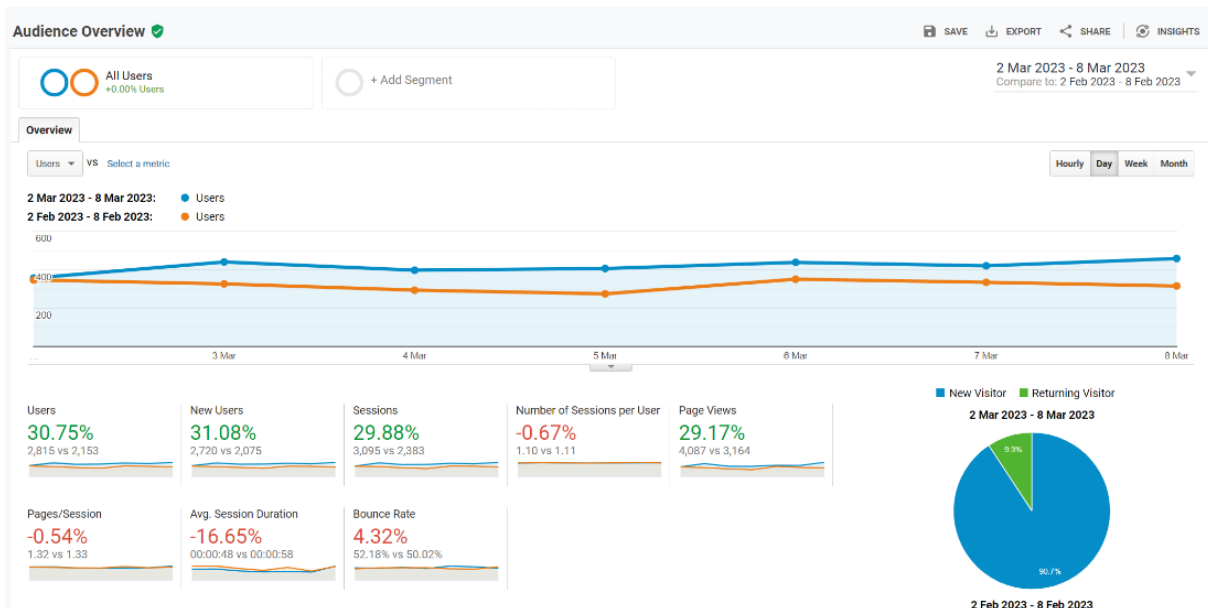
The open rate for our follow-up digital email update = 40% versus peers' average performance = 35%.

We are starting to collate information ready to create the London TravelWatch annual report for 2022-23. This will be online-only. I believe it will be the first annual report produced since 2019. I intend to share a draft copy of the report with you by the end of the month.

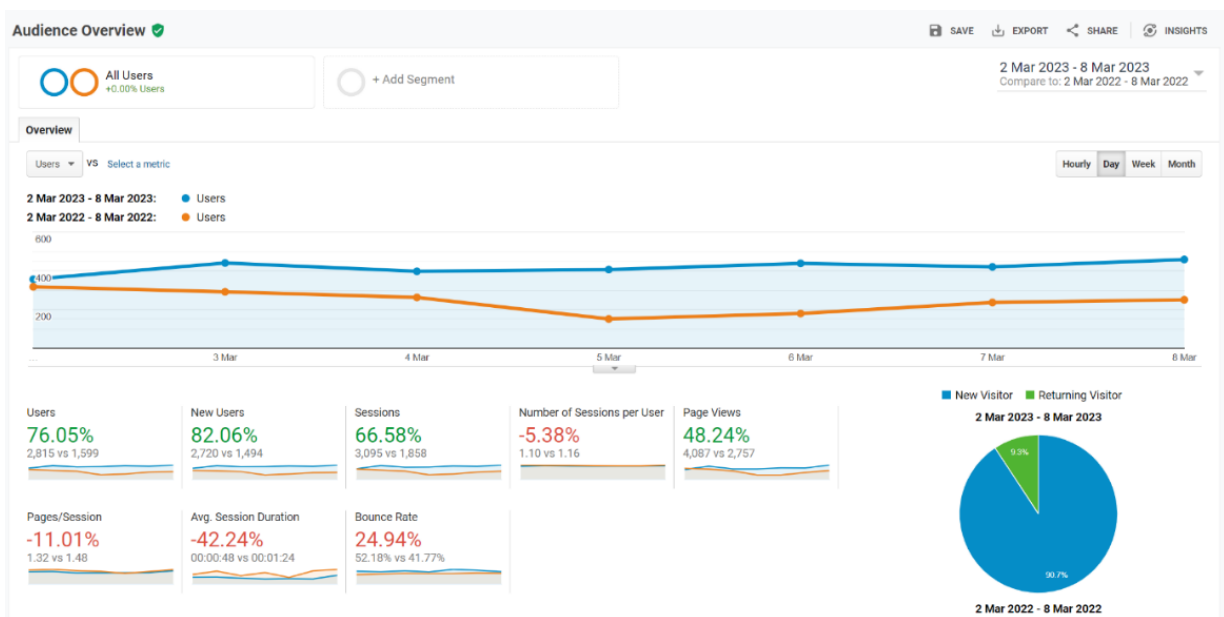
Our website migration (from Browser to DXW) took place on 23 February. There were no reported issues and everything is going smoothly. We will commence a content audit alongside DXW with a view to making improvements to accessibility as soon as possible e.g. changing colour contrasts, deleting the homepage carousel, replacing inaccessible PDFs.

Already we have noticed a significant increase in web traffic. This is likely related to SEO (search engine optimisation) work carried out by DXW. In essence, it makes our content more searchable online.

This is shown in the graph below from Google Analytics. Comparing one week in March with one week in February shows we have a 31.08% increase in 'new users' i.e. they may have found us through organic search rather than 'returning' to a bookmarked page.



A more long term view shows website performance from March 2022 versus March 2023. In comparison, we now have 76.05% more users of the website. We will need to keep an eye on this to check if it is a one-off event and whether we can sustain increased website traffic each month.



Michael posted his first blog-post as CEO. This was shared with key stakeholders who have been following the performance of the new Southeastern timetable. The Evening Standard quoted from the blogpost and followed up on a separate story off the back of the post.

We are now in the field carrying out a passenger survey about the Southeastern timetable and its impact.

## **Other / miscellaneous**

After meeting the head of strategic planning and senior stakeholder manager at Govia Thameslink Railway to discuss their new May 2023 timetable, we followed up with some focused questions around engagement and wider external comms. We offered to support them to publicise the timetable changes. We are glad train operators are proactively approaching us to share information in this way.

We also met Lime (the bike hire / sharing company) to discuss how they are working to make sure their bikes do not obstruct pavements in London. We told them about the uptick in complaints we were seeing on social media channels about bikes being left in inconvenient places.

We met the senior team at Southeastern and expressed our concerns about their new timetable. They have since reinstated some direct services to Charing Cross on the Bexleyheath line. This will happen in the new timetable, from May 2023.

We have previously raised the EU Entry Exit system for UK nationals and potential implications (queues or overcrowding by Eurostar services) with policy-makers. We have since learned that this has been postponed yet again, until 2024.

We are pleased that our close work with TfL has seen further improvements to the timeliness and usefulness of their communications around strike action. Their dedicated webpage and in-station announcements and signage have been well received.