

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Collaboration Cycle v1

Final Insights

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WHAT WE DID

Gathered research

VFS Research

- 8 directed interview inquiring about:
 - General experience with new Collaboration Cycle
 - Specific Collaboration Points
 - Collaboration Point Tracker
- Qualitative survey
[See Readout](#)

DEPO Workshops

- 3 workshops
[See Mural](#)

VSP Workshops

- 1 reviewer retro
- 5 workshops
[See Readout](#)

Final Insights

How we went about it

- **Combined** feedback from VFS, VSP and DEPO
- Grouped all feedback into **themes**
- Looked at those themes through the lens of **DEPOs strategy for 2020**
- Wrote questions asking **how might we** solve those pain points
- Prioritized those questions to start finding **opportunities for solutions**

Aligning with DEPO

DEPO Strategy for 2020

Make the VA.gov platform scalable and get serious about VA.gov product quality

To make the VA.gov Platform more scalable

How might we...

- make running tests for 508 and QA easier, automated or self-serve?
- adapt the collaboration cycle process for projects of different sizes?
- make collaboration cycle process more self-serve?

To get serious about VA.gov product quality

How might we...

- encourage teams to follow the process by adapting it to projects of different sizes?
- better communicate the intent of each collaboration point and reduce confusion?
- integrate QA and Accessibility into the collaboration cycle?
- get buy-in from DEPO team leads on iterative collaboration cycle planning?
- fit collaboration points into VA's processes and standards (i.e. recruiting usability test participants, meeting pre-set deadlines)?

Next Steps

- Begin solutioning and ensuring that we can satisfy our “How might we’s” with Q4 planning
- Drafting product outlines for those solutions
- Determine how to measure success

Discussion



DIGITAL SERVICE at VA

Thank you.

Appendix

VSP THEME 1

Organizational tension and lack of clarity of roles

VSP THEME 1

“Definitely have felt tension with VSA teams more than any other team, which feels strange because they were so involved with building the process. Wondering how we can build good-will with them. ”

- *Anonymous*

“Does VSP have the final call? Does VSA? Are these entities on equal footing?”

- *Anonymous*

“Tension (with VSA) felt in meetings and other channels (ex: VSA teams taking content feedback when they’ve already written things. ”

- *Anonymous*

VSP THEME 2

Timing Issues

Timing Issues

- General timing
- Content & IA timing
- Engineering touchpoints
- Big review meeting timing

“We might want to consider moving the “review” meeting to after the product team has reviewed the tickets and can address some of the bigger recommendations [in the meeting].”

- *Anonymous*

“Accessibility feedback is often pretty technical and having a VFS dev there could be beneficial.”

- *Anonymous*

“The Design practice meetings are great. Before designers were getting random feedback from different people.”

- *Designer*

“Our tech lead thinks VSP has been reasonable in removing unnecessary steps. Feels like a lot more meetings but there are short, concise. ”

- *Designer*

VSP THEME 2

Documentation doesn't account for all scenarios and edge cases

- One-size-doesn't fit a
- How do we grand ex and what are excepti

Documentation doesn't account for all scenarios and edge cases

“Think QA was done better before. Seems like it's not called out in the same way.”

- *Product Manager*

“QA is so disconnected from the cycle. People don't know what to do w/ QA”

- *Designer*

“Wasn't clear who needed to write Testrail test cases.”

- *Product Manager*

Did we prematurely ask for a 508 spot check? Did we ask for accessibility too soon?

- *DEPO, Collaboration Cycle v1 Research*

VSP THEME 4

Tracking and accountability

THEME 4

Tracking and accountability

- What exceptions have been granted
- When are products launching?
- Follow up with collaboration feedback

“The reviewers don't always align. There'll be conflicting feedback in the tickets.”

- *VSA Lead*

“There is a missing linkage between cycle and value to vets. If we see that we can prioritize appropriately and communicate to stakeholders.”

- *DEPO*

“I have come away from feedback sessions overwhelmed due to all of the voices in a short 30 minute period.”

- *Anonymous*

“My team feels exhausted and intimidated by it. It feels like all of vsp is management with so many voices and rules that it stifles our inspiration.”

- *Anonymous*

VSP THEME 5

Scalability problems

THEME 5

Scalability problems

- Too many meetings
- Missing topics and pieces from the collab cycle
- the more we do the head gets

“My DEPO has concerns about how this can impact time of deliver. Feels process and meeting heavy. Not agile. Do more asynchronously.”

- *Product Manager*

“Hard to do rapid iteration, making small changes, getting feedback. Scheduling of meetings feels the most burdensome”

- *DEPO Lead*

“[The experience] feels like a one-size-fits-all that doesn't in fact fit all situations or product types.”

- *Anonymous*

“It's really confusing and we inevitably miss something which frustrates VSP and makes our team feel bad”

- *Anonymous*

“I've really struggled with it because it seems inflexible, confusing, and not supportive.”

- *Anonymous*

VSP COLLABORATION CYCLE WORKSHOPS

Final Insights

	Project Kickoff	Design Intent Collab	Usability testing prep	Research plan review	IA Request	Analytics request	Contact center review	Staging review	Privacy & security review	Launch!	Accessibility/508 office audit	Post launch check in
Design and IA (7/15)	IA: Every project regardless of size or focus has a kickoff		IA: Coming a little in the process (design team is external kickoff)					Staging review: Do Feedback Only				
	Use the kickoff to determine which parts of the cycle are necessary							IA: Could this be asynchronous?				
	Combine kickoff and design intent calls for some teams		IA: How might we integrate content changes into the next sprint? Or within the same sprint?					IA: How are we integrating content changes into the next sprint? (How? Any? Not? Feedback? Needs? Code? API?)				
			Design: How might we make this asynchronous?					Escalation paths for feedback differences				
Design and Content (7/30)		Content: Don't lose this in early process meeting	Design: Work could start, and if the research is modular, that's the compliance of research									
			What could we do to be back to get up to the content standards, what priorities to have in addition for research?									
			Content: How are we integrating content into the research process?									
QA and Accessibility (7/31)		QTY: What a great day to have, integrate content into the research process (as a meeting to)	QTY: Review final content as part of the research process, which is a good practice (probably)									
		QA: Review final content as part of the research process, which is a good practice (probably)										
		QTY: Review in design, content and design, and design (probably)	QTY: Would be to have a meeting to integrate content into the research process					QTY: Review in design, content and design, and design (probably)				
		QTY: Would be to have a meeting to integrate content into the research process						QTY: Review in design, content and design, and design (probably)				
Analytics (8/4)		Analytics: KPIs set up from workshop to set				Analytics: Make the analytics a part of the research process						
Contact Center (8/6)		Contact Center: Design user testing							Contact Center: Be alerted when product is launched			Contact Center: Make it known if the Contact Center is part of the research process

How might we...

- Adapt the process for projects of different sizes?
- Provide more early guidance to developers?
- Standardize when and how we provide Accessibility feedback?
- Coordinate with DEPO team leads on V2 planning?
- Further explore pain points around timing reviews to align with teams' release plans?