# VA.gov CMS: Office user research 1

**Moderator Guide**

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| --- | --- |
| Project Name: | VA.gov CMS: Office initial discovery |
| Date: | March 4 - 13, 2019 |
| Plan: | [Research Plan (gDoc)](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y2Nox3rQRIuXwhiealUHSz1QhoZfLSP5u-W4oljmRA4/edit?usp=sharing) |

## 

## Research questions

1. What prompts participants to seek information about the Department of Veterans Affairs?
   1. How do they begin their searches or investigations for information?
   2. What resources are most/least useful and why?
2. How do participants use VA-sponsored websites or information?
   1. What is succeeding/failing about this information?
   2. How are people expecting this content to be interpreted by their audiences?
3. What types of content do participants create for veterans?

## Set up

* Send the participant an email reminder with meeting link and consent form.
* Print this guide.
* Leave bias / baggage at the door. Get into active-listening mode.
* Turn on “Do Not Disturb” or mute notifications.
* Turn off “power save”/sleep mode on external devices, e.g. cameras
* Clear your desktop.
* Auto mute new attendees (So observers don’t disrupt).
* Turn off “chime for attendees joining/leaving.”

## Important Links

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meeting Link: | Different for each session, see meeting invitations |

## Interview Reminders

* Ask open-ended questions
  + DON’T ask multiple-choice questions
  + DON’T ask yes/no questions
* Ask broken questions
  + So what… is…
  + What do you expect to see next?
* Bring your curiosity
  + DON’T assume. Ask why!

## Reset Meeting

* Mute & stop your video (Stay dark and silent until you are ready to start.)
* Stop sharing.
* Stop recording.

## Participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Day** | **Time(ET)** | **Name** | **Participant Details** | **Team** | **Zoom link** |
| P1 | 3/8 | 11:30AM | Annette Boyle | **Journalist**  *U.S. Medicine* | Eric (interview)  Howie (notes) |  |
| P2 | 3/8 | 10AM | Regan Hopper | **Former journalist**  Director, Internal Comms & Engagement, USDA | Eric (interview)  Howie (notes) | [105964746](https://zoom.us/j/105964746) |
| P3 | 3/8 | 11AM | Nikki Wentling | **Journalist**  *Stars and Stripes* | Eric (interview)  Howie (notes) | [819019215](https://zoom.us/j/819019215) |
| P4 | 3/12 | 2PM | Ryan Gallucci | **VSO**  National Service Director  VFW | Eric (interview)  Howie (notes) | **Send invitation** |
| P5 | 3/12 | 3PM | Sherman | **VSO**  Chief Strategy Officer AMVETS | Eric and Howie (interview)  Jodi (notes) |  |
| P6 | 3/15 | 3PM | Lisa Rein | **Journalist**  *Washington Post* | Eric (interview)  Jodi (notes) |  |
| P7 | 3/20 | 2:30PM | Claudia Belk | **VSO**  Accessibility Officer | Eric all |  |
|  |  |  |  | **Congr. Staffer**  TBS |  | VA Showcase on 3/13? |

# Hello & Welcome (~2m)

#### Greeting

Hi there. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m joined today by \_\_\_\_\_ who will be notetaking for our discussion today. We will try our best to limit our conversation to the half hour that we have allotted. Is right now still a good time for you to talk?

As you know, we’re calling on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs to learn more about what it’s like for people like you to use the VA’s content, as well as **va.gov**. Specifically, we are interested in learning about your experiences in using VA’s content to achieve your goal, whatever that might be. Thanks so much for your time!

I would like our conversation to feel relatively informal today. If you ever feel like there’s a question that you don’t want to answer, simply let me know. Also, if you don’t want to participate in the study, you can cut this conversation short at any point. Your input is extremely valuable, but your level of comfort in participating is more important.

We have an idea of how we would like to talk today: I’d like to start by learning more about you and your experiences, then delve into more specific ways that you have sought information. Do you have any questions about anything I’ve said?

I’d like to record today’s session so that we can ensure we hear you correctly when we review our notes. This recording will only be used for our research and will be promptly deleted at the conclusion of the study. May I record this session?

Any questions before we begin the recording?

**With permission, begin the recording...**

# Interview (~27m)

Research goals: What prompts participants to seek information about the Department of Veterans Affairs? What are their goals?

## Learn role, build rapport (~5 mins)

*Gain a basic understanding of this person.*

* **Background and role**
  + What is your formal role title?
  + How might you describe what you do to someone outside your professional circle?
* **Goals**
  + When seeking information to do your job, what are your goals?
  + What does success look like in your role?

## VA public affairs information use (~10)

*Discuss targeted use for VA outreach content.*

* Goals/needs with VA content
  + Why might you need content from the VA as a \_(role title)\_?
* How do you find that content or information today?
  + What resources do you refer to?
  + Do you have any people who you might get information from?
  + Where would you go to first for information? Help me understand what you trust most.
  + Have you done this any differently in the past?
* What are some of the challenges that you face in doing this?

## Wrap-up (~4-10 min)

*Address ideal future use.*

* What would make VA resources more useful for you?
* As a \_(role title)\_, I’d like for you to imagine a future in which the VA becomes your go-to source. What makes it work and what might it feel like?
  + Research note: If participant has said, "None of this is useful," ask them to complete the sentence, "what I really need is \_\_\_\_\_\_."
* Can you think of any site that does this well? (which media site, website, internet thing is doing this well)
* Would it be okay for us to contact you again to involve you in our design testing process?

# Goodbye & Thank You (~1 min)

* Well [participant name] you’ve answered all of our questions. Do you have any questions for us?
* Your input will be very valuable to me and the team. We really appreciate your time and feedback. <briefly summarize a few of participants’ key points>
* And with that, I’m going to end the Zoom session.
* Thanks so much for participating. Have a great day!

# Appendix: team parking lot

## Research questions for the future:

* What was the last / big thing they published?
* Reverse engineer their last big gov/military story from idea to publication

## Outcomes

* Research findings across user groups, across design studio
* Design principles?
* Example of other Offices: acquisitions, vendors, contractors, BVA (lawyers, judges)
* 30 mins “What we heard success looks like”
* 30 mins session with stakeholders that reach design principles