

Project 1

Competitive benchmark

Overview

Competitive benchmarking is an extremely useful research technique that allows you to identify what your competitors are doing right, and learn from what they are doing wrong. For this project, you'll review four websites to gain some insights on how best to design your own airline website or app.

Objectives

Identify how best-in-class websites solve the problems we are trying to solve;

- Best practice that we should emulate
- Convent

Conventions we should follow



Strange functionality provided to user

Tasks

- 1. Identify four websites, three of which should be airlines. You are welcome to include one wildcard but it should be travel related, such as a travel aggregator or hotel.
- 2. Define which aspects of their software you want to look at. For example, the homepage, search and select, how users inputs their details etc.
- 3. Review each website and app by taking screenshots with plenty of commentary to explain what's happening and why you think it's noteworthy.

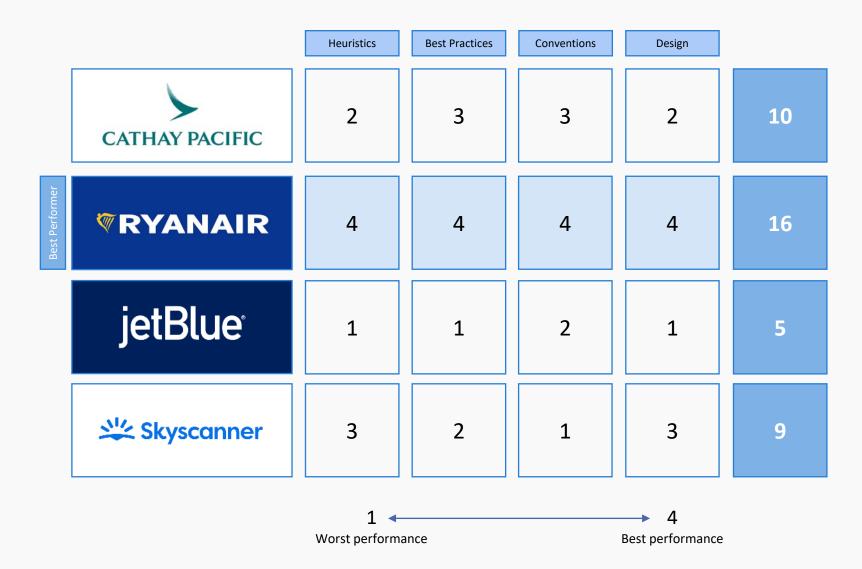
While not perfect, the Ryanair website was the best overall performer of the websites reviewed.

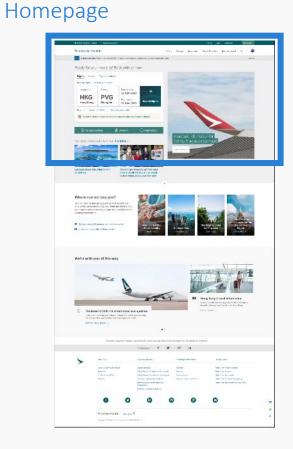
In general the flow threw out the booking process fitted well with a mental model to search and book flights. The use of language and iconography made the process fairly intuitive and the flexibility built into the system aided the ease to use.

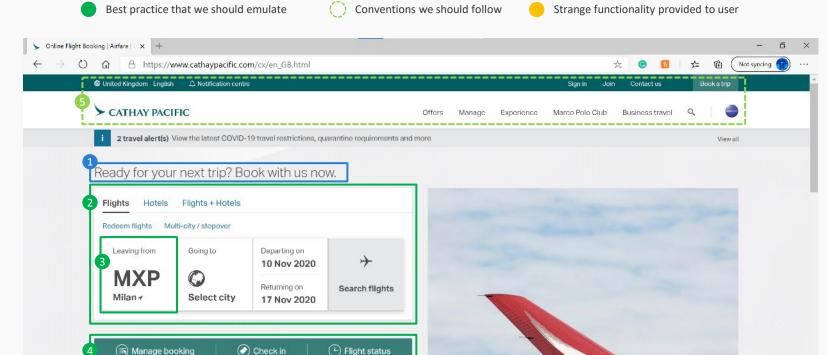
A good solid performance from the Cathay Pacific and one that offered the easiest way for customers to contact the company with queries. However during the booking process over scrolling caused some issues by jumping to different parts left me a little frustrated.

While my initial thoughts for Jetblue looked promising, there use of a white label product, overall busy and confusing layout left me feeling anxious and distracted through out.

Skyscanner's homepage offers the most simplicity in design, but it lacks some of the basics that aid a good experience by adding unnecessary extra steps that interrupt good flow when making inputs for a booking.







1 Headline – Evokes a feeling of confidence, direct and to the point, not adding extra fluff.

Our latest news and offers from London < 6

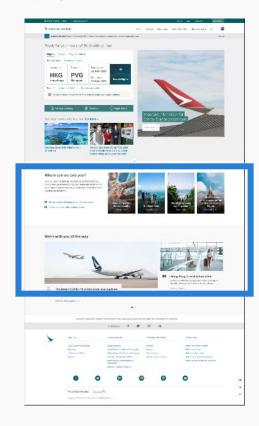
- Make a booking The main purpose to visit the website is to book/search flight options. Colours and placement make it easy to find, great use of text and symbols highlight the main details. Hovering over clickable areas are indicated by text changing to underlined and pointer changes from normal select to link select.
- 3 It knows my airport I'm on the UK version of website, but it knows I am in Milan, Italy and has already populate the departing airport as Malpensa (MXP).

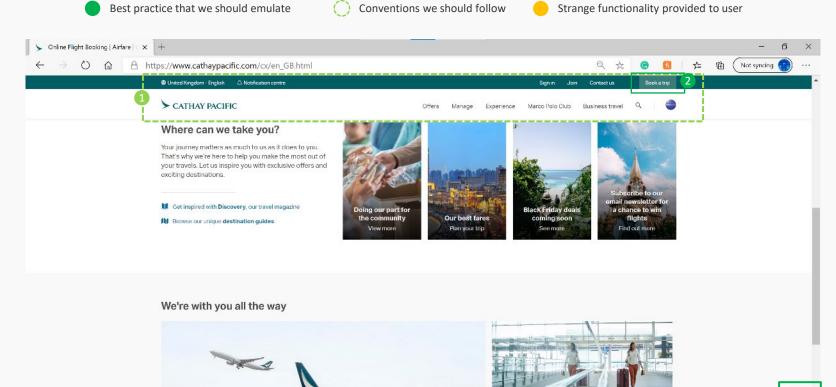
Secondary actions – Located close to primary function, these actions are the next important and are easy to find. Simple wording and great iconography.

Important information for Cathay Dragon passengers

- Header Uncluttered not too many categories. Doesn't distract from the booking section below. Membership login/signup, contact us, country version easy to find.
- 6 Location specific offers/news The website is optimised for different countries/regions but know where I am, but also gives me the option to change.

Homepage





Sticky navigation header – As the user flows through the website, the navigation header is still available to click

https://www.cathaypacific.com/cx/en_GB/covid-19/information-and-updates.html?cxsource=HOMEPAGE-CAROUSEL_BANNER

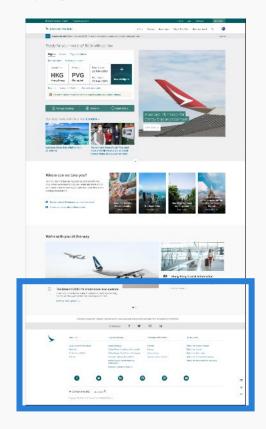
- Book trip link A first I was confused why this was here due to the booking section available at the top. I now understand that as you scroll down, this give you the option to book rather than scrolling back to the top.
- Feedback/chat with us Once you scroll ¼ way down the page, this side bar appears that contains feedback and chat with us links. When you hover, it extends to reveal what each icon means.

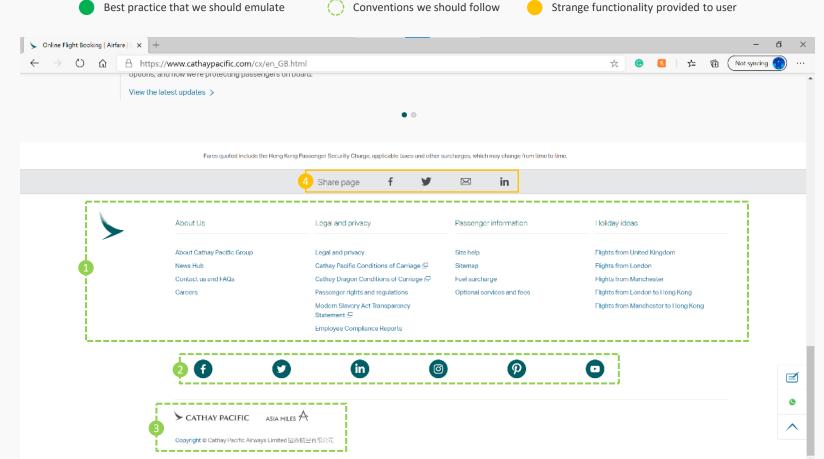
Hong Kong transit information Learn about the latest requirements for passengers transiting through and travelling to Hong Kong.

Find out more >

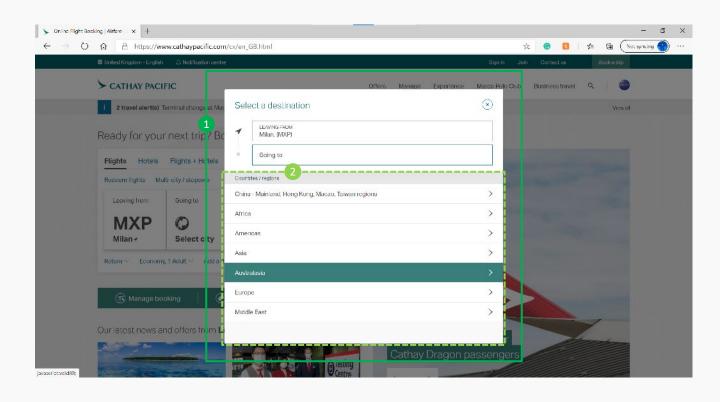
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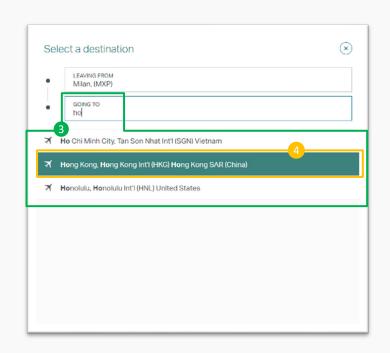
Homepage





- Site Navigation Doesn't follow the same categories found at the top, but is the user has made it all the way to the bottom and not found what they are after, this may help the find it.
- Social media links The option is available to user to use these links but placed at the bottom to avoid user from leaving for these platforms.
- Copyright details Seems to be the standard location for this element.
- Share page Option available to the user to share the homepage of this website via Facebook, Twitter, email or Linkedin.

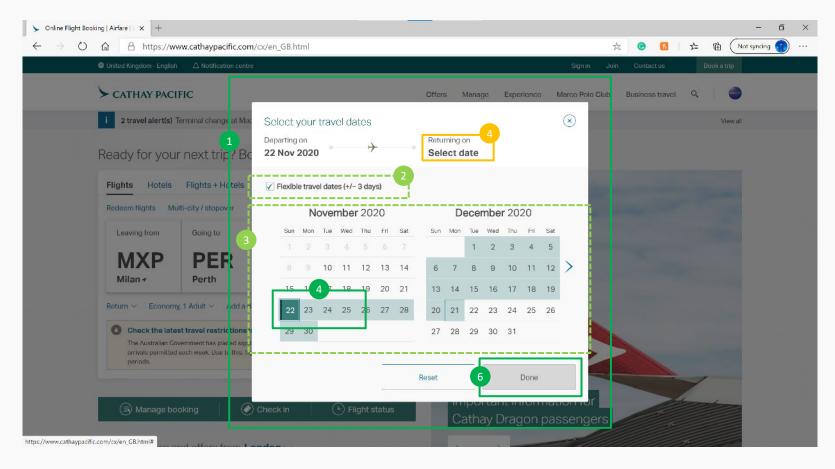




- Select a destination After click, background fades followed by the dialogue box appearing with slight downwards slide into position. Allows the user to focus on the task and allowing to focus.
- Select via Country/region A section is provided to step through countries and regions to find destination.

- Select by typing If the final destination is know, you can easily type into the space labelled "Going to" and options start to be listed below as you type.
- Flow Once the destination is selected, it doesn't take you straight to the dates inputs but back to the homepage, requiring additional clicks.



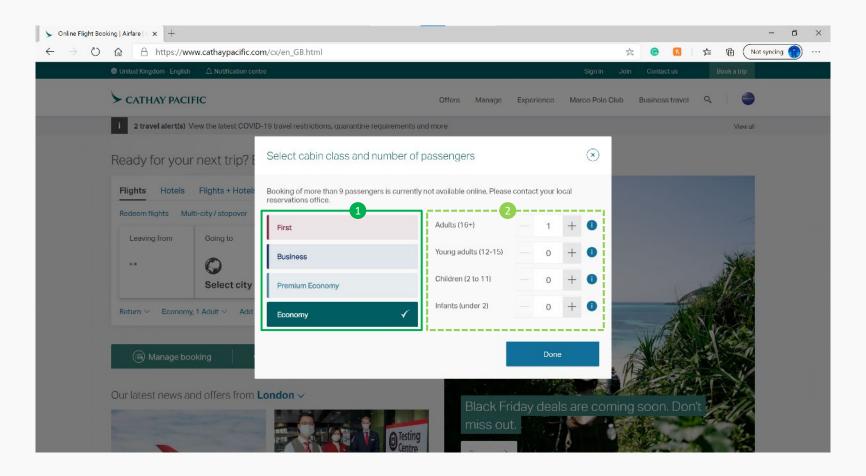


- 1 Select your travel dates Same action and animation as previous.
- Flexible on dates Simple tick box option available for user that is flexible on dates for better prices.
- (3) Calendar Displays 2 months. Handy for user to visualise length.

- Select dates Click the start date which highlight in green. As you move the pointer around, the days change to a lighter tone. Clicking the return date highlights to green.
- 5 Flow No option to type the date at the top if dates are known like the previous when selecting destination.
- To complete, you must click the "Done". Dates are more flexible that destination. By not moving on after clicking return date allows user to make adjustments if required.

Conventions we should follow

Strange functionality provided to user

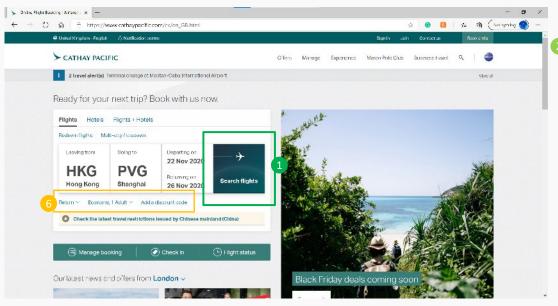


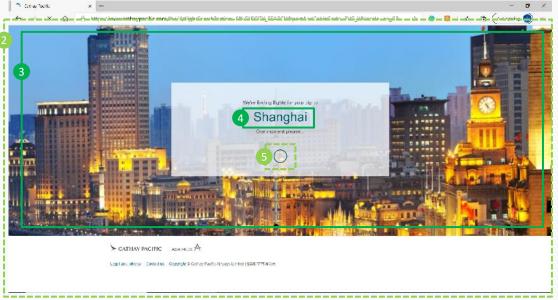
Select class – This airline offers different classes. Easy to know which is selected by use of ghosting and tick icon.

2) Pas

Passengers – Seems to be an easy way to add or remove the number of travellers to the booking. If the user infringes on the any of the booking constraints, the dialogue expands under the category.

Flow – You need to go find this, small text at the bottom, doesn't automatically open.



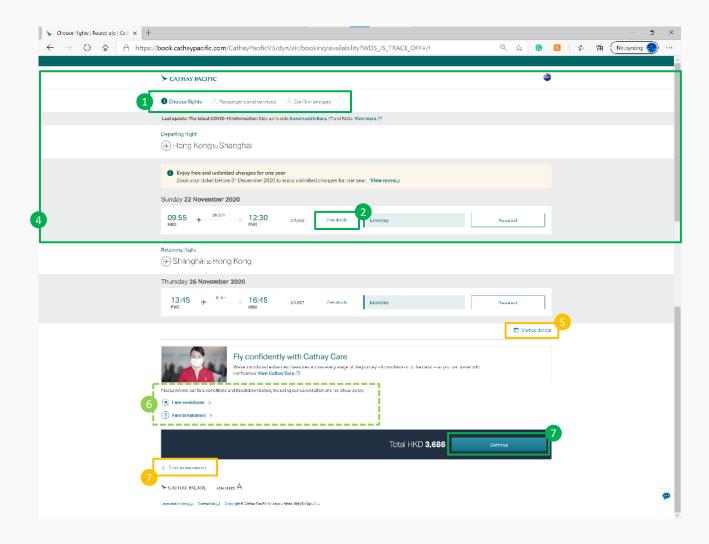


- 1 Search flights Once you have added these minimum details, the "Search flights" button is enabled in green. At the beginning it was grey.
- One moment please After clicking the "Search flights", the screen jumps straight to a loading screen. I know something is happening
- 3 Background image I noticed that the photo in the background changes depending on the destination.

- Destination name On the loading screen the text adjusts to align with the intended destination .
- 1'm thinking A throbber is used to indicate that something is happening.
- 6 Additional booking details These options are not visible from the beginning.

Cathay Pacific Choose Flights

Best practice that we should emulate



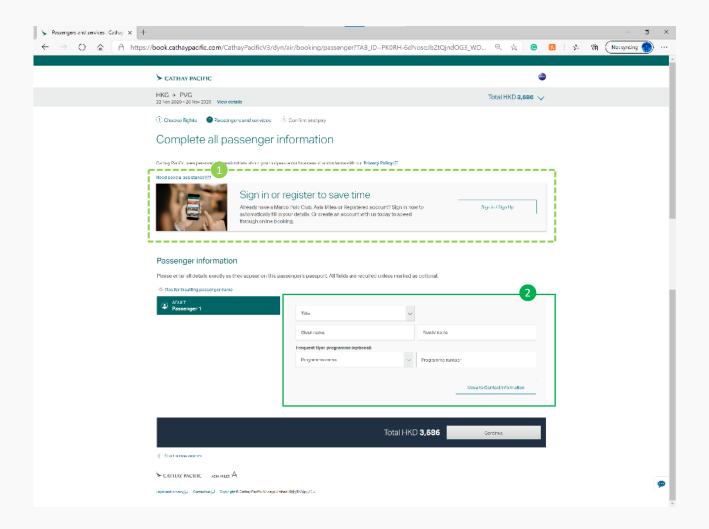
Conventions we should follow Strange functionality provided to user



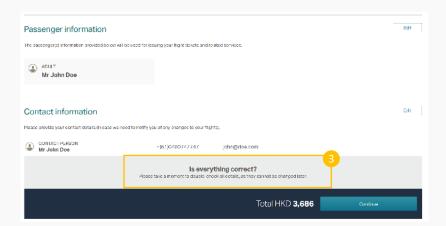
- 1 Progress shown Website shows that there are 3 steps required to complete task and well located at the top of page.
- 2 Details hidden Clean and uncluttered. Option available to user to see more if they want.
- 3 Select flights Website only has one available to choose, only uses the word "select", no other visual indicators used to help identify it as something to click.
- Flow The website only shows one thing at a time. Once you have selected, it minimises to show basic information. User doesn't need to scroll as the information requiring focus is presented.
- 5 Change date option —Option available to change dates, good use of iconography, but only becomes available after selecting the first flight.
- Terms & conditions Clicks through to a pop up window.
- 7 Continue The button changes colour to indicate that all the required parts have been completed to continue forward with the booking.
- Start new search The tendency is to push the back button which provides errors, should be moved closer to the top.

Cathay Pacific Passenger Info

Best practice that we should emulate

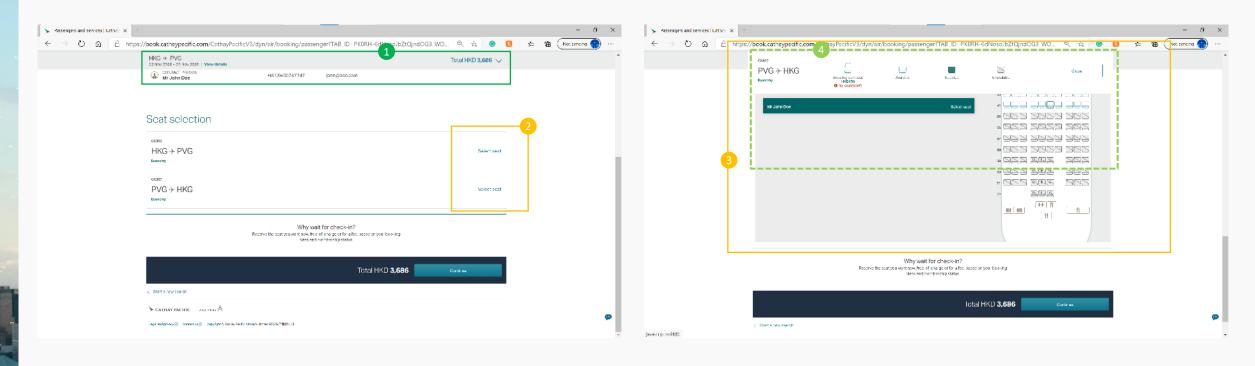


Conventions we should follow Strange functionality provided to user

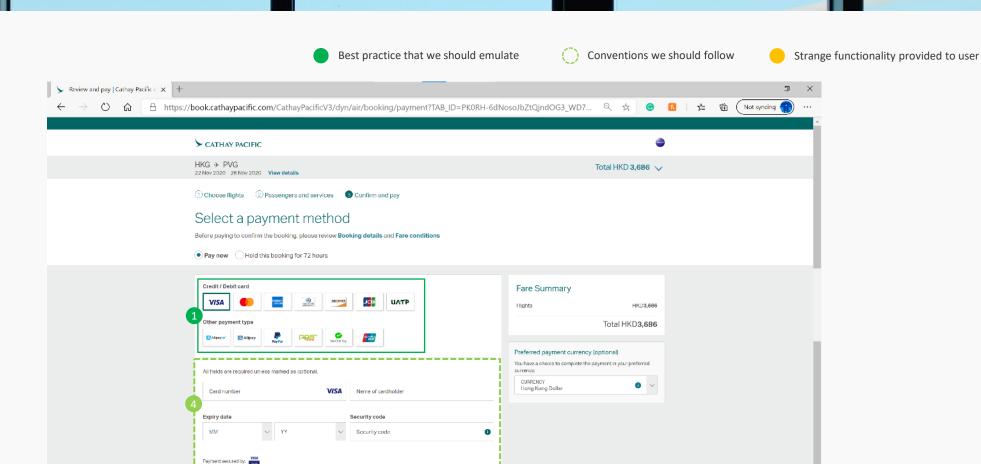


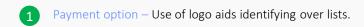
- Membership Always seems to be near or first thing and provides option to sign in/up.
- 1 Fill in details Rather than throw everything at the user in one hit, it is broken down to smaller mor manageable parts.
- 3 Select flights First of many prompt to check details

Conventions we should follow



- 1 Summary– Keeps basic summary of the progress made and offers ability to expand
- 2 Select seat Nothing to denote that these are buttons to click.
- Don't scroll too far As the user scrolls to look for a seat, if they go too far the website thinks they want to go to a previous section and has issues.
- 4 Seat selection Standard layout and use of iconography.

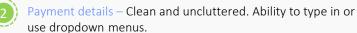






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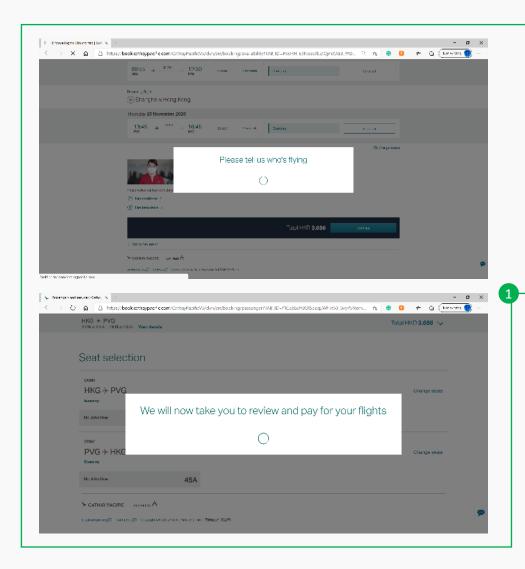


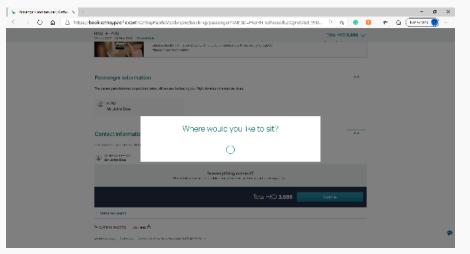
Total HKD3,686



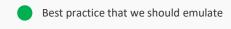
Conventions we should follow

Strange functionality provided to user



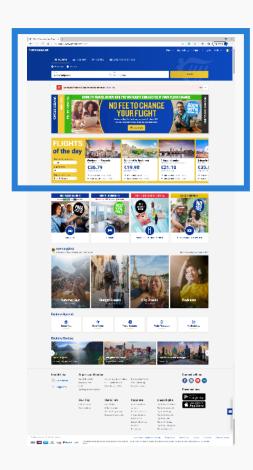


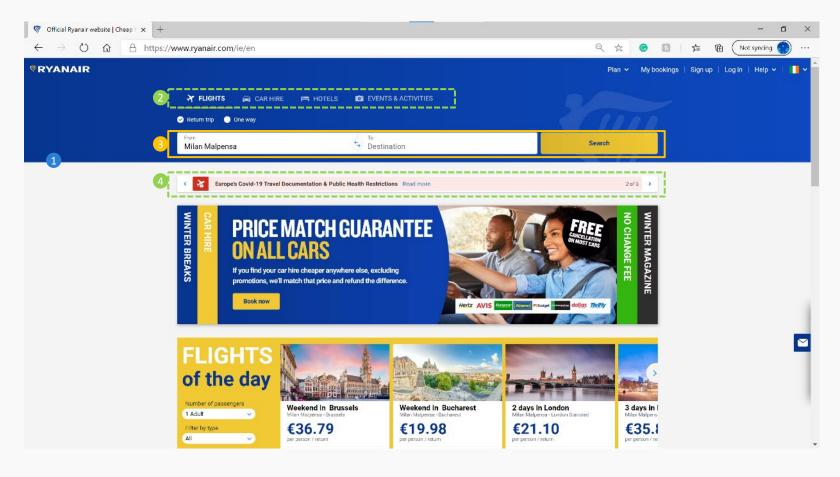
1 Loading screens – Always feel I know that things are still working





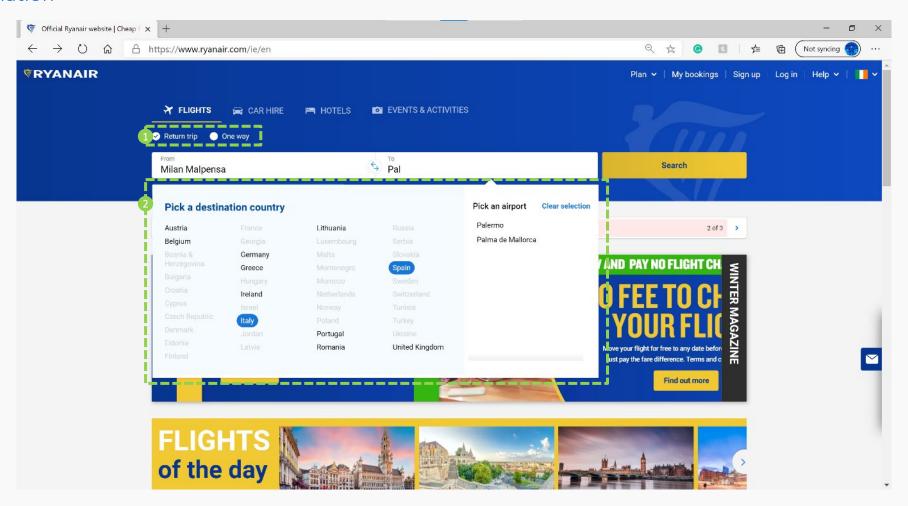






- No Headline Website feels more fun and more focused on promotions. Subtle use of branding.
- Additional booking options This website offers addition functionality for booking outside of flights.
- Primary search Smaller compare to the previous, still the first thing I see is the promtions. Possibly the point though.
- Travel warning Due to the current travel restriction, the placement of these warning and use of colour attracts attention.

Select a destination

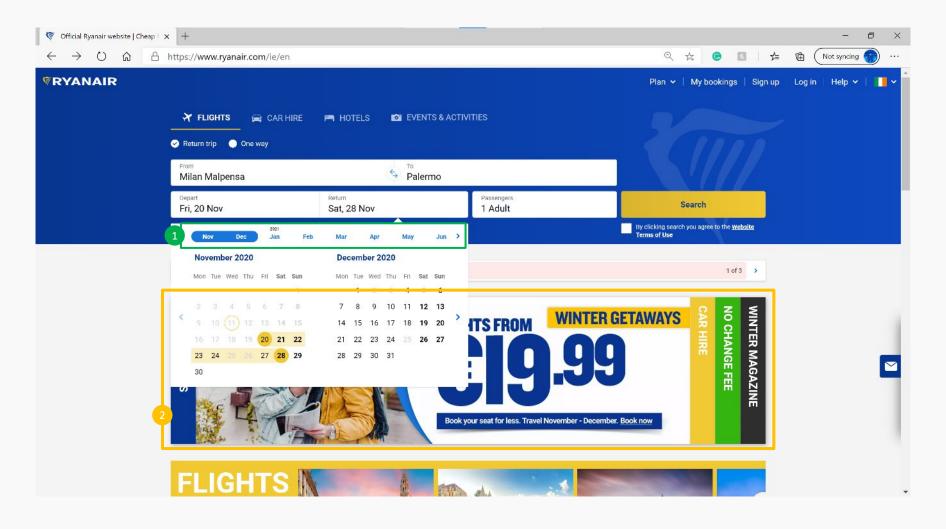


Trip style – Always visible, rimple radio button selection, can't miss it.

Flow – Once the destination is selected, it take you straight to the dates inputs.

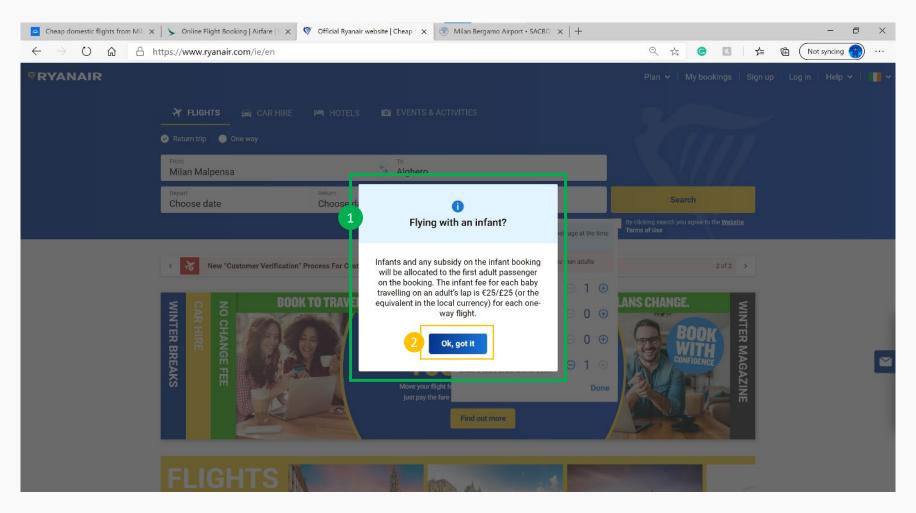
Select via Country/region – Different approach, but similar outcome for selecting destination.

Conventions we should follow



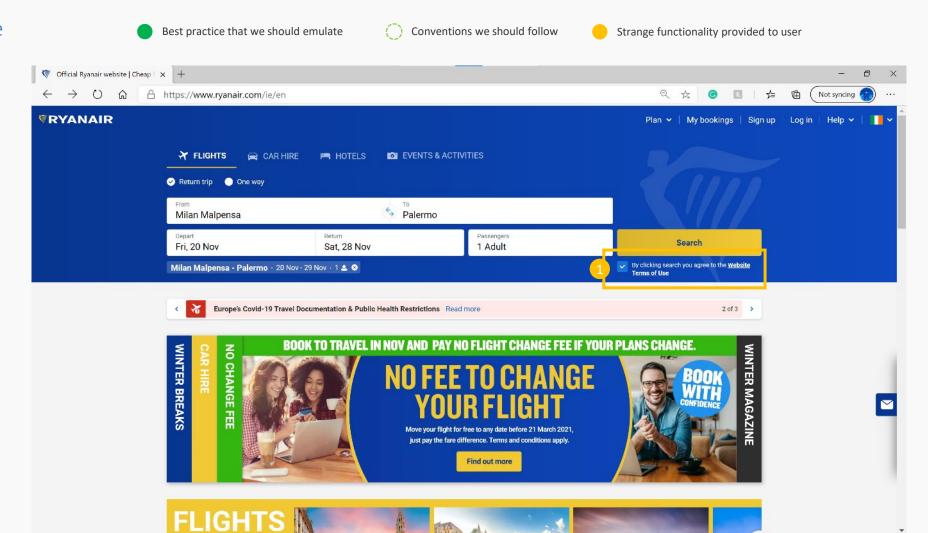
- 1 Month options Added option to select months in advance, rather than needing to click the arrows multiple time.
- Distracting ad slider The ad slider continues to move left and right, with no contrast it is very distracting
- Flow Once clicked it immediately opens the passengers dropdown





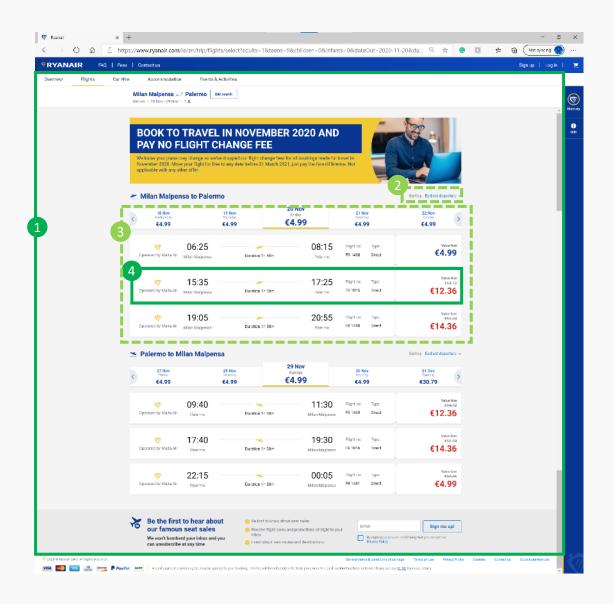
1 Important info – The information must be important as the only time this functionality is used to grab attention.

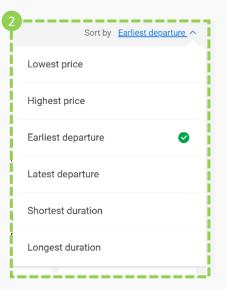
2 Strange language – I understand the use of casual language, but this wording could be a little out of place.



1 Trust – By clicking the search button, it ticks the box and so you have agreed with the websites terms of use.

Conventions we should follow





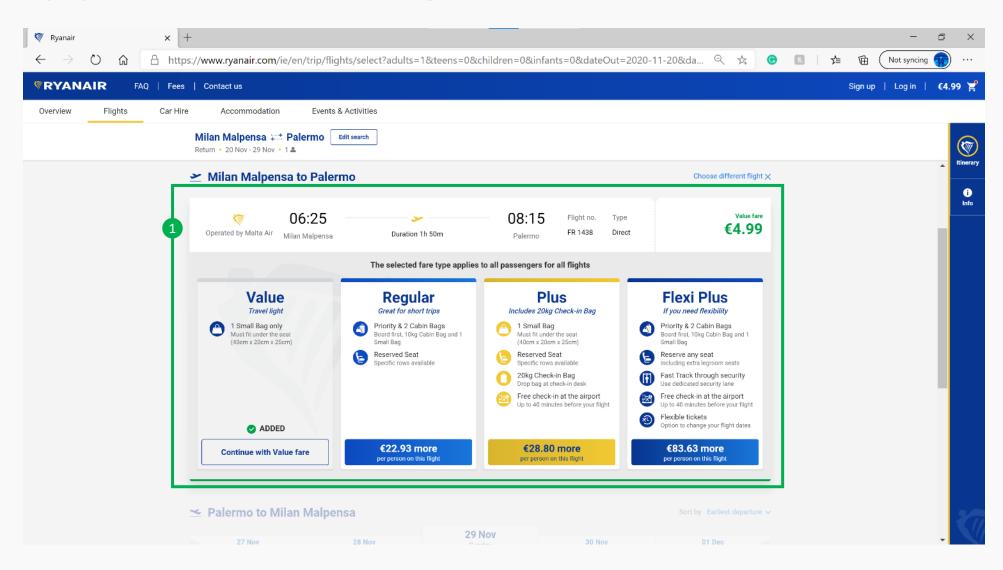
- 1 Very clean A clean and super uncluttered layout.
- Sorting options Offers user different options to find
- Flight options Easy to navigate through the available options
- Hover over— As the user hovers over the flights, they animate with shadows to highlight.

After selecting flight

Best practice that we should emulate

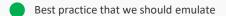
Conventions we should follow

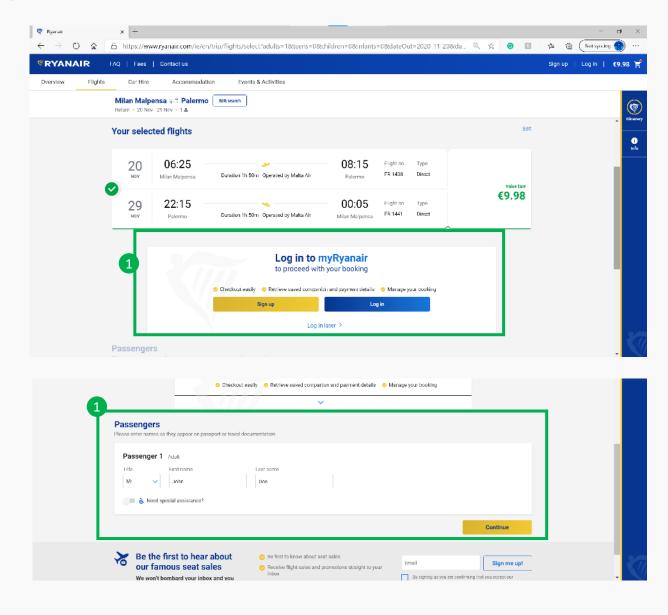
Strange functionality provided to user



1 Flow – After clicking, the flight slides up and then the options slide down.

Passenger details

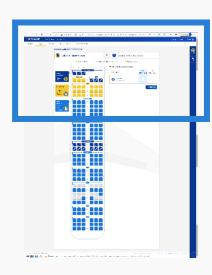


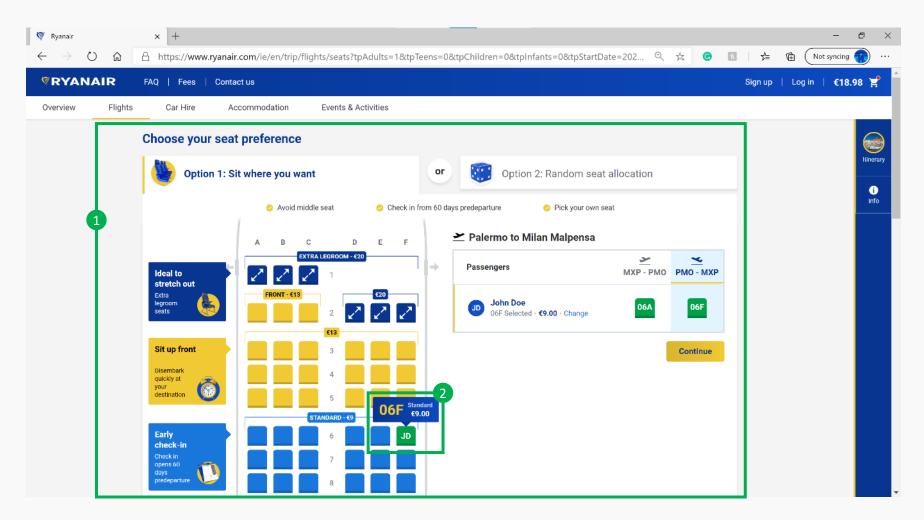


Conventions we should follow Strange functionality provided to user

- 1 Login First time asked for details, but doesn't disrupt the flow badly, allows you to keep moving forward
- 2 Passenger details Slowly start to ask for information, rather than hit you with everything.

Conventions we should follow

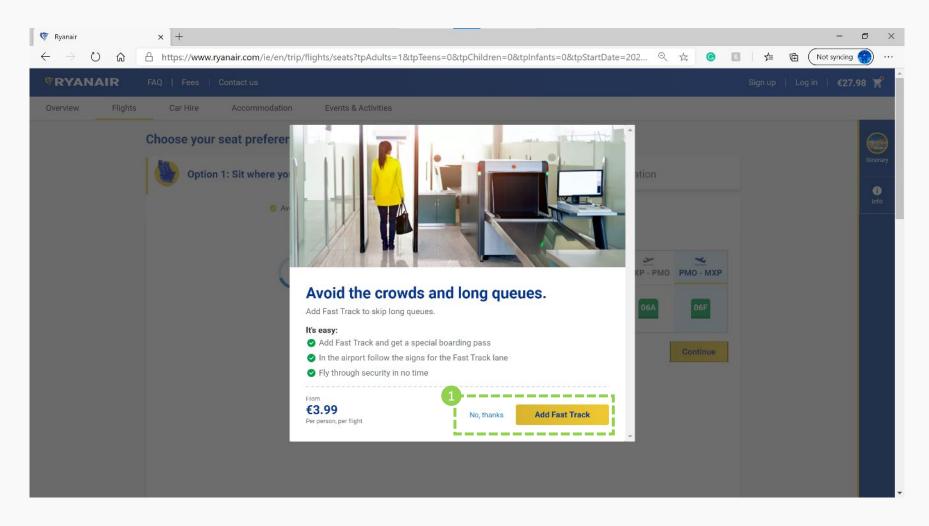




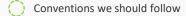
- 1 No legend required Great use of colours and iconography creates an easy to understand
- 2 Initials When selecting a seat, it goes green and put the passengers initials on the seat

Conventions we should follow

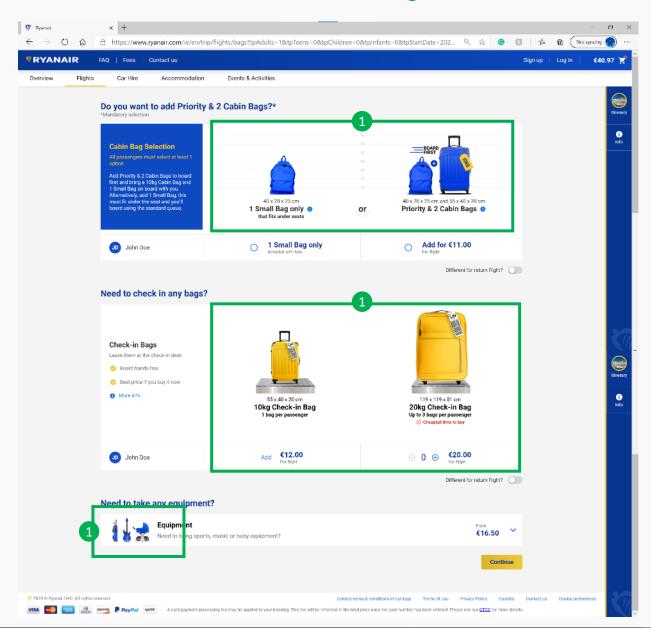
Strange functionality provided to user



1 Button design – Due to the booking nature also creates a sense of urgency.

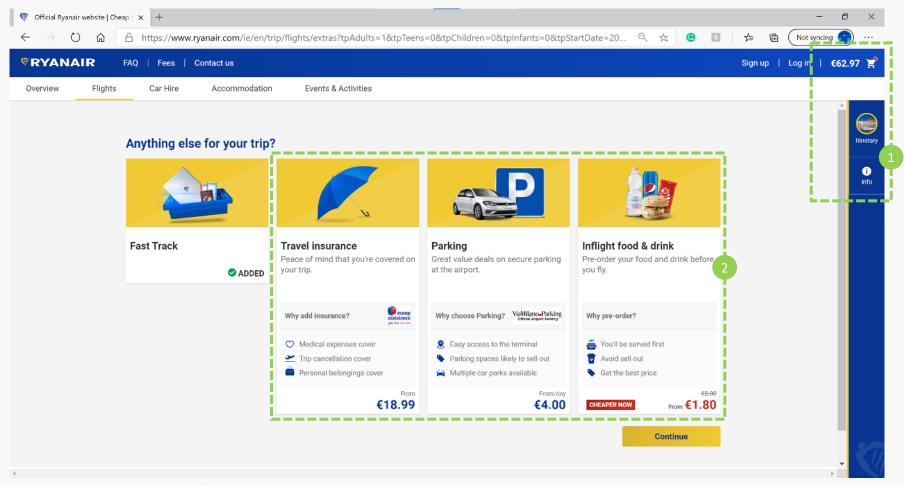






1 Powerful imagery – Not overly word and easy to interpret what is being asked with the use of easy to understand images.

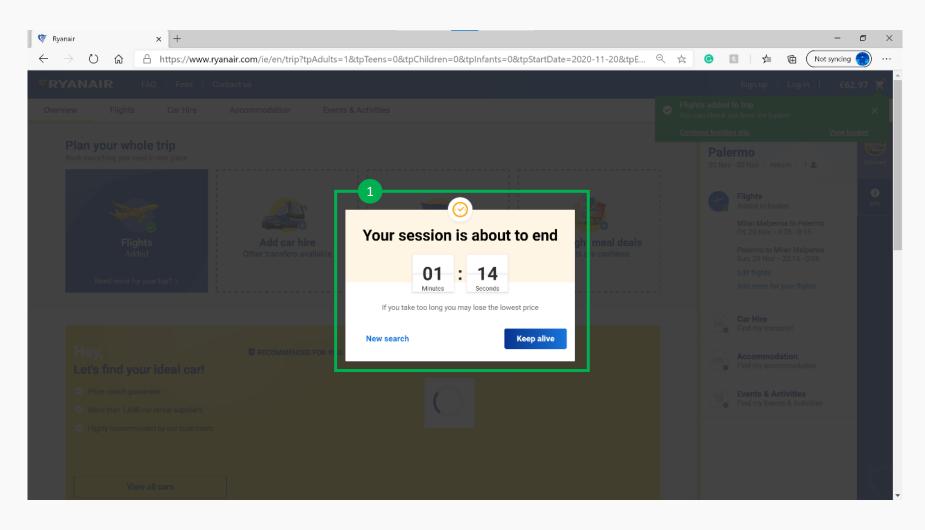
Conventions we should follow



- Information is seen but not heard Itinerary and price information is easy to access, but not always in full view. Doesn't distract from what this page is trying to offer.
- Simple language Doesn't over explain itself, offers the additional basics to make the experience a little more easier.

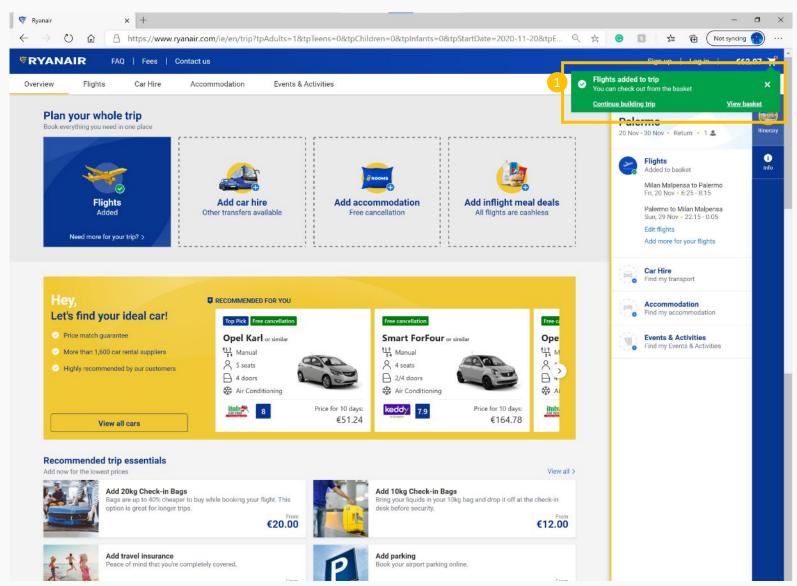
Conventions we should follow

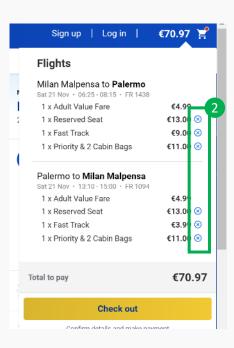
Strange functionality provided to user



1 Important info – Due to the booking nature also creates a sense of urgency.

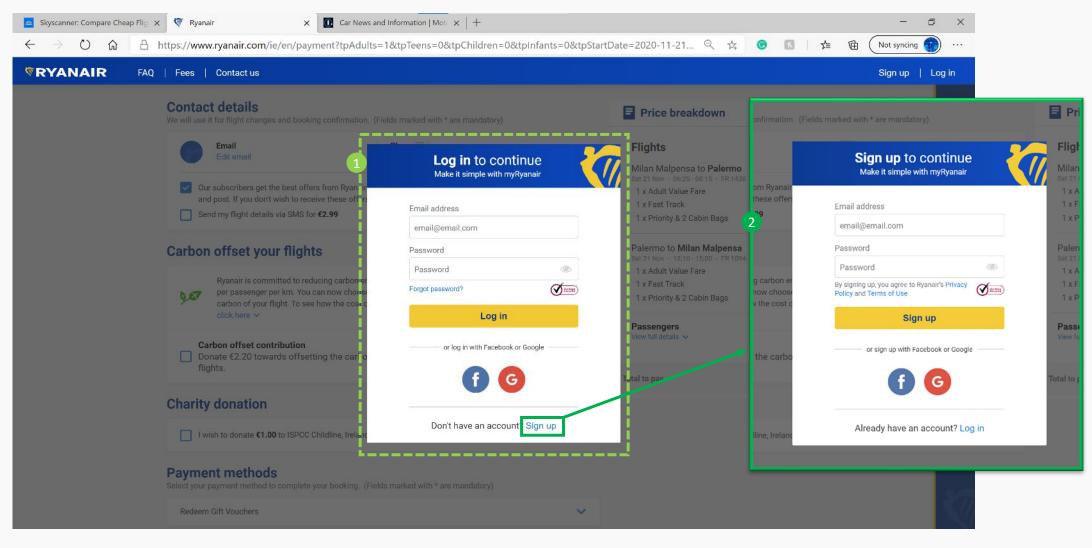






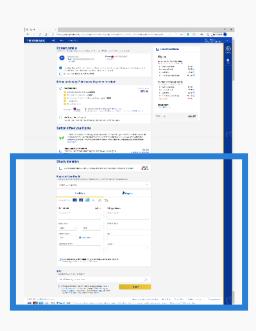
- 1 A little tricky I understand why as it make the user scroll to the bottom, but if not they still need to click agin to get to the check out.
- 2 Go via basket Because of the functionality, it does save a going to an additional complete the booking but gives option to easily remove extras.

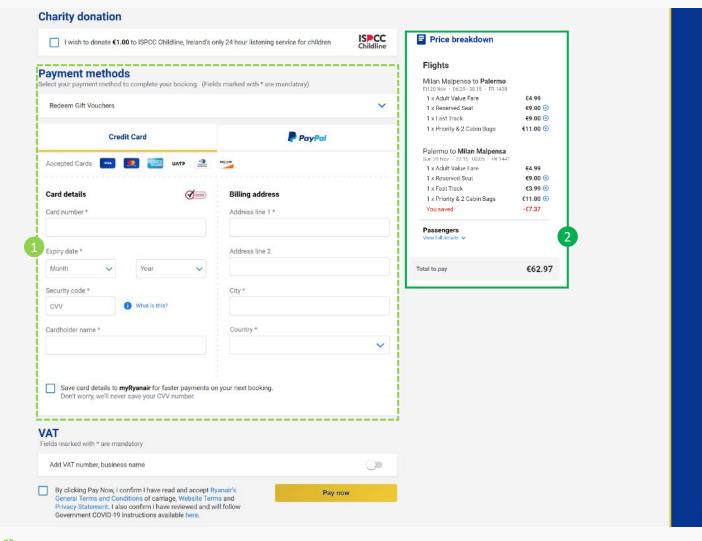






Conventions we should follow



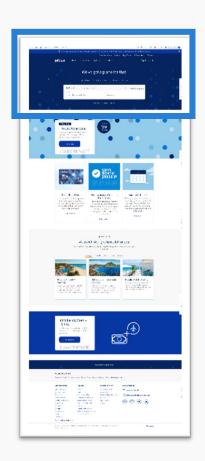


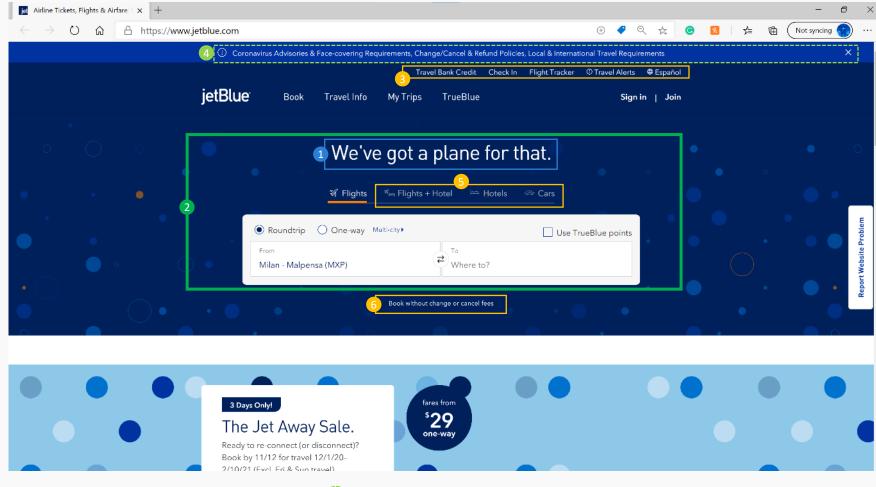
- Payment details Seems to be a standard way of showing payment structure with online form.
- 2 Price details Slides up and down, import at the final payment screen.



Strange functionality provided to user

Homepage





- Headline Fun play on words, switching plan for plane. Overall feel is that the website isn't very corporate, more a clean fun brand, but not too discount.
- Flight booking The core functionality to book a flight is easy to find. The use of contrast and placement help achieve this. Also know where I
- Secondary Header Functions The placement makes me think they are important, but as you scroll they disappear from the sticky header. Unclutter and improve position.

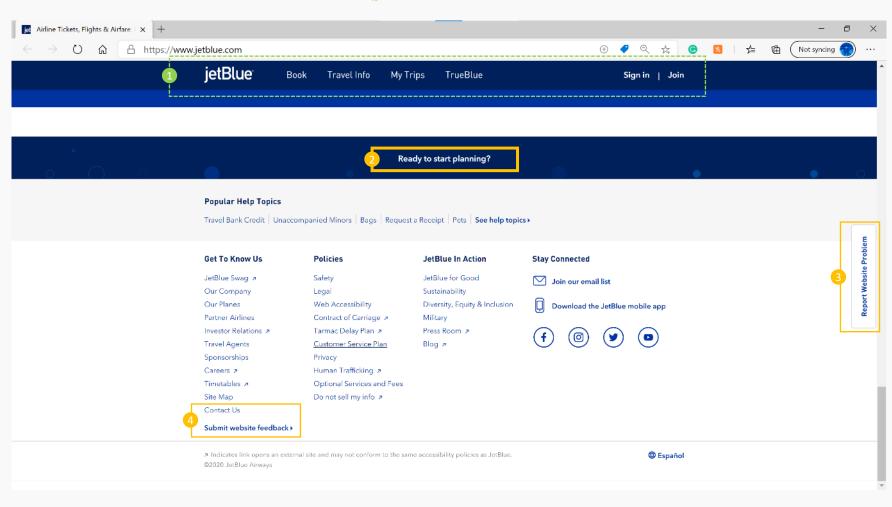
- Travel notifications A sign of the times, all providers in this sector are placing this information near the top of the website. This website allows you to hide it once you have viewed it
- Airline or Travel aggregator I wonder how well this works for the airline and its affiliate programs, feel out of place as the purpose is book/search for a flight.
- Lost USP Looks like an afterthought. If this USP is important then make a point of it. Feels like small print that is trying to catch the user out.





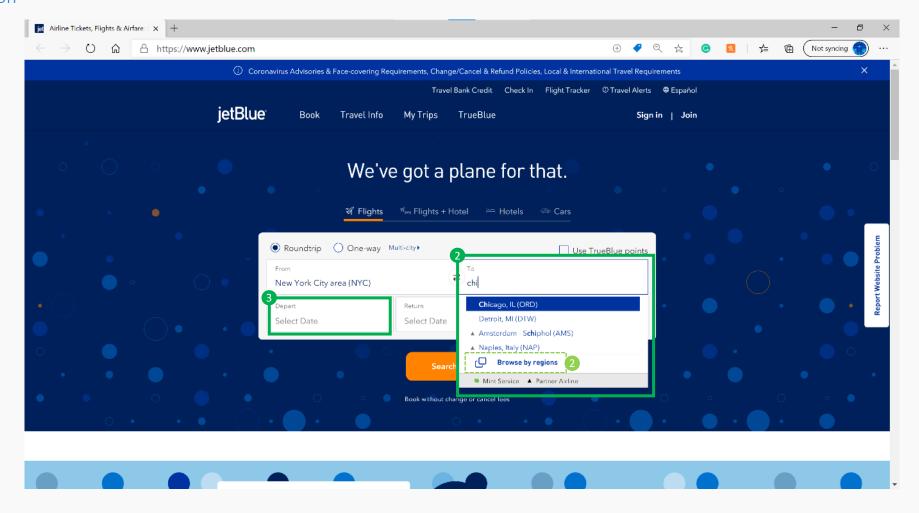






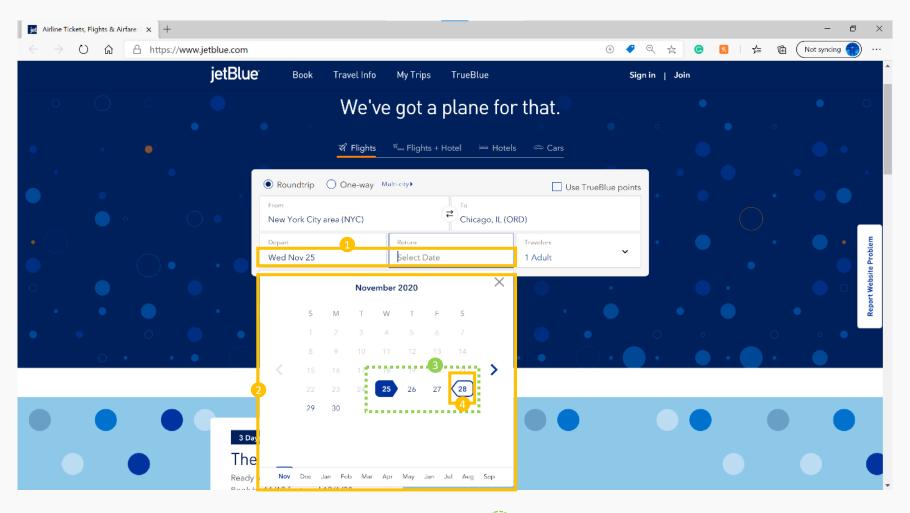
- Sticky Header As you scroll through, the header stays available at the top for easy access.
- Back to the top This text takes you back to the top of the page. The text prompts you to think, but you wouldn't think it is a button. It is handy to take you back to the top but other websites use icons and generally place at the bottom right of a page.
- Contact Us –This seems to be a standard, where websites place Contact us links at the bottom and in hard to find places. I can understand from a business perspective , but the user experience is poor.
- Report website problem You actually see this at the top. Seeing this make me think this website is unreliable. It is pinned to the right side and wonder if it would be better swapped with the contact us.





- Select by typing If the final destination is know, you can easily type into the space labelled "Going to" and options start to be listed below as you type.
- Select via Country/region A section is provided to step through countries and regions to find destination.
- 3 Flow After clicking the destination, it the opens up the calendar to set the dates for departure

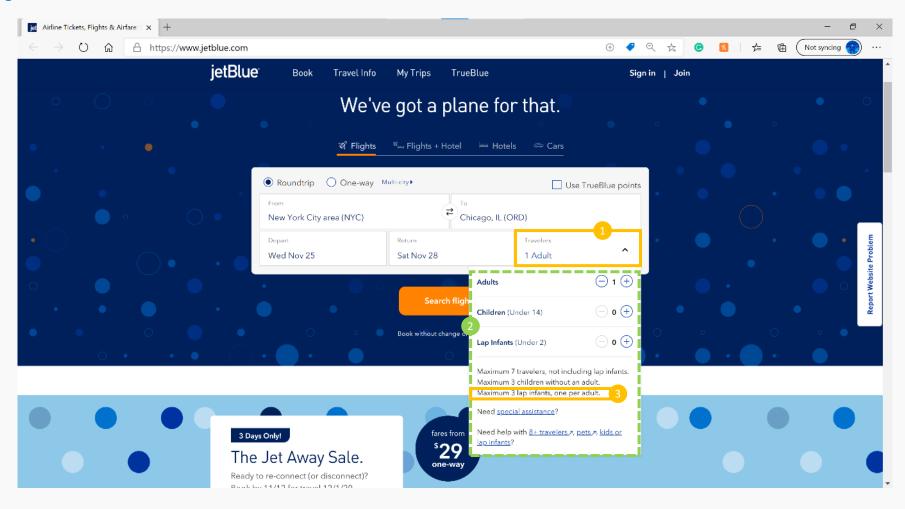




- 1 Typing in dates You can type in the dates which is good, but must follow US convention MM-DD-YYYY, must use a space, dash or slash between for it to work as well.
- Calendar Displays 1 month. You need to click the arrow on the right or the months labelled at the bottom to see more. Hard to visualise length if dates cross into another month.
- Select dates Click the start date which highlights blue. As you move the pointer around, the return date is shown as a blue outline.
- 4 Flow Clicking the return date immediately takes you to the next section.

 More decisive user suited flow, if user is an overthinker / procrastinator, or flexible on dates, not easy to use.

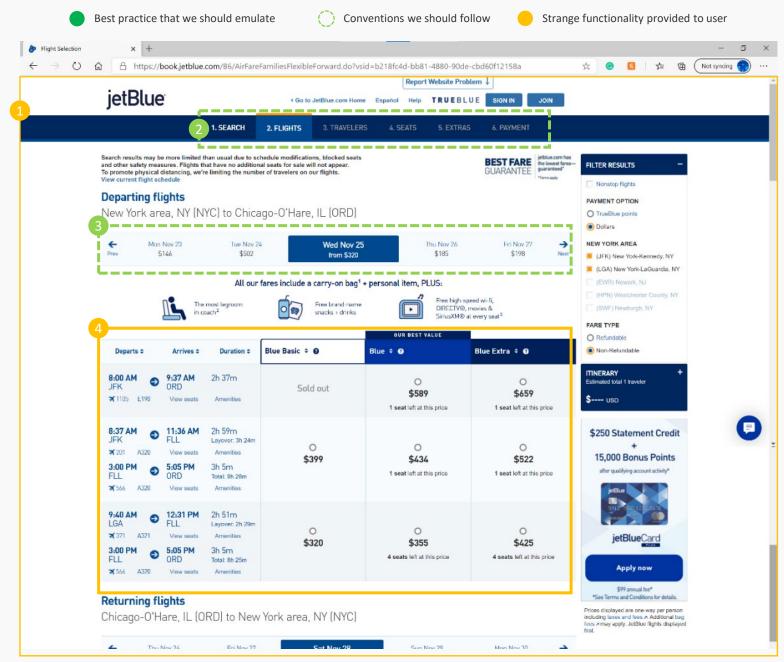




- 1 Adult– Dropdown doesn't open, user required to click. Helpful if the user was browsing.
- Passengers Seems to be an easy way to add or remove the number of travellers to the booking. If you in infringe on the maximums, they go bold. Functionality not as good as Ryanair as to do bookings larger than 7, you need to call or fill in an online form which add more effort.
- Mistake Website states Maximum 3 lap infants, per one adult. However if you can't choose it, only one infant per adult can be chosen.

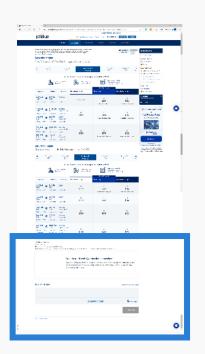
jetBlue Select flights

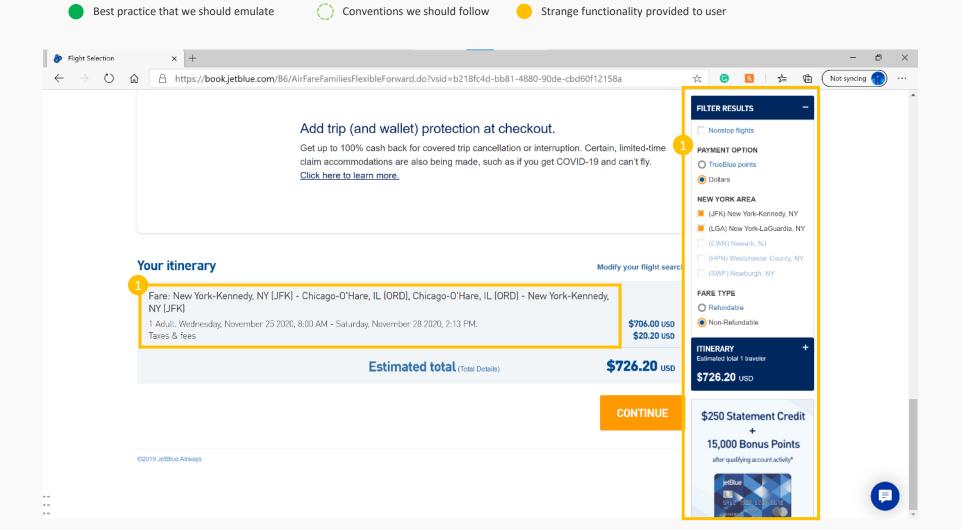




- 1 Very busy The website goes from clean to super cluttered. Seems to over explain itself, lots of different font sizes adds to the busines, hard to know what to focus on.
- Progress shown Website shows that there are 6 steps required to complete task and well located at the top of page.
- Price/date options Website shows options if flexible on dates for better price flights.
- 4 Flight matrix Table shows all the class options while the flights available on the selected date are pushed to the side.

jetBlue Select flights





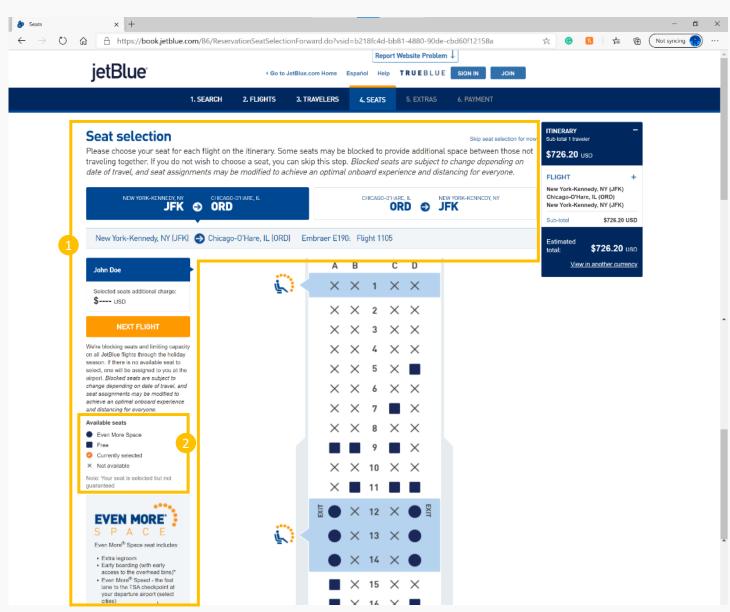
- 1 Very long List in full and hard to understand.
- Banner The banner chases me up and down the page. Doubles up information and no longer relevant.







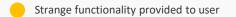




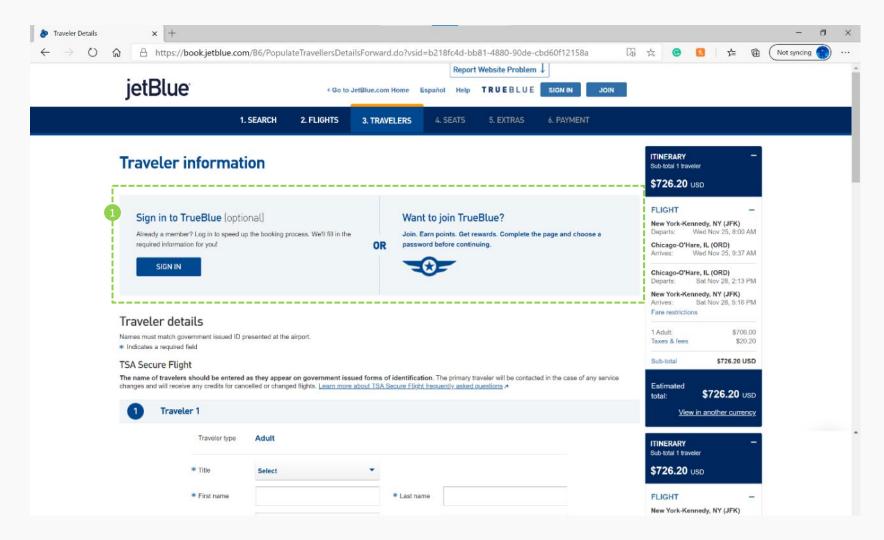
- 1 So many words Seem like a lot, when all I need to do is pick a seat.
- 2 Icons & legend Looks a little confusing and the legend gets lost.





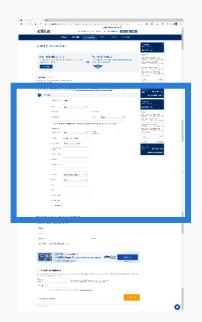


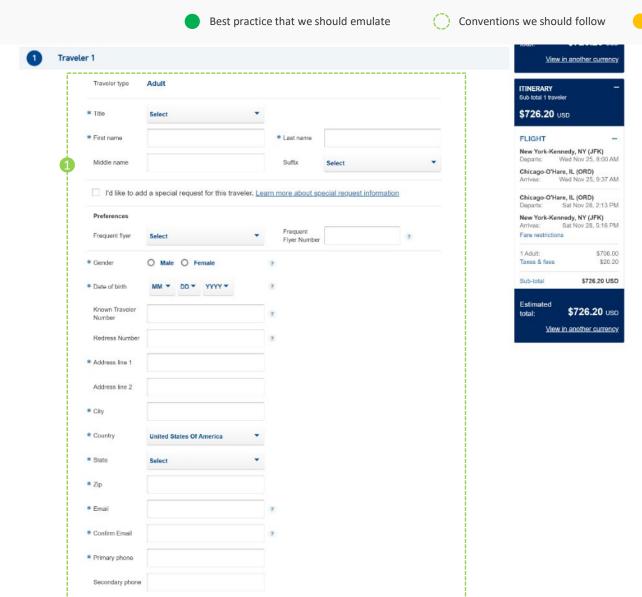




Membership – Always seems to be near or first thing and provides option to sign in/up.

Traveler information



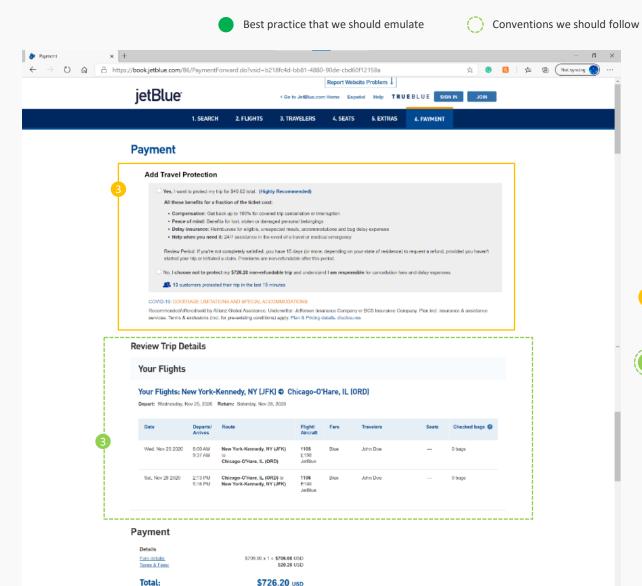


Strange functionality provided to user



Traveler details – While it is a long form, seems to be a standard.





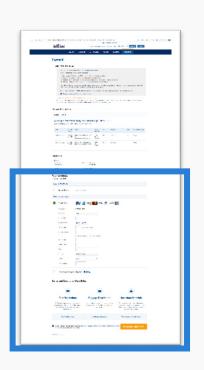
Strange functionality provided to user

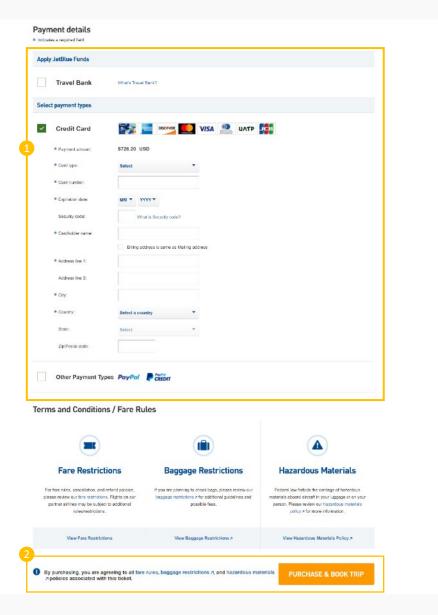
- 1 More extras The user has just made their way through all the extras and then is bombarded with one final thing.
- Review details Rather than throw everything at the user in one hit, it is broken down to smaller mor manageable parts.

Best practice that we should emulate

Conventions we should follow

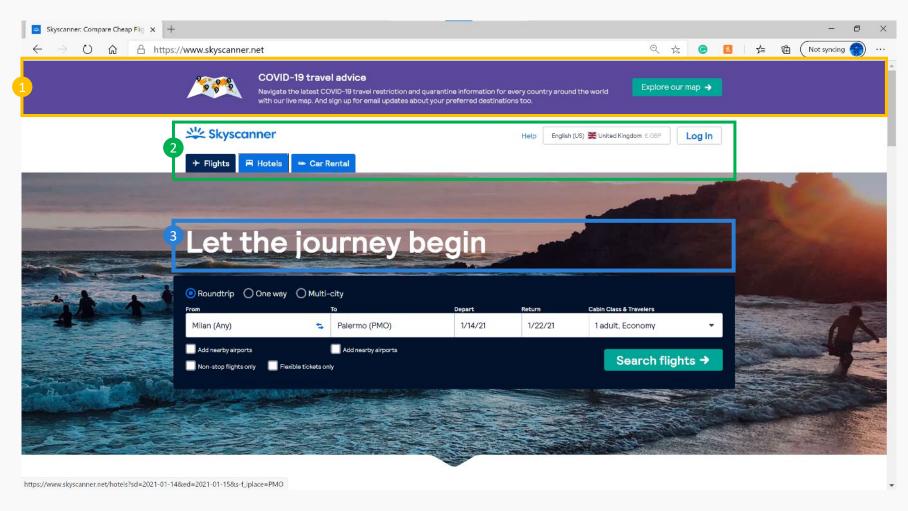
Strange functionality provided to user





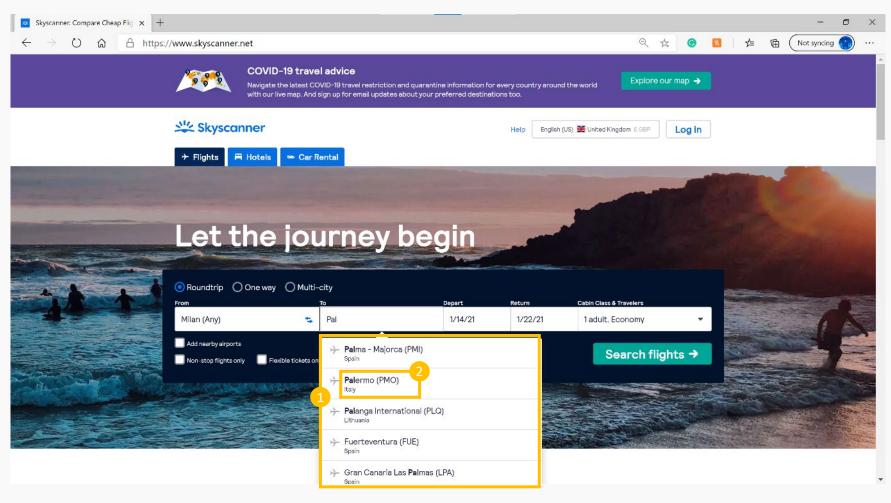
- 1 Payment details Seems to be longer than standard way of showing payment structure with online form as it includes a billing address.
- 2 Assume compliance No tick required, but the purchase make you agree.





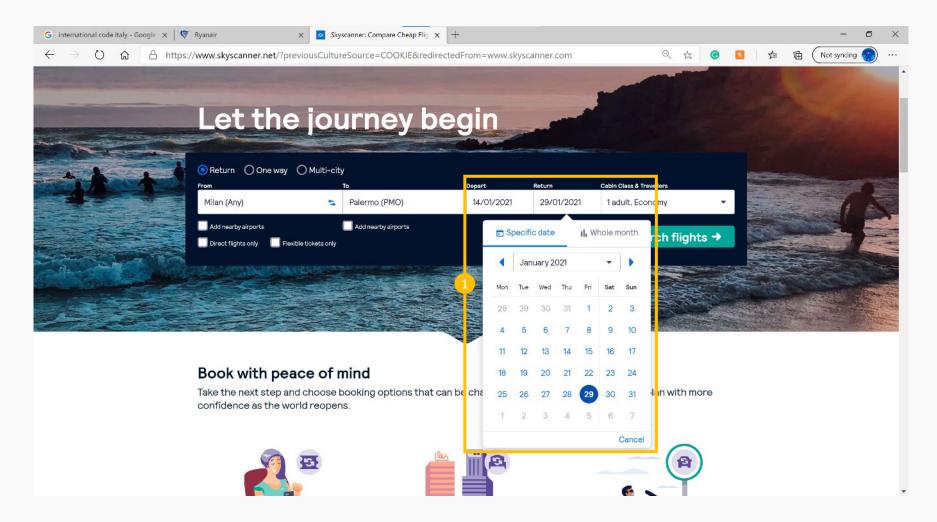
- 1 Covid warnings The largest warning of all the websites. Feels a little excessive.
- 2 Simple header No distracting other categories, just focused on the search below.
- 3 Headline Evokes a feeling of simplicity, direct and to the point.

Best practice that we should emulate Conventions we should follow Strange functionality provided to user

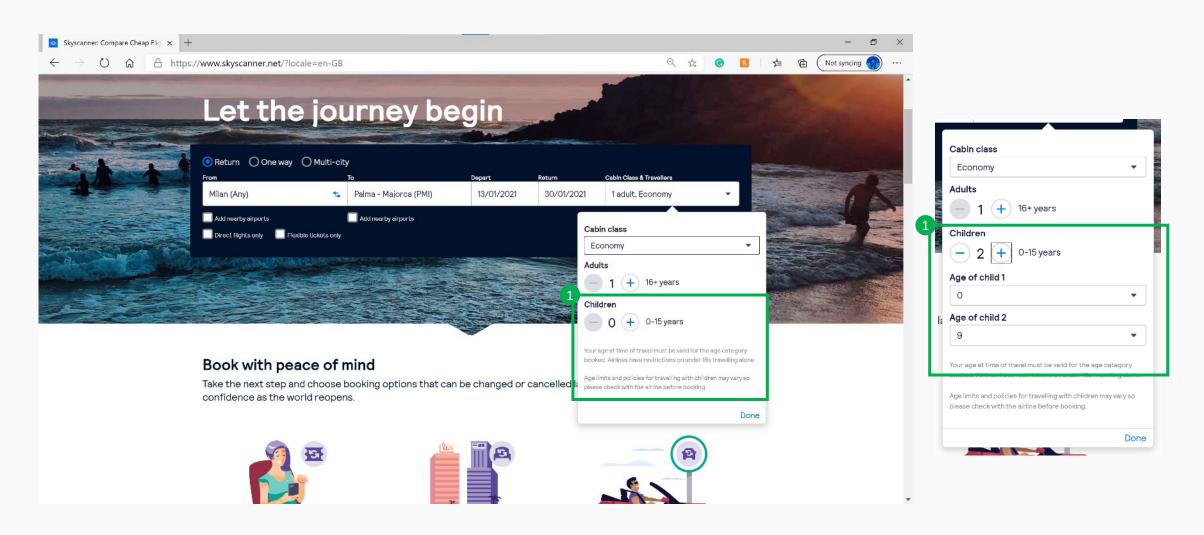


- 1 No regional search option User can only type in search.
- 2 Flow After selecting destination, it doesn't open to the departure date

Best practice that we should emulate Conventions we should follow Strange functionality provided to user



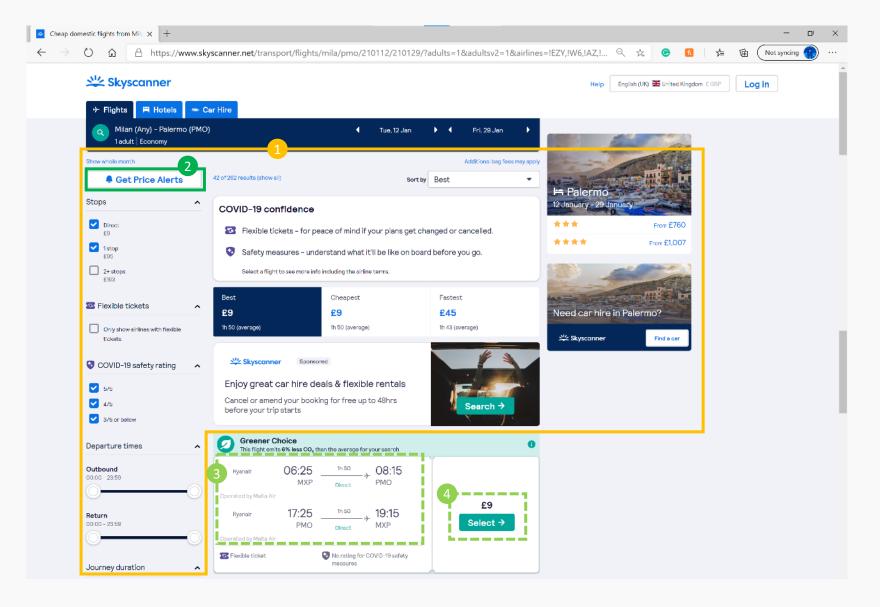
Opens on at a time – User needs to pick one, then click return and click. No way to visualise timeframe or type in dates.



Best practice that we should emulate

Conventions we should follow

Strange functionality provided to user



- So much info User needs to look past all this info before they can see the flights.
- Price alerts Researching flights seem to be one of the key functions, this adds to the stickiness and need to come back that airlines don't offer.
- Flights Fairly recognizable format for flight details.
- CTA Visible call to action.