

## Interviews & Surveys

| Category           | Questions                                                                              | Aniket                   | Naveen                         | Suraj                                        | Alicia                                                           | Aalap                                 | Harshita                                                                       | Shreya                 | Akshay      | Friend                       | Travel Blogger                         |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Intro/type of user | Region                                                                                 | India                    | UAE                            | India                                        | Canada                                                           | Canada                                | India                                                                          | India                  | India       | USA                          | USA                                    |
|                    | Type of travel - domestic/intl/both?                                                   | Both                     | Intl                           | Both                                         | Intl                                                             | Intl                                  | Domestic                                                                       | Domestic               | Domestic    | Both                         | Intl                                   |
|                    | Personal or work travel?                                                               |                          | Both                           |                                              | Personal                                                         |                                       | Personal                                                                       | Both                   | Mostly work | Both                         | Work                                   |
|                    | How often do you travel by air?                                                        |                          | 2-4 /yr                        | 4-5/yr                                       | 5-6 /yr                                                          | 1 /yr                                 | 5-6 /yr                                                                        | 6 /yr                  | 12 /yr      | 5-6 /yr                      | 10 /yr                                 |
|                    | Do you do the bookings yourself or do you go through a travel agent or something else? | Self-booked              | Work travel primarily          | Self                                         | Self                                                             | Self                                  | Self                                                                           | Self                   | Self        | Self                         | Self                                   |
|                    | What tools do you typically employ to find and book flights? Where do you start?       | MakeMy Trip, Booking.com | Concur/Navan                   | Skyscanner, Google                           | ChatGPT, Google flights, <a href="#">booking.com</a> , cheapOair | Google search → google flights → book | goibibo or directly through airline websites or banking websites for CC offers | Skyscanner             | Govt portal | Google flights               | Google flights + star alliance website |
|                    | How much do you search typically before booking? Approx time (L/M/H)                   |                          | 15mins                         | A lot (prices tend to reduce Tuesday nights) | Few days discontinuously                                         | Few days discontinuous                | Few days discontinuous                                                         | Few days discontinuous | 15mins      | A lot                        | Few days discontinuously               |
|                    | What prompts you to use google flights?                                                |                          | Google search → google flights |                                              |                                                                  | Google search → google flights        | N/A                                                                            |                        |             | It's fast, shows me multiple |                                        |

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                  |                                                                                         |                                             |                                                                      |                                                                               |                                                                         |                                                               |                                        |                                                                          |                                                                  |
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|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                  |                                                                                         |                                             |                                                                      |                                                                               |                                                                         |                                                               |                                        | airlines at once, and I trust the price calendar for flexible dates      |                                                                  |
|                                               | What % of flights you've booked are via google flights?                                                                                                                                |                                  | > 80%                                                                                   | Low (10%) - started using GFlights recently |                                                                      | 100%                                                                          | 0%                                                                      |                                                               |                                        | 100%                                                                     | 100%                                                             |
| <b>User careabouts</b>                        | What are your key considerations when traveling for work? Fixed dates, cost, travel class, company policy                                                                              |                                  | Fixed dates<br>Duration<br>Company policy                                               |                                             |                                                                      |                                                                               |                                                                         |                                                               | Company Policy, Non-stop, Travel times | Fixed dates<br>Duration<br>Company policy                                | Duration, Stops, Price, Optimizing for miles (loyalty programs), |
|                                               | What are your key considerations for personal travel?                                                                                                                                  | Cost<br>Duration                 | Nearby airports<br>Cost<br>Luggage                                                      |                                             | Cost, Direct, no manual baggage transfer, Prefer Delta               | Cost<br>Duration /Stops<br>Leg space                                          |                                                                         |                                                               |                                        | Cost<br>Nearby airports<br>Baggage<br>Timings (when traveling with kids) |                                                                  |
| <b>Problem exploration - nominal workflow</b> | What's the most frustrating parts of booking flights online? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes long</li> <li>Have to repeat enter info</li> <li>UX not intuitive</li> </ul> | Other than google flights, other | Concur is very slow<br>Navan has a slightly better UI<br>Google flights - no ability to | Cookies get used to inflate prices          | Comparing different itineraries in one tab<br><br>Merge booking into | Filtering options take time although user needs are similar from trip to trip | Credit card points are not accounted for in any tool - user has to keep | Refunds<br><br>Dynamic pricing<br><br>Time it takes to search | Seat booking is not included           | Points systems missing<br><br>More open ended queries not supported      | Integrate miles and loyalty programs<br><br>Travel hacking       |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                  |                     |                                  |                                                                                                                         |                                                                           |                                  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                       |
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|                           | Razors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency</li> <li>• Severity</li> <li>• Workaround</li> </ul>                                                   |                                  | make direct booking |                                  | search in Google Flights                                                                                                | Can't find exact seat (esp families with kids, etc) within Google Flights | track<br><br>Prices change a lot |  |  | ted<br><br>More integration into my trip<br><br>Having to re-enter traveler info every time.<br><br>Hidden fees (seat selection, bags) aren't obvious until late in check out | Follow tiktoks/reddit/etc. To understand and points utilization<br><br>+ Credit card miles redemption |
| <b>Types of workflows</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominal - search &amp; book</li> <li>• Compare flights across sites?</li> <li>• Advanced searches</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | Compares between MMT and Booking | Multiple airports   | Flexible - doesn't specify dates | Company discounts<br><br>Price tracking<br><br>TikTok tips (5am, Tuesday flights, etc.)<br><br>Flexible on travel dates | N/A - only compare flight prices on different platforms in Google Flights | N/A                              |  |  | Advanced searches                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                       |
| <b>Closing</b>            | If you could change just one thing about flight booking, what would it be?                                                                                       |                                  |                     |                                  | Comparing itineraries                                                                                                   | Notifications by default when user searches for                           |                                  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                               | Autofill info for all airlines<br><br>Incl seat                                                       |

|  |                                                                                        |  |                                                                                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                         |  |  |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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|  |                                                                                        |  |                                                                                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | flights<br>(esp if<br>price<br>changes)                                                                                                 |  |  |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | tiering<br>pricing<br><br>Visa<br>require<br>ments<br>info<br><br>Combin<br>ing<br>travel<br>to<br>multipl<br>e<br>destina<br>tions<br><br>Additio<br>nal<br>certific<br>ates<br>like<br>vaccine<br>records<br>, etc. |
|  | Is there anything I<br>didn't ask that I<br>should know about<br>your travel planning? |  | Club and<br>make<br>travel<br>itinerarie<br>s based<br>on<br>flights<br>(+ads) |  | Inconsis<br>tencies<br>between<br>n<br>pricing<br>on<br>differen<br>t<br>website<br>s at the<br>same<br>time<br><br>Currenc<br>ies are<br>also<br>weird at<br>times<br>(default<br>s to USD<br>for ex) | Flight<br>info:<br>Some<br>details<br>(like<br>non-stand<br>ard<br>baggage<br>policies)<br>should<br>be more<br>explicitly<br>clarified |  |  | People<br>are<br>used to<br>the<br>current<br>level of<br>effort<br>require<br>d to<br>book<br>flights | I often<br>coordin<br>ate<br>trips<br>with<br>family<br>or<br>friends,<br>so<br>sharing<br>flight<br>options<br>easily<br>(withou<br>t<br>screens<br>hots or<br>links<br>that<br>expire)<br>would<br>help a<br>lot |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

# User categories

## Approach:

1. Interview/Survey responses → abstracting answers for each question → classifying into 2-3 categories
2. Ranking attribute categories with data from interviews/surveys
3. Find unique combinations of categories across attributes (36x total possible) → define persona type for most common types

| Attribute                                          | Category 1                            | Category 2               | Category 3 |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Type of travel                                     | Personal (2)                          | Business (1)             | Both (4)   |
| Length of travel (roughly translates to →)         | Domestic (3)                          | International (4)        | Both (3)   |
| Travel frequency (interviews intentionally biased) | < 1 per quarter (2)                   | > 1 per quarter (7)      |            |
| Time spent to decide on travel                     | Low (few mins to search and book) (2) | High (multiple days) (7) |            |

## Top 2 personas:

1. Frequent, mixed-use traveler - both domestic & intl, high decision time
2. Frequent personal traveler - international, high decision time

## Persona 1: Frequent, Mixed-Use Traveler

- **Name:** Priya, 36
- **Profile:** Works as a consultant; flies often for work but also extends trips for leisure.
- **Travel Pattern:** 8–10 trips/year (domestic + international). Often combines work trips with personal stays.
- **Decision Style:** High decision time — spends days or weeks comparing prices, schedules, and routes to maximize both convenience and savings.
- **Pain Points:**
  - Overwhelmed by too many options across airlines.
  - Difficulty tracking price fluctuations over time.
  - Needs flexible ticket options because work travel changes last minute.
- **Goals:**
  - Find reliable, flexible flights that balance cost and convenience.
  - Optimize trip extensions for leisure while still aligning with work obligations.
  - Save time in comparing across multiple sites/tools.

## Persona 2: Frequent Personal Traveler

- **Name:** Jason, 29
- **Profile:** Travel blogger. Lives away from family; travels regularly to visit friends/family, plus leisure trips with partner.
- **Travel Pattern:** 6–8 trips/year, almost entirely domestic.
- **Decision Style:** High decision time — spends days scanning for lowest fares and best departure times. Often sets price alerts.
- **Pain Points:**
  - Price swings create anxiety and FOMO ("Should I book now or wait?").
  - Hard to coordinate across multiple people (friends, family schedules).
  - Too much effort to track different airline policies and baggage fees.
  - Has built up a bunch of points and doesn't have an easy way to integrate that into searching for best combination of points + money
- **Goals:**
  - Book affordable flights without worrying they'll drop later.
  - Easily compare airlines and find convenient timings.
  - Get clarity and confidence in booking decisions.

### Razors not considered

- One-way/Round Trip/Multi-City travelers
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## SWOT Analysis: Google Flights (User Research Based)

### Strengths

- **Google Flights is a trusted search engine:** Many users start directly with Google Flights or get there through Google Search ("Google search → Google Flights" came up multiple times)
  - **High adoption for personal bookings:** Some respondents (Aniket, Shreya, Alicia) use Google Flights for nearly *all* bookings
  - People generally spend time researching for their flights and Google flights allows them to run their nominal searches well
- **Reliable pricing:**

- **Comparing** airlines and other websites (like Kayak/Priceline/etc.) assures user of being able to get the best price (a key careabout mentioned by almost all travelers)
- **Price calendar** helps understand flight price variability over time - another assurance to user
- **Speed:** Faster searches compared to other websites

## Weaknesses

- **Cannot complete bookings directly** → users must switch to airline or OTA sites, adding friction
- **Loyalty programs not integrated** → miles, credit card points, limited time offers, etc. are not supported
- **Hidden costs** → baggage/seat fees not obvious upfront
- **Repetitive data entry and lack of Personalization** → no cross-site traveler info autofill; no pre-suggest of user's common traveler filters (timings, non-stop, luggage needs)
- **Regional gaps** → Most users in India reported using other sites to book their flights. Users in North America used Google Flights a lot more
- **Price tracking** → While this feature exists, it didn't seem like many users used it or were able to derive value from it. But users did mention that alerts on price changes would be very valuable
- **Flight price guarantees** → While this feature exists, it's only for a small set of routes. None of the users interviewed even spoke about this

## Opportunities

- **Deeper integration:** Loyalty programs, credit card points, and airline seat maps.
- **Advanced workflows** → Include flows for multiple leg journeys that allow for stopovers, advanced seat selection options (esp for families), travel class combinations, visa info, vaccine info, etc.
- **Proactive alerts:** Default notifications for ticket price changes, itinerary changes, etc
- **Itinerary building:** Once a user books their flights, there is opportunity to help build an entire set of services around that including:
  - Commute to and from the home-airport and home
  - Instructions to gate within airport
  - Hotel and rental car bookings
  - Itinerary planning and automation for vacations
- **Collaboration tools:** Share flight options easily with family/friends without screenshotting.
- **Business travel optimization:** Integrate with company policies and offer Google Flights for businesses

## Threats

- **Competitors with booking built-in:** OTAs (MakeMyTrip, Skyscanner, Booking.com) and corporate tools (Concur/Navan) provide one-stop booking.
  - **Dynamic pricing perception:** Users feel cookies and hidden algorithms inflate fares. This erodes trust.
  - **Credit card ecosystems:** Points-driven sites (airlines, Amex portals, loyalty-focused apps) pull high-value travelers away.
  - **Social/alt sources:** “Travel hacking” culture on TikTok/Reddit competes for discovery and decision-making insights.
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## Goal Setting & Problem Priorization

### Google Flight’s revenue model *(From Assignment 1 Phase 1)*

- Ads (additional context about the user; better targeting)
- Fuels Google’s Travel Analytics data (a B2B service)
- Commissions from bookings made via Google flights

While Google doesn’t disclose revenue distribution among the aforementioned 3 revenue streams, this assignment assumes Ads is the biggest segment and will hence attempt to improve Ads based revenue (i.e. gather more context about the user so that better ads can be served)

### Primary business goal *(of acquisition, activation, engagement, retention, or revenue):*

- Engagement (expand better understanding of the user)
- Acquisition (expand to geographies where Google Flights isn’t popular - ex. India based on the user interviews)

Activation (not reported as a problem by any user) and direct revenue (we’ll instead focus on revenue via ads as mentioned in the previous section) are not major needle movers. User studies also show that customers who have used Google Flights stick to it - we therefore assume retention is not an issue. Between engagement and new user acquisition, we’ll choose to focus on engagement as there doesn’t seem to be much publicly available data on user count by geography for Google Flights (to truly understand how big of a problem it is).



### Goal setting:

1. Solving “Cannot complete bookings directly” reduces friction and therefore improves retention
2. Solving “Loyalty programs not integrated” improves engagement
3. Solving “Hidden costs not obvious upfront” improves engagement
4. Solving “Repetitive data entry” reduces friction and therefore improves retention

### Problem Prioritization

| User Reported Weakness                                                                                                                                                        | Business Goal: Improve engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                               | Persona 1: Frequent, Mixed-Use Traveler                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Persona 2: Frequent Personal Traveler                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Cannot complete bookings directly → users must switch to airline or OTA sites, adding friction                                                                                | <b>Frequency:</b> Always<br><b>Severity:</b> Low-Med (doesn't block workflow)<br><b>Effort:</b> High (have to build out a full booking engine)                                                                                                                           | <b>Frequency:</b> Always<br><b>Severity:</b> Low-Med (doesn't block workflow)<br><b>Effort:</b> High (have to build out a full booking engine)                                                                                                                                                      |
| Loyalty programs not integrated → miles, credit card points, limited time offers, etc. are not supported                                                                      | <b>Frequency:</b> Always<br><b>Severity:</b> Med (doesn't impact business travel as much)<br><b>Effort:</b> High (highly custom systems for miles, CC points, offers, etc.)                                                                                              | <b>Frequency:</b> Always<br><b>Severity:</b> High (price sensitive customer segment; travels a lot - can save a lot)<br><b>Effort:</b> High (highly custom systems for miles, CC points, offers, etc.)                                                                                              |
| Hidden costs → baggage/seat fees not obvious upfront                                                                                                                          | <b>Frequency:</b> Sometimes (airline dependent)<br><b>Severity:</b> Med (doesn't impact business travel as much)<br><b>Effort:</b> Med (expand existing API with airlines to include details on seats and fees and use that information to provide total price up front) | <b>Frequency:</b> Sometimes (airline dependent)<br><b>Severity:</b> High (price sensitive customer segment; travels a lot - can save a lot)<br><b>Effort:</b> Med (expand existing API with airlines to include details on seats and fees and use that information to provide total price up front) |
| Repetitive data entry and lack of Personalization → no cross-site traveler info autofill; no pre-suggest of user's common traveler filters (timings, non-stop, luggage needs) | <b>Frequency:</b> Always<br><b>Severity:</b> Low-Med (doesn't block workflow - needs manual entry)<br><b>Effort:</b> Med (support multiple travel types for same user)                                                                                                   | <b>Frequency:</b> Always<br><b>Severity:</b> Med (doesn't block workflow - needs manual entry)<br><b>Effort:</b> Low                                                                                                                                                                                |

P0 identified: **Hidden costs** → baggage/seat fees not obvious upfront