

Local rcles



“Improving the IRCTC Reservation Portal”

Collective inputs from over 90,000 Citizens in circle

“Making Railways Better”

(Current State, Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)

April 19, 2015



Improving the IRCTC Reservation Portal

Executive Summary

Launched in 2002, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) www.irctc.co.in had booked merely 27 tickets on the first day of its commencement of e-ticketing service in the country. Now after 13 years of sparkling journey, it has emerged as the leading portal in the country with more than 6 lakh bookings per day in terms of online ticketing, leaving behind several high-profile e-commerce sites worldwide.

The 90,000 strong “Making Railways Better” online community has come together to collectively identify the key issues, root causes and solutions for improving the IRCTC Reservation Portal and the community expects that Indian Railways will work towards implementing the identified solutions.

Key issues identified by Citizens:

1. It takes a longer time to log in now
2. The CAPTCHA becomes pretty difficult to read
3. The portal has become a little confusing now
4. There is no way to book an onwards journey
5. The refund takes a long time to get processed
6. Selection of seats/berths is not allowed on the current website
7. No feedback or complaint section in the site
8. Senior citizens still cannot be guaranteed lower or middle birth while booking
9. Site logs out after every few minutes
10. IRCTC website becomes slow during the Tatkal period
11. The site also crashes many times
12. While booking, it is very difficult to figure out which classes are air conditioned
13. Once a person logged in with password, it asks password for each sub-section
14. The status of RAC / WL is not updated regularly
15. TDR takes months to clear and sometimes never even happens
16. Payment gateways are another bottleneck – payment gets rejected many times
17. No option of knowing if a pantry car exists in the train
18. Mobile booking not allowed from 8am to 12 noon
19. There is no option available for disabled citizens



Root Causes identified by Citizens:

1. The number of people that visit the portal is huge
2. Too many security features have been added to the portal
3. New features are being added to the site but they are not well planned
4. Some features on the portal are not explained properly
5. People are unaware of the TDR guidelines
6. IRCTC may not be well equipped to effectively running and scaling such a high traffic portal.
7. The site is not tested thoroughly before making the release live
8. Too many ads from Google provide for a poor user experience
9. Ministry of Railways and IRCTC currently do not have access to experts in next generation technology, innovation and new media to stay ahead of the curve.

Solutions identified by Citizens:

1. Selection of seats and berth should be allowed on IRCTC
2. Extra servers should be installed to optimize the portal performance during tatkal bookings in the mornings
3. The CAPTCHA should be removed and some other security feature should be put in to make the login process faster
4. Refunds should be automated and should be processed within 2 days
5. Senior citizens should be guaranteed lower births, pending availability
6. A message should automatically come up, when the screen has been idle for more than 5 minutes and the site is about to log out
7. Description of each class should pop up while booking
8. The status of RAC / WL should be updated every day on the IRCTC website
9. TDR issues should be addresses within 7 days
10. Payment gateways should be made more smooth and fool proof
11. Onward booking facility should be introduced
12. Booking through mobile should be allowed during all times like in the portal
13. The mobile experience of the site should be better optimized as lots of people come via smartphones/tablets
14. A feedback/complaint section should be put on the portal, where people can communicate their observations and suggestions
15. IRCTC should actively take inputs from Make Railways Better community and integrate collective citizen inputs for reservation portal improvement.



IRCTC Reservation Portal – a few Citizen posts and comments:

1. The Captcha reading is very difficult and it is not known why for login captcha is introduced. Only at the final stage one simple captcha may be introduced. Or if login captcha is there, why would you put one more captcha? Senior citizens may find it very difficult to read the slanting alphabets – **V. Srinivasan**
2. IRCTC should offer choice of berths/seats showing vacant berths/seats on coach map like in airlines. May be at extra charge. This will give higher transparency. They may also offer choice of food and include charges in tickets – **Rajiv Verma**
3. Senior citizens, whether or not they exercise the option of indicating their choice of berth, must be allotted a lower berth. Very often one found oneself allotted an upper berth, that too a side upper one! – **Chandrakant Tembe**
4. If people are given the option of choosing their seat / berth beyond what is currently provided, it will mean lower berths going out very fast. Hence I disagree with this suggestion. However I'd say that the formula used for berth selection can be shared unless it is trade secret IP – **Sudhanshu Mittal**
5. An average data should be available to know up to what wait list number reservations may be confirmed. This is help in taking the decision if the booking has to be done or not by knowing the probability of the seat getting confirmed – **Ashok Rao**
6. There is no way to know whether a train has pantry car. A simple "P" added with the train number will indicate that it has pantry car facility. This addition will not need any great effort. Also, the availability of seats/berths and provision to select seats/berths should be added. This will help senior citizens in their travel plans – **Parakkal Unnikrishnan**
7. It is a welcome news exclusive reservation of lower berths for senior citizen +other physically handicapped + pregnant women only 4 berths of each compartment. This quota may be increased for AC three tier and two tier coaches also in view of the limited coaches are available when comparing with sleeper class compartments – **VR Vinaitheerthan**
8. The Payment gateway is very slow and makes it cumbersome and repetitive and many refunds because of that. We should have a Kitty system. Put money in your account with IRCTC. that way when you login--your balance shows up--you can book tickets till that amount...will make it faster and better - **Mohan Srinivasan**
9. Can we not have a system by which passenger will fill up person's details, journey date & booking required from which station to which station & submit. System to automatically show best possible available trains, class, seats or berths. Then passenger selects their option & booking is completed – **Vinay Manohar**