

## MakeMyTrip: 2013 (C): Redesigning the Home Page

In mid-2013 Deepak Kumar, Chairman and Group CEO of MakeMyTrip (MMT), was headed to the Hindustan conference room of the company's head office in Gurgaon, India, for deciding the new homepage design. A day earlier, Ajay, Product Head, had shared the consolidated results of the trials of different options (see Exhibit 1 for the results of testing the options) with the homepage website redesign team, responsible for the entire project. The team consisted of the head of business (CBO), the Analytics Head, the user experience (UX) head, the Product Head and the Tech Head (CTO).

Looking at the results, Deepak Kumar reflected that there were a lot of surprises in how the different options had performed. While the tracking tools in online businesses had a huge advantage over traditional businesses in that almost every customer interaction could be measured, there was still a lot of reading between the numbers that had to be done. Deepak was looking forward to a fruitful discussion to evaluate the options and finalise the new homepage design to be rolled out. As he opened the door to the conference room, he heard an excited chatter.

### History of MakeMyTrip:

MMT, an online travel company, was founded by an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. It was launched in the US in 2000 to cater to the travel needs of the Indian community in the US. By the early 2000s, the Internet penetration in India had started to increase. Also, the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) had started providing online bookings of railway tickets and the low-cost carriers had started entering the air travel industry in India. To take advantage of such trends, MMT was launched in India in 2005. MMT was regarded as the pioneer of online travel in the country.

Over the years, the company had broadened its portfolio of products and services through introduction of different offerings: hotels and holiday bookings in 2006-07; booking of bus-tickets in 2008; booking of rail tickets and flight and hotel deals in India and abroad in 2009. Towards this end, MMT had also made acquisitions in 2011 and 2012 in India, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

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Prepared by Abhinandan Kumar Jain, Adjunct Professor, IIM Ahmedabad with the assistance of Ms. Kaveri Misra, Senior Manager, MakeMyTrip & ISB Alumnus. Author wishes to thank executives of Make My Trip, especially Mr. Deep Kalra, Chairman and Group CEO, for all the assistance and help in writing this case.

Teaching material of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad is prepared as a basis for class discussion. Cases are not designed to present illustrations of either correct or incorrect handling of administrative problems.

Stakeholder names have been altered. Meetings have been tailored to bring out conflicting priorities for better learning.

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MMT's comprehensive offerings, coupled with the convenience of online transactions aided by great-value prices, revolutionised the way Indians purchased travel services. In 2011, MMT also created several travel-related apps on mobile phones to capitalise on the increasing penetration of mobile devices in India. MMT had received a number of awards from various organizations, including Best Travel Portal, Best Travel Facilitator in India, Best Mobile Strategy and Best Mobile Solution, Best Travel Innovator, etc. It was also the Winner of CNBC Travel Award(2013) and the Lonely Planet Travel Award for Best Travel Facilitator (2012& 2013). (See Exhibit 2 for a List of Awards for MMT in Recent years). MMT had continued to be the leading online travel provider with growing business over the years (Table 1 below).(See Exhibit3 for data on travel industry.)

**Table 1: Growth of MMT Group (2008-09 to 2012-13)**

(As reported in USD '000)

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Gross bookings	313,310.8	465,876.2	742,455.1	992,957.5	1,169,558.6
Revenue less service cost	68,551.7	83,560.2	124,721.4	196,599.3	228,821.9
Revenue as per IFRS P&L	24,990.7	40,282.5	61,070.5	88,184.9	88,165.2
MMT Profit After tax	(7,348.2)	(6,207.0)	4,829.7	7,048.4	(27,589.1)

(As reported in /INR Crores: One Crore is 10 million)

Gross bookings	1,445.9	2,224.27	3,400.76	4,788.90	6,365.49
Revenue less service cost	316.35	398.95	571.28	948.17	1,245.40
Revenue as per IFRS P&L	115.33	192.32	279.73	425.3	479.85
MMT Profit After tax	(33.91)	(29.63)	22.12	33.99	(150.16)

**Source:** Company Records

### The Project for Redesigning the Home Page of MMT:

The project for redesigning the homepage began with a meeting called by Deepak about 12 weeks earlier. He had opened the meeting with:

"In the past few months, there have been isolated discussions amongst us on the need to redesign our homepage (See Exhibit 4 for the home page in early 2013) in a significant way. With all the relevant department heads here, I wanted to hear your thoughts on this and decide if we need to take this up as a key project in our upcoming product roadmap."

Deepak recalled the key thoughts from the meeting:

- As Soham Agarwal (CTO) mentioned, the code had evolved over a period of 10 years and was written by over 15 engineers. A redesign would provide the opportunity to streamline the code architecture in a big way, which would mean significant reduction in page-loading time.
- Manik Goyal (CBO) emphasised the increasing importance of high-margin products like international flights, flight+hotel combos, hotels, and holidays, which needed to be

tapped through capitalising the company's biggest strength- high home page traffic of domestic flights. He was also wary of too much metro bias in the company's customer research, indicating the need to de-clutter the MMT homepage.

- Dilip Arora (UX Head) emphasised the need to change the risk-averse approach to design. He mentioned that at least one of the competitors had moved to a design focused website. He also mentioned that more than 200+ links on the homepage led to loss of customer focus. He proposed making the right tradeoffs between a) what content is exposed to the user and b) how much content the user is exposed to. He also emphasised that the shift in web technologies from web 2.0. to web 3.0<sup>1</sup> had brought around huge changes in the field of front-end design, leading to user interfaces becoming slicker than ever. These had the potential for providing extremely light weight responsive experiences with very little code overhead. He cited social media site Facebook from the valley as an illustration. As the Online Travel Agents (OTA) market leader in India, he emphasised that MMT should be pushing the envelope in terms of web design.
- Vijay Chatterjee (Analytics Head) emphasised the need to setup a fairly robust A/B experiment and to ensure that different variants of test versions were shown to small numbers till the final winner was picked. He recommended that the options be restricted to a maximum of 4 variants as every additional option increased the cost of the experiment by at least 10 days.
- Ajay Singh (Product Head) showed his eagerness for redesign and mentioned that the reason for not touching the homepage largely was the approach of "don't mess with something that works". Looking at internal analytics data, customer feedback sessions and the approach taken by competitors, he felt that MMT might be missing out on some very real opportunities by not redesigning the site. He also emphasised the need to watch out for the major development of emerging mobile platform<sup>2</sup>.

In the second meeting of the project, held a week after the first meeting, the team had decided on the following:

- **The Purposes of the MMT Website**
- **Decision Areas**
- **Parameters for Deciding the Best Home Page**
- **Options for Testing**
- **Research Design to Test the Options**
- **Tools for Tracking the Parameters**

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.uxbooth.com/articles/web-2-0-web-3-0-and-the-internet-of-things/>

<sup>2</sup> a: <http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/1963915>

b. <http://trak.in/tags/business/2012/08/22/india-china-smartphone-market-growth-comparison/>

c. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/elizabethwoyke/2011/12/06/twelve-2012-predictions-for-the-telecom-industry/>

## The Purpose of the MMT Website

Given the importance of the website for the business, specific objectives were proposed in the areas of site identity; search; registration, credibility and trust; and appropriate space for all stakeholders.

### *Site Identity and Mission:*

The homepage has to inform the user what the site is and what it's for. The homepage has to give an overview of what the site has to offer and how it's all organised

### *Search:*

A website like MakeMyTrip needs to have a prominently displayed search widget on the homepage. Easy access to each product mandatory.

### *Registration, Credibility, and Trust:*

Access to account login should be visible upfront. Brand claims which address the trust factor and showcase brand credibility need to be highlighted. For some visitors, the homepage is the only chance the site gets to create a good impression.

### *Provide Appropriate Space for All Stakeholders:*

Prominently promoted items on the home pages tend to get significantly greater traffic. It is the most "in-demand" real estate with limited acreage. Product Managers of each individual product / service who have a stake in the site want a promotional element or a link to their section on the homepage, and the turf battles for homepage visibility can be fierce.

## Decision Areas

The team agreed upon the decision areas on the basis of a few preliminary research studies: user response to the current site, usability study, surveys to find the strengths and weaknesses of the site, and analysis of online feedback on user behaviour. These studies were in addition to the ongoing brand equity studies conducted by MMT, which tracked monthly top-of-mind recall; satisfaction score; consideration set for purchase; and ratings on brand image parameters. Overall findings and decision areas decided were as follows:

### *Overall Findings of the Pre-studies:*

1. **Product tabs** (at the top of the page and on the widget): White tabs (top) on a white background were not getting much attention of users. This was inferred from the data which showed that more users were using tabs on the widget rather than the tabs at the top.
2. **Hero Banner**: Being at the center of the page, the main banner on the page, called 'Hero Banner', was the premium marketing inventory, which got the highest attention from the user. Click-Through Rate (total clicks received by the banner/total instances when the banner appears) on hero banner was the highest (0.6%).
3. **Special Offers Section**: Studies showed that users found these kinds of placements more informative than banners.

**4. Side and Bottom Banners:** These were the least effective banners with lowest CTR and used to add to the irritation and annoyance of the visitors (studies confirmed this).

*Decision (Problem) Areas based on Conclusions from the Pre-Studies:*

On the basis of the studies, it was concluded that:

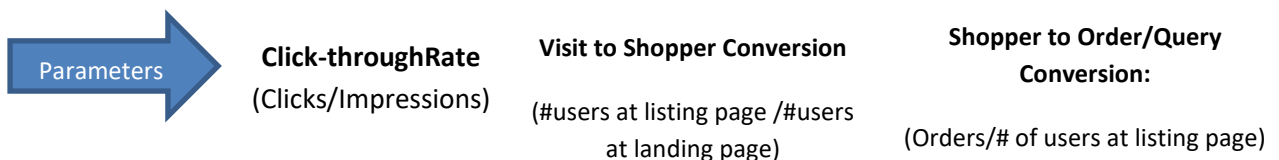
- Discoverability of MakeMyTrip's offerings was an issue. For some users, the web-content didnot align with their needs and their feedback left a big scope of improvement.
- Several travel innovations in products/initiatives, introduced by MMT for the first time in the industry, needed to expand their reach to the customers.
- Most of the users didnot like the clutter on the page and expected a cleaner User Interface (UI) and better navigation. Too many ad banners were found to be pushing the products/offers. Many calls to action (CTA) buttons across banners on a single page were also NOT desirable.
- Instead of ad banners, prominence needed to be given to the search widget and the product tabs to let users search for what they wanted. The data analysis (MMT website) and trend across the e-commerce industry shows that the Click-through Rates for [banner ads](#) have fallen over time. Users didnot tend to respond to large banner ads as compared to text ads and other formats.

### Parameters for Deciding the Best Home Page

In order to identify the metrics for success based on which the winning design could be chosen, the key objectives of the redesign were defined on the basis of the journey of a typical user visiting MMT at the beginning of 2013. Besides these metrics, the new design was expected to be perceived by customers as: (i) that of a leading travel brand, (ii) with improved strengths, and (iii) with reduced weaknesses.

The sequence of activities that a visitor went through helped to define the basic parameters to be captured and led to defining the ones to be tracked to select the best option:

The final option chosen should just not only be attractive to users and force them to click; rather it should generate curiosity with the user ('Let me check what this offering is, it seems relevant to me,') and encourage the user to explore the options/offerings.



The specific parameters of success were defined as shown above. The rationale for the same was as follows:

- Bounce Rate on the page: To make sure that users are comfortable with the change and there is no technical issue that users might be facing which led them to leave the page
- Actions which user can take on that page: All the next possible page visits from that page (conversions), to make sure that the new page is better in terms of (i) user engagement and (ii) discoverability of offerings
- Final conversion (purchase) in the direction of above actions: To make sure that the upside observed in the above parameter is not because of accidental clicks or to ensure that the user exploring the elements on the page is the one who really needs that feature (serious shoppers or quality traffic)

It was also decided to track where the visitors were getting confused and to understand how the visitors were using the website. Information was also needed to track the strengths and weaknesses and brand image of the site vis-a-vis the competing sites.

### Options for Testing

The team came up with the 4 options for the search widget and 2 options for the product tabs. (See Exhibit 5 for the options for search widget). The search widget would perform the same function as it currently did, namely helping customer select the product (flights, hotels, holidays etc.), origin and destination cities, and other relevant parameters such as number of passengers or class of travel. The product tabs would provide a direct path for the user to reach a particular product. These tabs would contain highly specific promotional banners based on the selected product.

A brief description of the four key options<sup>3</sup> are given below:

1. *Option 1:* The search widget by default contained 3 fields—Product Selector, Departure City, and Destination City. The product selector was revealed as a pull-down menu that showed different products (Flights, Hotels, Flight+Hotel, Holidays, Bus, Rail & Cabs). However, the Flight option was selected by default. This was needed as the other two fields are dependent on this.
2. *Option 2:* This option was similar to the first option, but for one key difference. The product selector was not revealed to the user by default. Instead, Flights was the default product. This was followed by Flight-related fields - Origin, Destination, Travel dates and Number of passengers. This option was designed to understand the extent to which the design could influence the product mix.
3. *Option 3:* The third option was very similar to the second option except that fields were revealed to the user only after the information in the previous field was submitted. For example, the user would be able to select the destination city only after entering the origin city field. The philosophy behind this was for the experience of looking for options (flights, hotels etc.) to be a bit more personal, as if a travel agent were guiding you through the booking process, asking first 'Where would you want to fly?', followed by the dates and the number of passengers.

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<sup>3</sup> As mentioned later the two Product Options did not show significant difference in the results. These, therefore are not included in the options mentioned here. However, these are available in the case MakeMyTrip: 2013 (B).

4. Option 4: The design team took a fresh approach with a very minimal look. The option presented only 2 fields to the user: Destination city and the product selector with no default option. Apart from being crisp and uncluttered, this option gave significantly more prominence to the banners and the other sections of the site.

### **Research Design to Test the Options**

The homepage website redesign team decided to use A/B Testing for evaluating the options. This technique tests two options (a pair of options) at a time. However, the number of options was 8 which meant it would take considerable time to test. It was therefore decided to prioritise the options to be tested. On the basis of the experience of the executives, it was decided to quickly check if there was any difference in the output from the product placement options. This test showed that there was really no difference in the two product placements. This reduced the number of options to be tested to 5, including the product placement option.

For testing a pair of home page options, about 5% of the incoming visitors were exposed to each of the options and the parameters were tracked. For an option to be declared the winner, it had to have superior performance on the parameters of success. (The research design is given in Exhibit 6.)

### **Tools for Tracking the Parameters**

In order to track the success parameters, the MMT team relied on third-party web analytics tools that tracked, aggregated as well as visitor-level metrics. Since the majority of the visitors interacted with the MMT website by entering through the homepage, it was critical to track the journey to conclude which homepage options worked best for MMT. However, only quantitative review was not going to be sufficient. In addition, the MMT team reviewed the visitor's interaction with the website elements, especially the elements that were going to be a part of the redesign. The MMT team also used third-party heat map tools in order to study visitors' clickbehavior. Heat maps indicated which elements received more or less clicks and could also record visitors' sessions.

MMT used Adobe's web analytics solution (then known as Omniture) for understanding visitor behaviour on the website. The tool helped visualise how visitors interacted with MMT site. The tool also helped track shopper visits, bounce rate and orders for different business unit and to understand conversion funnels. The back-end data for this was based on several GB of data in an hour, where every interaction of the visitor with the MMT website was noted.

Clicktale's heatmap helped understand which sections of the MMT homepage the users were engaging with or clicking. Red indicated higher engagement and green indicated lower engagement. This was identified using the clicks on the page and was a great way to visualise and understand where the users were likely to click, so that design of the new homepage could take this into account.

Inspectlet helped analyse where visitors were looking and what parts of the site they were reading by visualising their mouse movements. This helped the team understand what visitors were looking at while they engaged with select components (indicated by heat maps).

(See Exhibit 7 for a sample of the type of results available from web analytics tools and heat maps.)

### **The Meeting to Decide the Best Home Page Design**

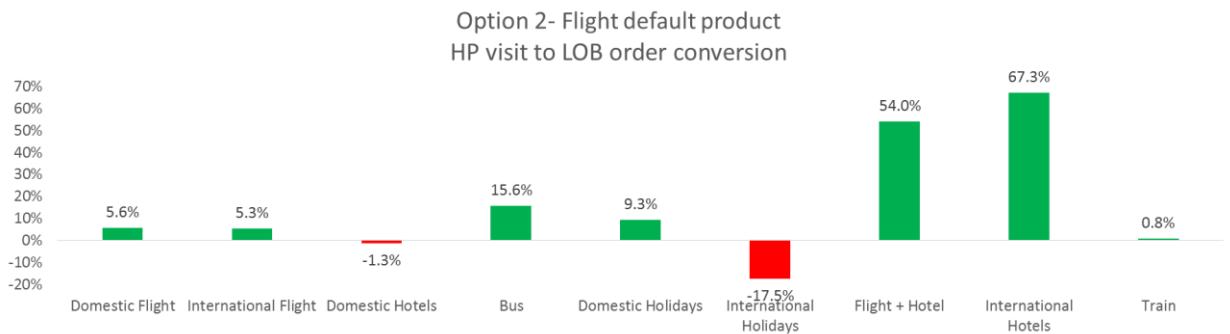
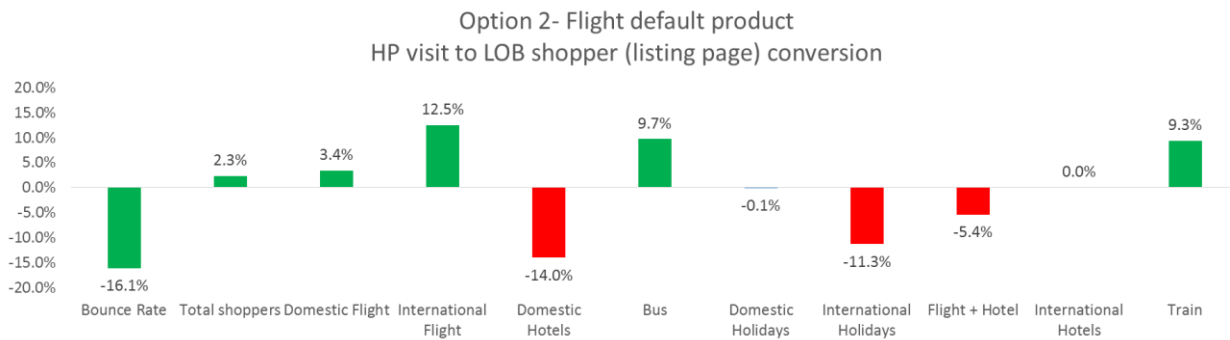
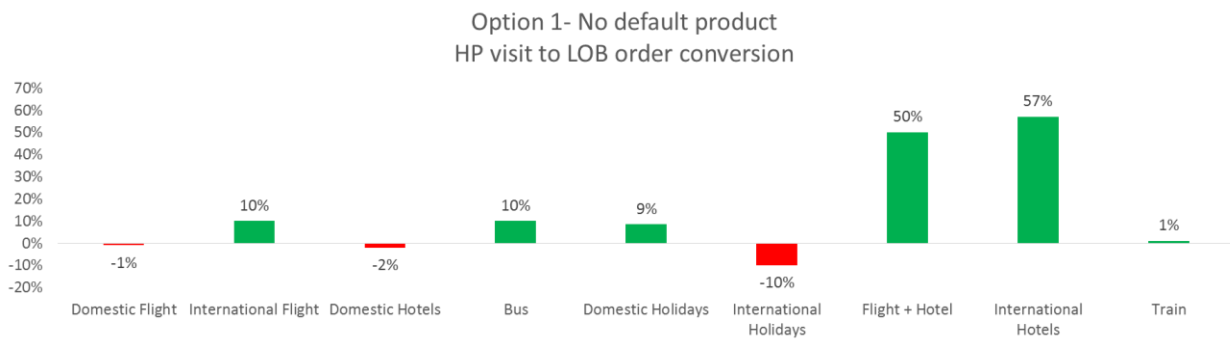
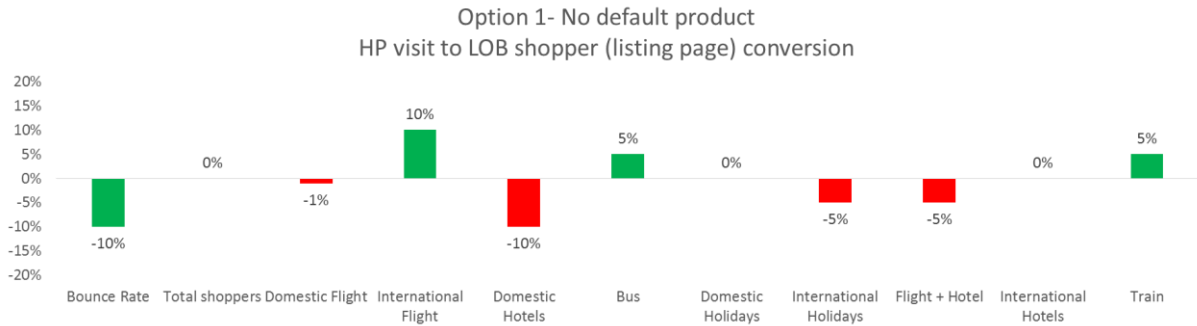
The Homepage product team shared the following with the homepage website redesign team a day before the meeting:

1. The results of testing the four options of the search widget as given in Exhibit 1.
2. The decision to utilize horizontal (not vertical) product tabs. This was because significant differences were not found in the performance between the horizontal and the vertical placements.

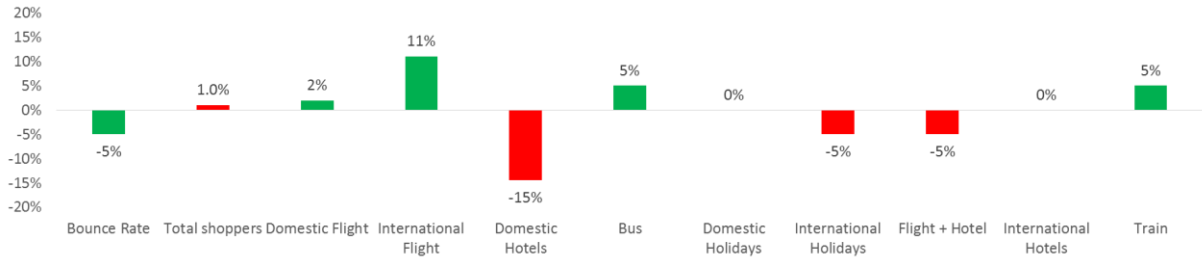
Deepak and the members of the homepage website redesign team then discussed the results to choose the best home page design for MMT and the research design which had implications for interpreting the results.

**Exhibit 1: MakeMyTrip2013 (C)**

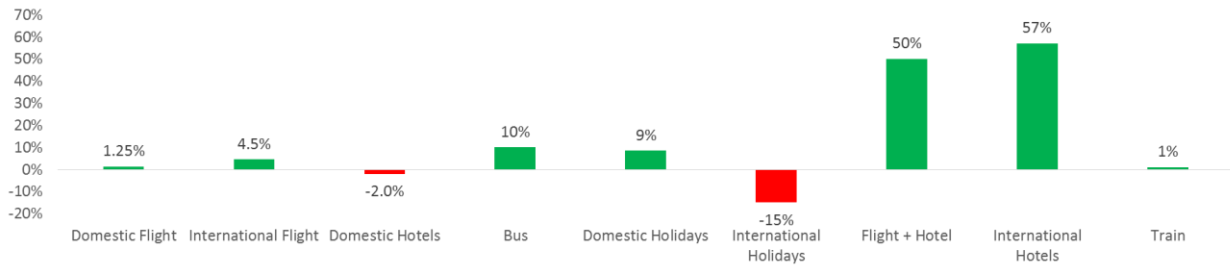
**Results of A/B Tests on Home Page Design Options**



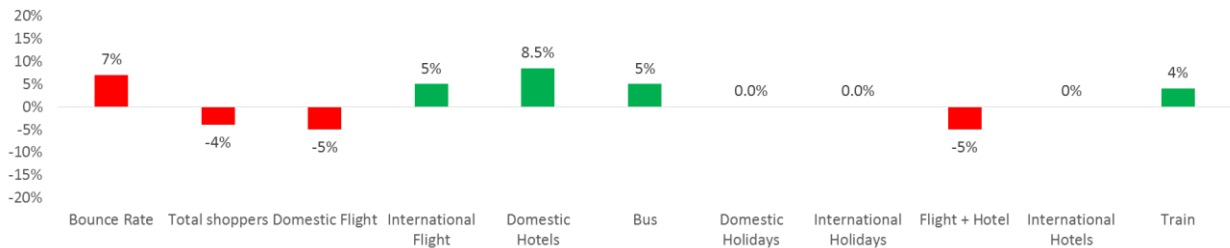
Option 3- Flight default product (progressive)  
HP visit to LOB shopper (listing page) conversion



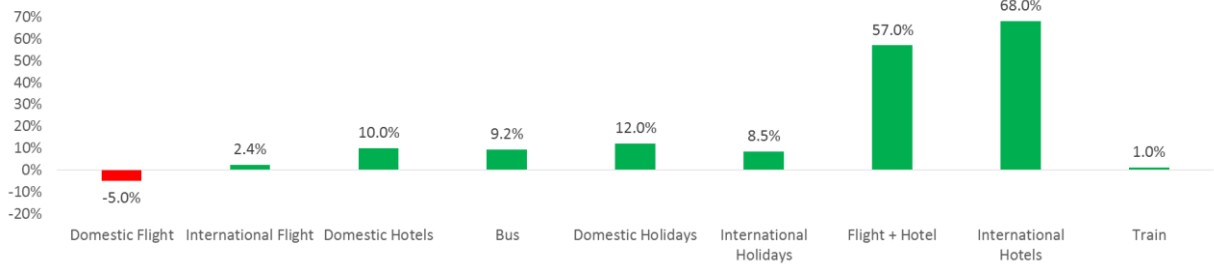
Option 3- Flight default product (progressive)  
HP visit to LOB order conversion



Option 4- Destination first  
HP visit to LOB shopper (listing page) conversion



Option 4- Destination first  
HP visit to LOB order conversion



**Exhibit 2: Make My Trip 2013 (C)**

## Selected Awards and Partner Accolades


- 1. Outlook Traveller Award –Best Travel Portal (2013, 2012)**
- 2. ET Retail Awards –E-tailer of the Year (2013)**
- 3. Lonely Planet Travel Award – Best Travel Portal (2013, 2012)**
- 4. CNBC Awaaz Travel Award – Best Travel Portal (2013, 2009)**
- 5. CondeNast Traveller Award – Favourite OTA (2013)**
- 6. PhocusWright Award for Most Innovative B2C Company (2013)**
- 7. Ascendas Website of the Year (2013)**
- 8. ICICI-Crisil Emerging India Awards (2013)**
- 9. Eyefortravel Award – Best Mobile Strategy and Best Mobile Solution (2012)**
- 10. Budgies Awards – Travel Innovator of the Year (2012)**
- 11. Consumer Superbrands India – Superbrand (2009)**
- 12. Galileo-Express Travel World – Best OTA Award (2007)**

**Exhibit 3: Make My Trip 2013 (C):**


India Online and Total Travel Market (INR Crores), Channel, Segment Share and CAGR, 2011 & 2015			
	2011	2015	CAGR: 2011-15: %
Airline			
Online air	16,414	35,366	21
Total air market	41,674	66,855	13
Hotels			
Online hotel market	2,634	7,692	31
Total hotel market	23,943	34,966	10
Rail			
Online rail market	9,646	22,947	24
Total rail market	26,321	47,515	16
Online travel market (leisure/unmanaged)	29,614	66,909	23
Total travel market	94,699	154,357	13
Online share of total travel market: %	31	43	-
Online Channel Share			
Supplier Websites	18,765	43,830	24
Online travel agencies	10,249	23,079	22
Supplier Website share of total online bookings: %	65	66	-
OTA share of total online bookings: %	35	34	-

**Source:** Phocuswright's Asia Pacific Online Travel Overview Sixth Edition

Exhibit 4: Make My Trip 2013 (C): Pre Redesign Home Page February 2013



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Mauritius	Rs-50,999*	Rs. 47,582
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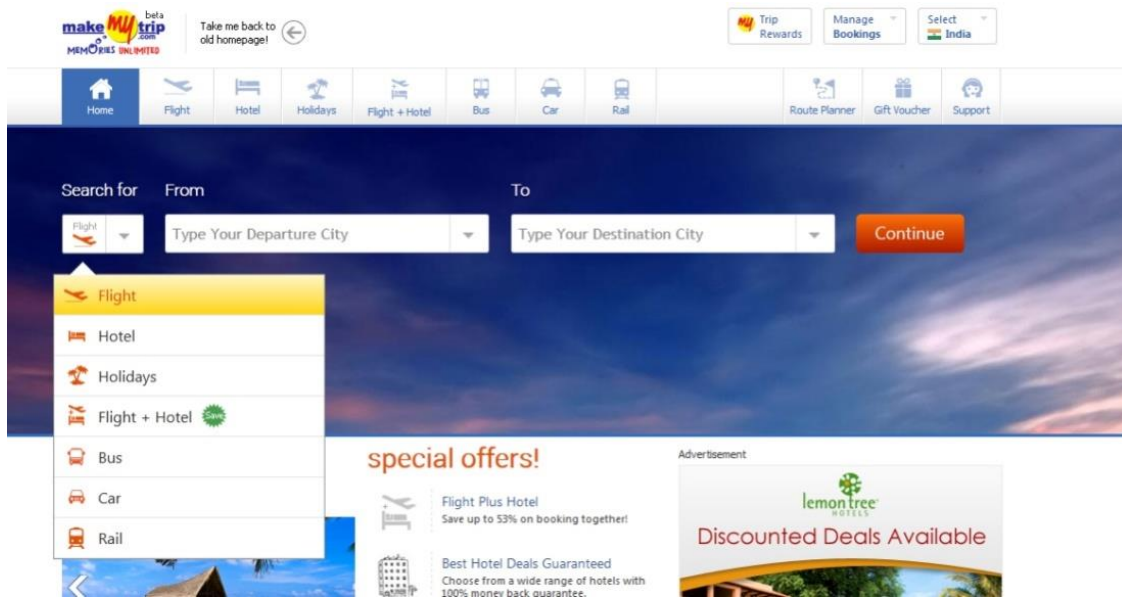
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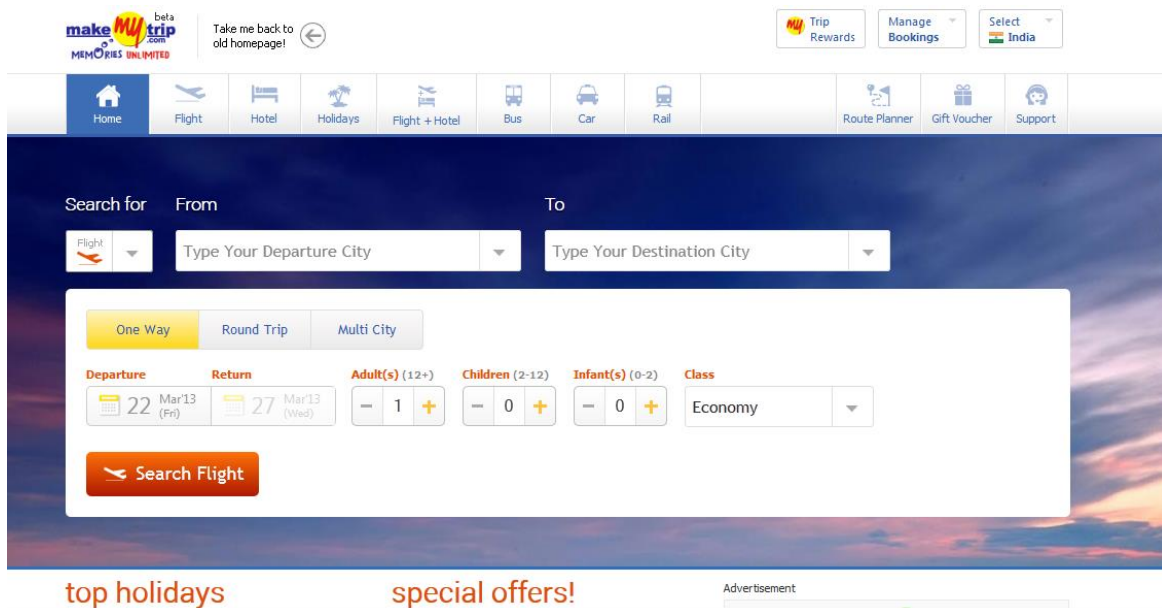


### Exhibit 5: MakeMyTrip2013 (C): Home Page Design Options Tested

#### Option 1 Search widget-



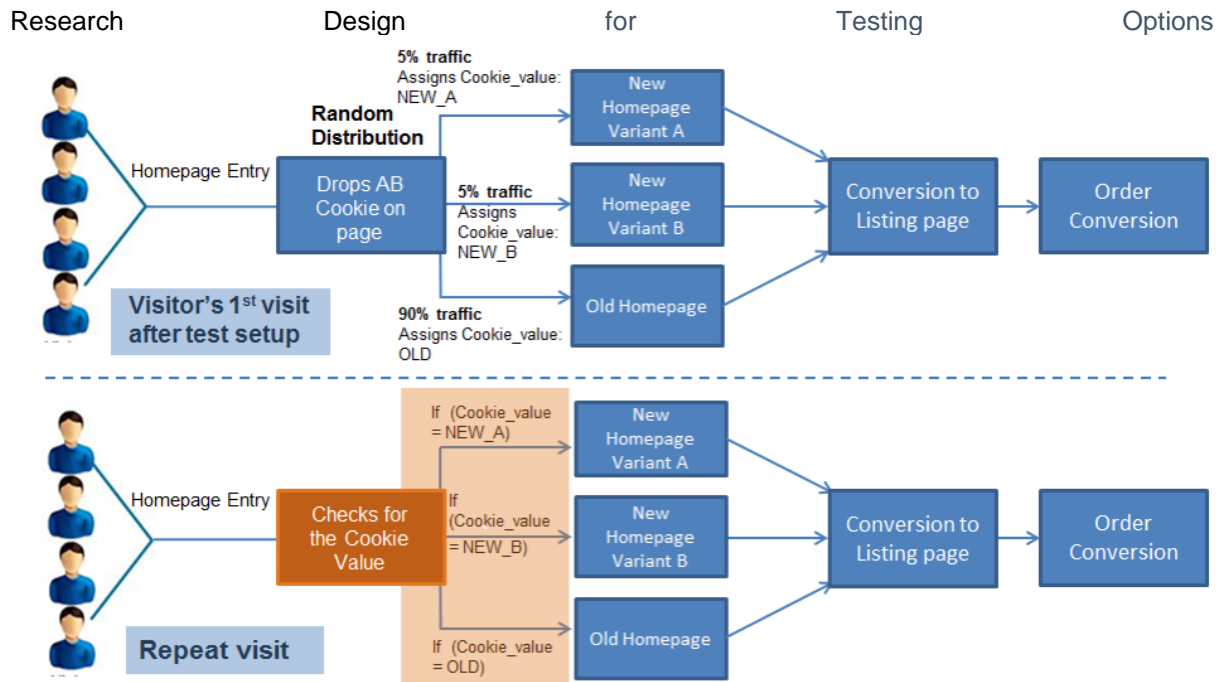
#### Option 2/3 Search widget



Option 4 Search widget-

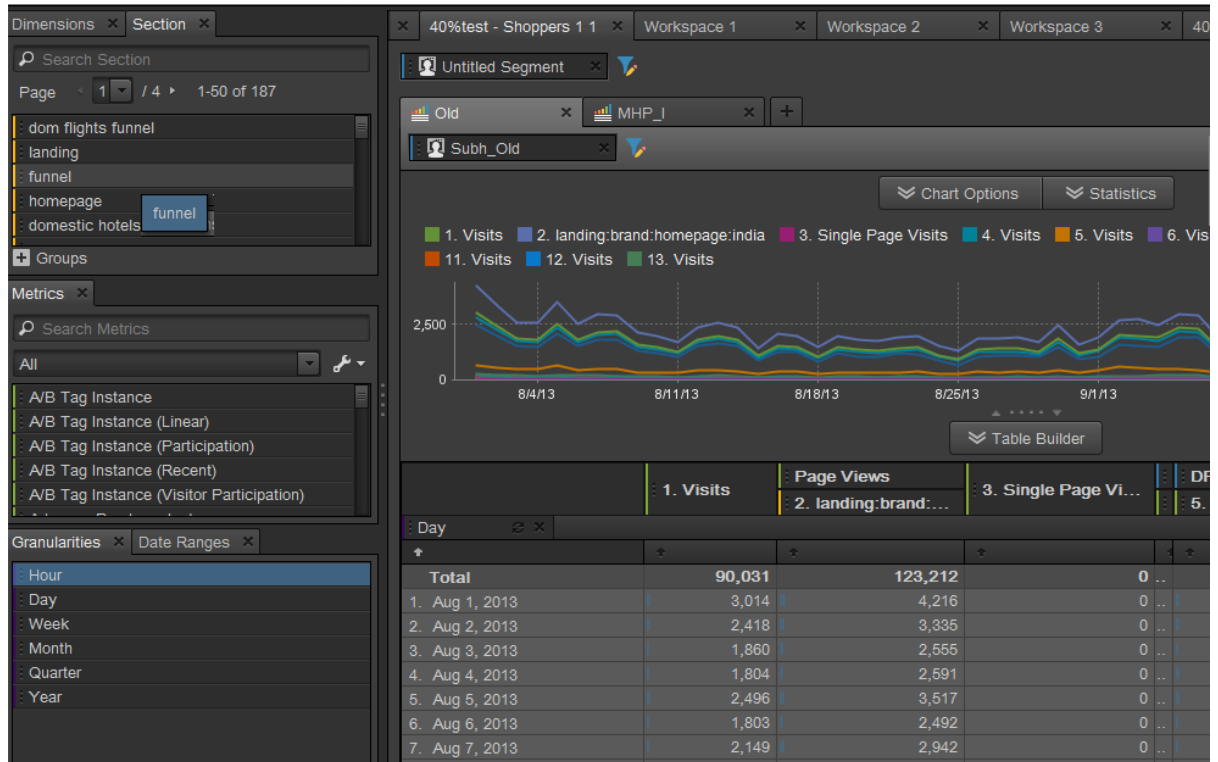
The screenshot displays the MakeMyTrip search interface. At the top left, the logo for 'make my trip' is shown with 'beta' and 'MEMORIES UNLIMITED' text. A link says 'Take me back to old homepage!'. On the top right, there are buttons for 'Trip Rewards', 'Manage Bookings', and 'Select India'. Below this is a navigation bar with icons for Home, Flight, Hotel, Holidays, Flight + Hotel, Bus, Car, Rail, Route Planner, Gift Voucher, and Support. The main search area has three sections: 'I want to go to' with a text input 'Type Your Destination City', 'I need' with a dropdown menu currently showing 'Flight', and 'I am travelling from' with a text input 'Type Your Departure City'. A 'Continue' button is to the right. The 'I need' dropdown menu is open, listing: Flight (highlighted), Hotel, Holidays, Flight + Hotel (with a 'SAVINGS' badge), Bus, Car, and Rail. Below the search area, there is a 'top holidays' section with 'Outside India' and 'In India' buttons, and an advertisement for 'lemon tree HOTELS' with the text 'Discounted Deals Available'.

**Exhibit 6: MakeMyTrip2013 (C):**



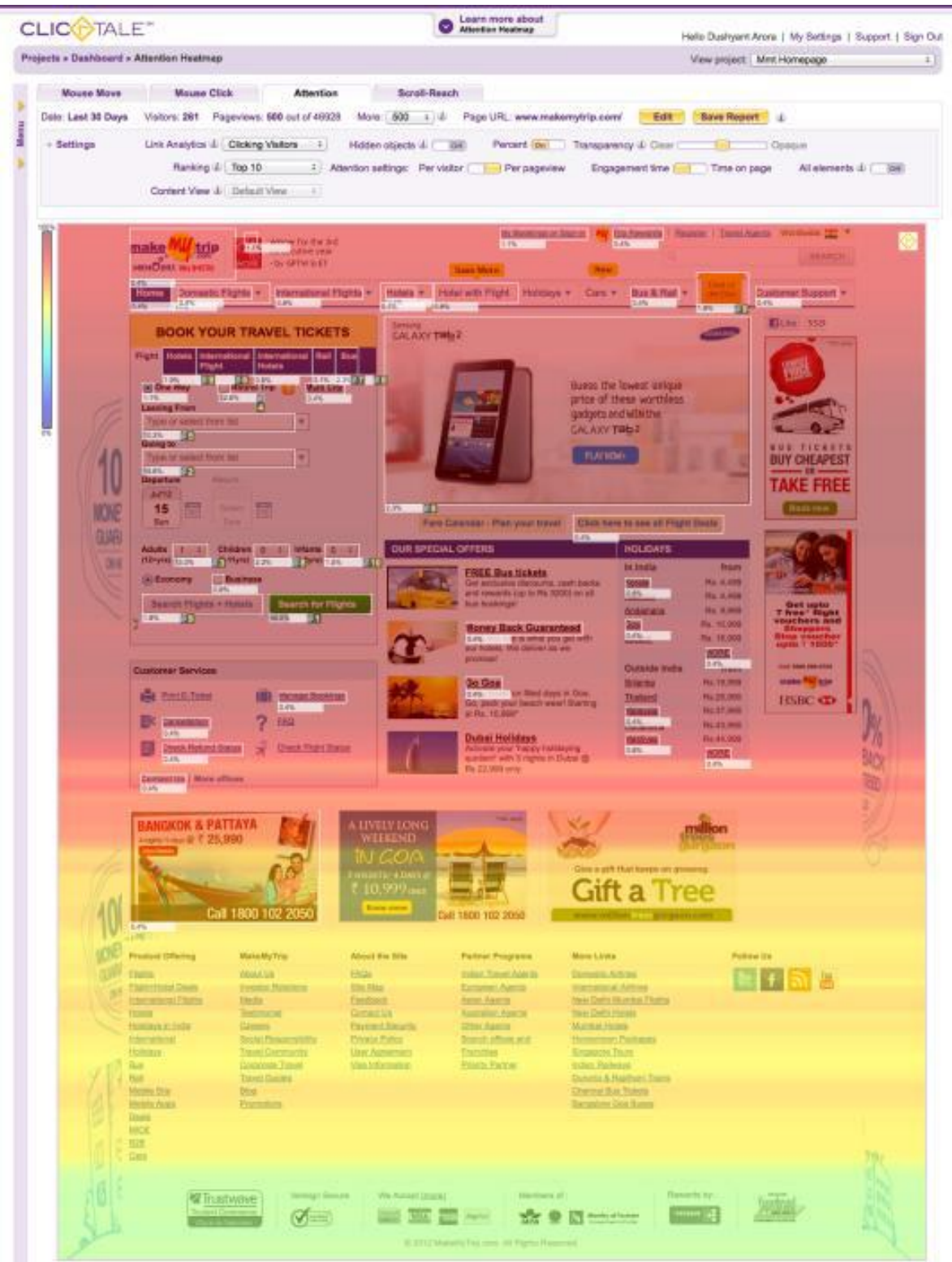
**Exhibit 7:MMT: 2013 (C): Tools Used for Tracking Parameters**

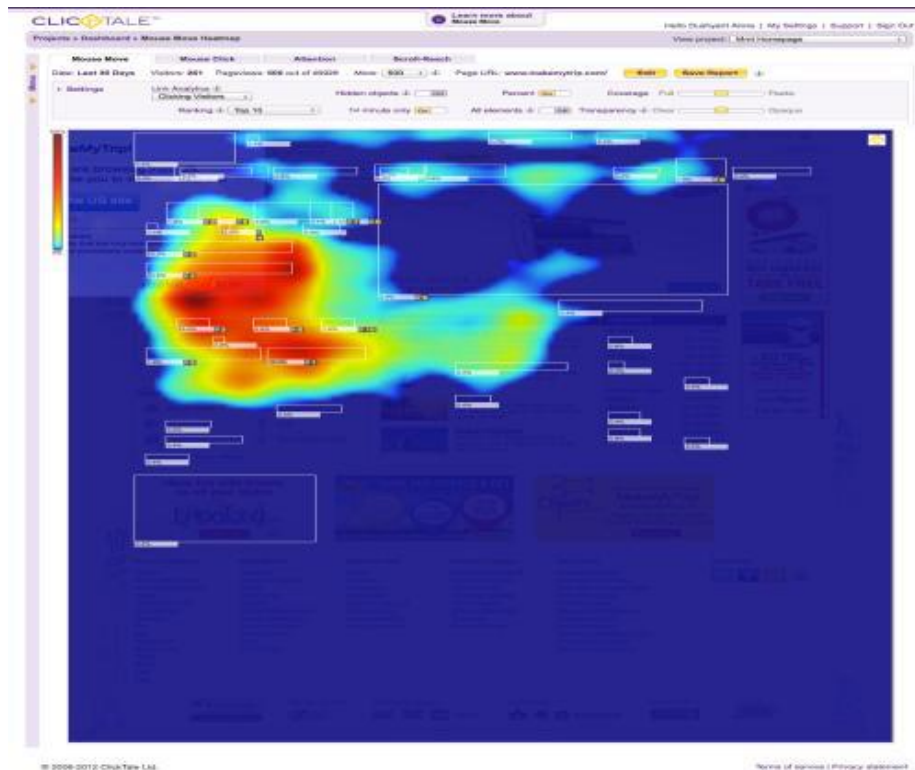
**1. Adobe's Omniture for Web analytics**



MMT used Adobe's web analytics solution (then known as Omniture) for understanding visitor behaviour on the website. The tool helps visualise how visitors interact with MMT site. The tool also helps track shopper visits, bounce rate and orders for different business units and also helps understand conversion funnels. The back-end data for this is based on several GB of data in an hour where every interaction of the visitor with MMT website is noted.

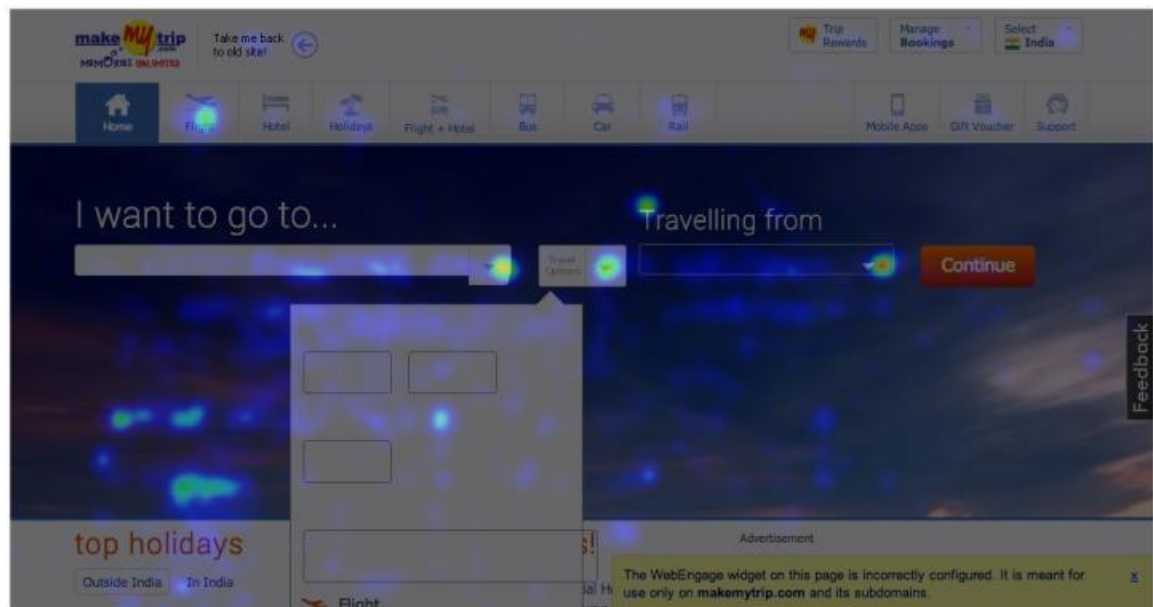
## 2. Clicktale for heatmap





Clicktale's heatmap helps understand which sections of the MMT homepage the users were engaging with or clicking. Red indicates higher engagement and green indicates lower engagement. This is identified using the clicks on the page and is a great way to visualise and understand where the users were likely to click so that design of the new homepage can take this into account.

### 3. Inspectlet for Eye tracking heatmaps



Inspectlet helps analyse where visitors are looking and what parts of the site they're reading by visualising their mouse movements. This helps to understand what visitors are looking at while they choose to engage with select components (indicated by heatmaps).