

World Passenger Awards

Purpose of the World Passenger Awards

When it comes to passenger support, you hear from those you inconvenience more often than those you help. It's natural to be louder in complaint than in praise, and we know how seriously the industry takes its negative feedback.

But every day, across the world, there are thousands of people who have been helped in big and small ways by their transport provider, and who want to let people know about it.

We want the World Passenger Awards to be a celebration of these moments. Amazing operators are always laser-focussed on their negative feedback, because they can use it to improve their service. But we also think it's important to remember that what you do affects people's lives for the better, every single day.

And you really do. From making transport more affordable and accessible, to incredible extra-mile work from staff, to the comfort and food, to the fight against climate change, people see what you're doing. And they're talking about it.

How were the nominees decided?

While there are many different national surveys on transport satisfaction, they aren't consistent across all the different territories we wanted to include. We decided to use Twitter data as the resource that covered the most countries and TOCs.

To be selected for nomination, each organisation had to demonstrate:

- An acceptable level of positivity across the category. We know that Twitter is often used as a place to articulate negative feedback, so it was decided that an unusual level of overall positivity should be taken into account.

- A clear cluster of relevant data within the category. A group of customers who had a positive experience around a particular aspect of the category.
 - This positive experience had to be felt by real people. No organisations were counted.

How will the winners be decided?

Judging positivity across a wide range of different cultures and organisations is tough. If you focus on the raw number of positive comments, you will obviously favour the large organisations who receive so many more posts. Conversely, if you look at the percentage of positive posts, really small organisations with a handful of monthly tweets can significantly benefit.

We were also keen to reward operators that were particularly focused on the category they succeeded in, and that showed excellence across all the different aspects within a category.

Our formula for deciding upon the winner of awards therefore took into account:

- Overall positive sentiment of comments in the category
- Number of positive comments in the category
- Proportion of all comments that appear in the category
- The lowest sentiment score of any of the subcategories within the awards category.

How was the data categorised?

In order to have a robust list of categories, we needed to be able to group this enormous corpus of text data into relevant categories. And when you've got idiolects from all over the world, this is never going to be easy.

The Wordnerds solution is our **context themes** feature which uses Deep Learning and Natural Language Processing to help us gather together similar topics based on meaning, not on vocabulary.

The system then takes that example and compares the language and context of this sentence or fragment with a sample dataset of around 20,000 posts, to find examples of people expressing a similar idea.

This year, with support of the Department for Transport in the UK, we have developed a **comprehensive theme bank** specifically for public transport issues, trained on publicly available public transport passenger data.

What are the limitations of this approach?

Any study worthy of the name is clear about its limitations, and obviously there are a few here. We wanted to be really upfront about them before we get to the winners:

- The awards do not necessarily highlight the best TOCs, just the ones that were most positively responded to by their customers. There are any number of cultural reasons why this may favour some TOCs over others.
- Hard as it may try, Twitter is not a universal medium, and some countries may see smaller amounts of data because of the source we used.
- The automated categorisation will never be perfect and there will always be the odd mis-attribution.