CASE STUDY

[KITBAG]
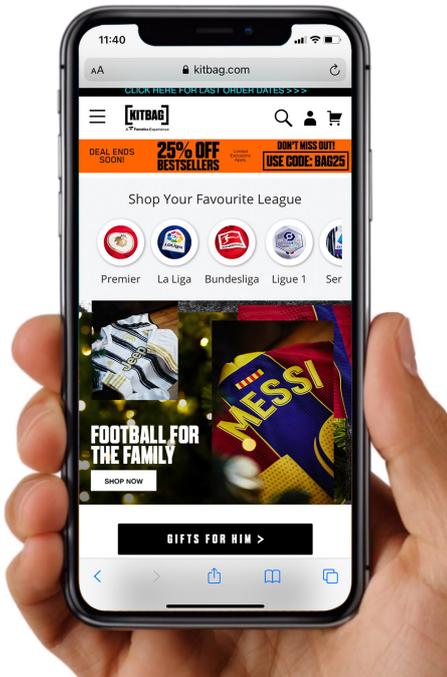
Kitbag monitors complex ecommerce sites and share vital data throughout the organisation

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Kitbag is the trusted online and multi-channel retail partner for many of the leading brands within the sporting world including Manchester United, Manchester City, FC Barcelona, Real Madrid, Chelsea, Leicester Tigers, Formula 1, The Wimbledon Tennis Championships, The British Open, The Ryder Cup, The RFU, The ECB, UEFA, The FA and many more. Kitbag also operate the highly acclaimed Kitbag.com eCommerce site.

Kitbag have been a thinktribe client since 2011 for both Load Testing and Monitoring of web and mobile journeys for a complex, completely customisable, product inventory, across a multi-lingual site portfolio.

Using The thinktribe Monitor Portal Data

Day to day the portal is used by Kitbag staff to continually view the status of e-commerce operations. This is not only the Operations Team logging to check, or waiting for alerts on issues, as with many monitoring systems, though, the information is constantly visible to all members of the IT department.

Of course it is expected now that IT and Operations in all mature eCommerce businesses will use a range of monitoring and performance measurement tools, but it is only in those well ahead of the curve that such data is being used intra-departmentally to improve communication and remove barriers between business and IT.

Working from, and understanding, the same data can make planning and prioritisation much more

effective. Everyone involved can see how their personal and departmental responsibilities fit into the online strategy, and the impact on the bottom line.

Joe Doherty, Data Manager at Kitbag, provides this example of using data for collaboration: "Our sales department have started to use the thinktribe portal so they know when sites will be down for maintenance and upgrades, are aware of any current issues, and can use load testing results to be fully confident that sites have been comprehensively tested for handling the increased activitiy expected from campaigns. If there are any on-going problems on a given day plans can be put on hold until they are rectified. Management request monthly reporting tool to help understand our up/down time."

Valuable, customer-focussed numbers are used as part of key strategic decisions such as discussion on future site improvements, customer experience and prioritisation and budgeting discussions.

"We have a 50" TV showing the thinktribe wallboard on screen. If a User Journey status bar turns a colour other than green (OK sample) we can spot it immediately and react before anyone else in the business notices an issue. We are able to resolve problems quickly helping minimising the impact to us and our customers."

Joe Doherty
Data Manager, Kitbag

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"The data is also used to help justify capital expenditure. If we are able to prove that a particular problem can be resolved by purchasing new systems then thinktribe reporting goes a long way to help here."

"There have been a number of occasions where the thinktribe have noticed odd behaviour on our sites before us. They not only notify us of these anomalies, but implement fixes prior to notifying us. That's a quality service! I can honestly say that thinktribe plays an important role in the success of Kitbag!"

Joe Doherty
Data Manager, Kitbag

The Benefit of Dynamic User Journeys

With Kitbag's extremely complex eCommerce site that offers customers the ability to customise products, there is really no such thing as the "basic product inventory". This means that the older style of "Static User Journey Monitoring" does not have the necessary sophistication to comprehensively monitor performance.

Dynamic User Journeys are the next evolution of journey monitoring. In a dynamic user journey the monitoring script behaves just like a real user, making random selections from all possible choices at each stage of the journey, the better to replicate real user behaviour and test the performance of all aspects of the site.

Monitoring this way was essential for Kitbag as Joe explains: "This feature was a key factor in deciding to move to thinktribe. Because of the very nature of our web site it was important that we were able to dynamically and randomly track our web pages and user journeys. Previously we were monitoring via static journeys – we had lots of problems we didn't capture which resulted in hours or days of downtime in parts of our web sites."

Using software as a managed service

Kitbag represents many different sports brands and has some demanding performance SLAs. thinktribe's managed service approach to support helps to ensure that these are met.

Joe says: "We rely heavily on thinktribe's systems as downtime means a loss in sales and damage to brand image for all our partners. Your support team consistently provide rapid reactive responses, as well as proactive support and have noticed issues before we have done ourselves."

The thinktribe Support Team has a close relationship with the Kitbag team, and is in regular communication with them, providing real-time notification of any significant degradation in responsiveness or availability, or any unusual performance patterns, along with diagnosis, analysis, advice and extensive investigation into root causes of more significant issues including recreating journeys manually to identify problems and providing screenshots and replayable samples.

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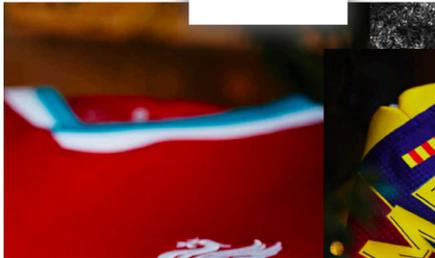
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Looking to the future

Kitbag have recently added international/multi lingual sites to the monitoring portfolio as their partners want to support their fan base throughout the globe. This means an increase in the number of sites, languages and structural complexity. As their web and mobile sites become more functionally complex and possible user actions become more varied, fluid and dynamic it is crucial for Kitbag that any monitoring tool can keep pace with the changes.

"A new Service Orientated Architecture is being implemented / redesigned a so that we're able to develop distributed systems accessible throughout the world. thinktribe will be a key partner in this as these systems will need to be monitored 24x7."

Joe Doherty, Data Manager, Kitbag.
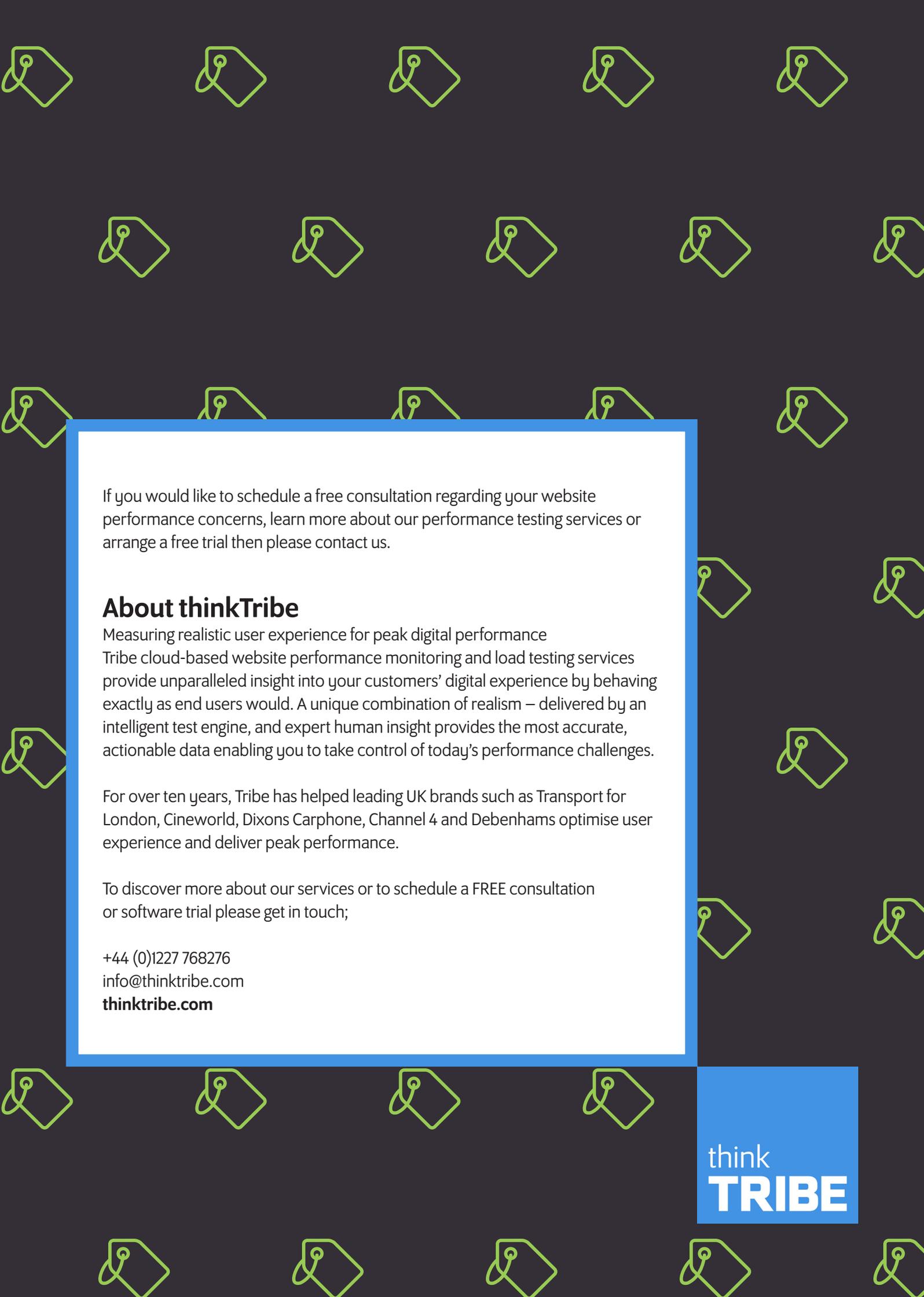
If you would like to schedule a free consultation regarding your website performance concerns, learn more about our performance testing services or arrange a free trial then please contact us.

About thinkTribe

Measuring realistic user experience for peak digital performance
Tribe cloud-based website performance monitoring and load testing services provide unparalleled insight into your customers' digital experience by behaving exactly as end users would. A unique combination of realism – delivered by an intelligent test engine, and expert human insight provides the most accurate, actionable data enabling you to take control of today's performance challenges.

For over ten years, Tribe has helped leading UK brands such as Transport for London, Cineworld, Dixons Carphone, Channel 4 and Debenhams optimise user experience and deliver peak performance.

To discover more about our services or to schedule a FREE consultation or software trial please get in touch;

+44 (0)1227 768276
info@thinktribe.com
thinktribe.com

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