

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Rules of Engagement Documentation

Discovery Research

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Summary

In this initial study to understand the VFS team user journey, we looked into Rules of Engagement documentation created by VSP and how it is being used by the VFS teams. During the course of our interviews, **our team gained insight into how VFS team members are finding the information they need and the pain points associated with that.**

Goals

1. Understand the landscape of documentation of Rules of Engagement (ROE) and how they are being used today
2. Define requirements for a template to document Rules of Engagement (ROE) that establish how VFS and VSP teams interact throughout the product development lifecycle.

Goals

Insights we hope to derive in asking these questions:

Findability

- Do people know a Rules of Engagement (ROE) documents is?
- Does one exist for their practice area?
- Can people find them when they need them?
- How do people find them today?
- Are teams who are aware of Rules of Engagement (ROE) documents more likely to exhibit the behavior outlined in them?
- What will make teams more likely to find and follow the Rules of Engagement?

Goals

Insights we hope to derive in asking these questions:

Effectiveness

- What information is useful in an ROE (per practice area)?
- Are VSP Team members fluent on ROEs across all areas, and thus know how VSP functions as a whole? Would people be able to say “oh, that’s not the way we do it here” if they saw a VFS team doing something that’s not aligned with our ROE?
- What practice areas still need to create an ROE?

Methodology

Interviews

Participants: 6 VFS team members from 4 practice areas

- Product Management - 1 participant
- UX Design - 3 participants
- Engineering - 1 participant
- Quality Assurance - 1 participant

Survey

Participants: 18 VSP team members from 7 practice areas

Key Findings

VFS Interviews

Key Finding: Findability

In order for people to feel confident they are doing the right thing, team members need to be able to easily find documents about processes and guidelines.

- Documents are scattered in a number of places (i.e. Slack, GitHub, GoogleDocs)
- People are reaching out to other team members to ask questions and send documents
- ROE as a term and acronym is unfamiliar to most

How might we

create a “single source of truth” for all documentation regarding platform processes and guidelines.

How might we

make sure the contents are findable and the contents of the documents are stated in plain language?

Key Finding: Effectiveness

To be an effective document, it will need to be tailored to each practice area and flexible enough to adapt to a variety of products being built.

- Having a document that shows the intended process and explains the value of each step will help set expectations with the VA. [Product Management]

How might we

use the Rules of Engagement (ROE) document to help communicate the baseline processes to increase transparency between VFS teams and their DSVA product owner in order to help launch quality products?

Key Finding: Effectiveness

Engineering & QA

- Getting new members environments setup as quickly as possible is critical to meeting deadlines.

How might we

show a complete list of systems an Engineer and QA member needs to access (with status of each) in order to be productive?

Key Finding: Scalability

Documentation has to be kept up-to-date in order to be trusted

- Engineering documentation needs to be kept current to be effective

Notifying team members of recent updates will save them time

- Designers would benefit from knowing the most recent additions to the Design System

How might we

- make updating documents easy for those who want to share their knowledge?
- keep people aware of the latest updates?
- encourage designers to submit new patterns to the Design System?

Key Findings

VSP Survey

Key Finding

Documentation has been created for most practice areas, but it's not clear if it's being used by the VFS teams.

- 11 out of 18 participants reported that a Rules of Engagement document exists for their practice area
- 11 out of 18 participants reported that they don't know if their teams documentation is being used by VFS teams.

How might we

- assess what documentation exists for each practice area?
- measure how useful the documentation is for the VFS team?
- create documents that address issues that VFS team members have?

Discussion

- Q&A
- “How might we” statements

Summary of Outcome

1. Understand the landscape of documentation of Rules of Engagement (ROE) and how they are being used today
 - a. They are not being used but are helpful to point back to when we need a concrete answer to disagreements.
 - b. Conversations organically helped us uncover pain points of findability and access of more important forms of documentation.
2. Define requirements for a template to document Rules of Engagement (ROE) that establish how VFS and VSP teams interact throughout the product development lifecycle.
 - a. Given the findings above, a template for ROE is not the most important way to proceed. Instead, we have a set of short-term recommendations and higher-level insights for the documentation site team to leverage in their larger solution.

Short Term Recommendations

Finding

- Teams are building their own link aggregator pages in order to access the relevant documentation from our repository

Recommendation

- Let's use those aggregators as prototypes to update the ReadMe's for each practice area and pin them to the vfs-platform-support slack channel..

Finding

- Engineers have a hard time getting up and running.

Recommendation

- Document who to contact for status of access

Finding

- People don't know which documents to trust as the source of truth and don't have confidence that they are looking at the most up-to-date version.

Recommendation

- Lend a feeling of authority by adding "Date last updated" and "Team Responsible" as a default part of va.gov-team repo content which also serves to instill a level of responsibility for our teams to maintain the documentation.

Finding

- People want to know how to fit within the larger organization.

Recommendation

- While long-term we need to do research to better understand this pain point and figure out the right artifact to create, in the short-term we recommend adding a 5 minute "big picture" talking point to the onboarding process.

Next Steps

- Assign owners to short-term recommendations
- Have conversation about these findings with the Content and IA team to guide their documentation site approach.