Stakeholder and Author Research - Pittsburgh VAMC

Prepared by the VA.gov CMS Team
for the DSVA Tam

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We wanted to learn about the challenges and opportunities this project can help address directly from VAMC stakeholders and authors.

1. Background

Our goal was to learn learn about content priorities, challenges, and opportunities this project can help address directly from VAMC stakeholders and authors.

Stakeholders

- Understand priority content needs from staff members who are proxies for Veterans based on their role at the VA.
- Understand challenges and opportunities related to the website from content creators and communicators.

Authors

- Observe authors doing their typical CMS tasks to understand the process, including tasks that happen outside the CMS.
- Understand training expectations and needs.

We conducted three workshops with stakeholders and three contextual inquiry interviews with authors.

Stakeholder Groups

- Veteran employees from various departments
- VSO representatives and Congressional staff
- Public Affairs and Communications staff (and one MyHealtheVet coordinator)

Authors

- Louis Skavnicky, VISN 4 web manager, former Pittsburgh VAMC web manater
- Kimberley Graham, Pittsburgh VAMC information designer and web manager
- Ryan Stubberline, PitPittsburgh VAMC information designer and web manager

Why stakeholder and author research?

This research will inform things like:

Information architecture	CMS training
CMS workflows, roles, and permissions	Governance framework

2. Key Findings

Stakeholder Workshop Findings

Content Priorities

Across stakeholder workshop groups, there was consistency in content priorities for Veterans (and their loved ones).

Direct contact info (including fax numbers) for programs, specialties, clinics, records, etc.	Details about accessing Veteran records … service, health, etc.
Details about eligibility for benefits and how to access them	Services/specialties available at the hospital

Content Context

The same information is needed by multiple people in multiple contexts. For example:

A Veteran might need to know the **facilities' hours** because they have to get to an appointment really early.	A Veteran might need to get their **discharge papers** to apply for health care.
A family member might need to know a **facilities hours** because they need to visit a Veteran.	A family member might need to get a Veteran's **discharge papers** to arrange a military burial.

Challenges

- There is a lack of integration of Veteran-facing information across administrations and offices, and across web brands, leading to a disjointed and confusing experience for Veterans and other audiences.
- Staff at the VA, especially records department and patient advocates, spend a lot of time helping Veterans with very basic information needs, taking time away from more pressing matters.
- VHA staff and VACO spend time on regional/local website back up that could be redirected toward more strategic and proactive digital experiences.

Opportunities

- Prioritize what content it makes sense to spend the most time on based on Veteran needs (and needs of other audiences).
- Fix the low-hanging fruit/priority content to help solve key problems/challenges first, and then move on to nice-to-have content/feature needs.
- Streamline the Veteran experience so that Veterans get what they need no matter where they land in the Va.gov digital landscape.
- Simplify content management tasks to free up time for more strategic and meaningful efforts.

Imagine a seamless experience for Veterans that emulates what we observed in Pittsburgh from VA staff: *Serving Veterans is our priority, whether it's our job or not, we go out of our way to get them what they need.*

Future State Testimonials

A website that works IS a part of providing the care Veterans deserve.

I am so happy with the VA.gov website. I was able to find the information I need to start my disability claim, which took a major weight off my shoulders.

I lost my job and health insurance right when I found out I was having a baby. I was able to find out that I'm eligible for prenatal care on VA.gov.

My son has never been the same since he returned from the war. Luckily, VA.gov had information about talking with a chaplain to get some help for him.

Author Experience Findings

Pain Points

- Authors with any amount of html experience don't use the WYSIWIG editors and edit the source code instead. For anything besides pretty basic formatting, authors create in Dreamweaver and copy the code into Teamsite.
- Images have to be uploaded in all sizes needed and can't be used in a page until they are uploaded. This requires several steps, including sizing in Photoshop.
- Organization of the folder structure is extremely localized, and even individualized, meaning that it's not repeatable across locations and very customized to the individual author's mental model.

Training Considerations

- Existing Teamsite training materials don't meet local authors' needs. There is a fair amount of training materials available, but it isn't provided in a way that's contextually useful.
- Authors prefer to learn by doing, whether that's in-person or remote.
- Authors have created their own cheat sheets and training guides to walk new authors through common tasks.

**Instructions to Publish a Feature Story
to the VA Pittsburgh internet website using TeamSite**

Overview

The *features* form is designed and integrated with the internet home page. When you publish a new feature story, your site's home page is updated with a synopsis of the story in a prominent location along with a link to a page that displays the full version of the story. By filling out and saving the *features* form, you actually create or update several different files:

- A formatted, RSS-enabled summary page of feature stories
  http://www.pittsburgh.va.gov/features/index.asp

  This page contains a list of the 10 most recent feature stories in chronological order with hyperlinks and teasers for individual stories.

- A formatted feature story page
  sample: http://www.pittsburgh.va.gov/features/nurses-week-2014.asp

  This page contains all the content of the feature story, including up to three photos.

- An updated RSS feed
  http://www.pittsburgh.va.gov/features/features.xml

  This page also allows visitors to subscribe via RSS to the feature stories.

Preparing Content for a New Feature Story

Before you begin creating a new feature story, it is probably a good idea to prepare the following elements:

- A title for the page that displays the story
- Full text for the story
- Metadata that richly describes the story content
- A short title and 'teaser' text for the story that will appear on your VAMC Home page
- A description for the story that will appear on the features index page, social media postings and GovDelivery notifications
- A thumbnail image for the home page and GovDelivery, sized to 180x130 pixels
- A larger image for the feature story page, sized to 480x330 pixels
- A file name for the page created by the features form that is in accordance with required file-naming conventions

Access to TeamSite

Log in with your PIV card to the TeamSite application at https://vaww.cms.webdev.va.gov. You can also log in using your VA network ID and password (/vha04 not required).

Content Lifecycle Considerations

- There is no structured content built into the CMS. Anything that resembles a component is hard-coded.
- Team has created fairly sophisticated intake forms for website content in Sharepoint that mimic governance and content requirements we'd like to see for a future state of the CMS.
- Today, you can't actually unpublish content. If you need to archive something but keep a record, you must make a copy that you don't publish and then delete the original.
- More research is needed on content that contains both centralized information provided by VACO and localized information the facility or system can control.

Thank you!

Contact Meghan Casey (meghan@navahq.com) or Kevin Walsh (kevin.walsh@civicactions.com) with questions