VA Facility Locator, Mobile

Summary of Usability Study, February 2021

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Intro and background

Background

The motivation/background for this research came from the following factors:

- In a mobile month study, veterans were not interested in using the map view of facility locator #14484.
- The Facility Locator search experience has not been approached from a mobile-first perspective.
- Planned changes include the implementation of two new usability features ("use my location" and "clear field") and the resolution of accessibility defects (not addressed in this prototype).
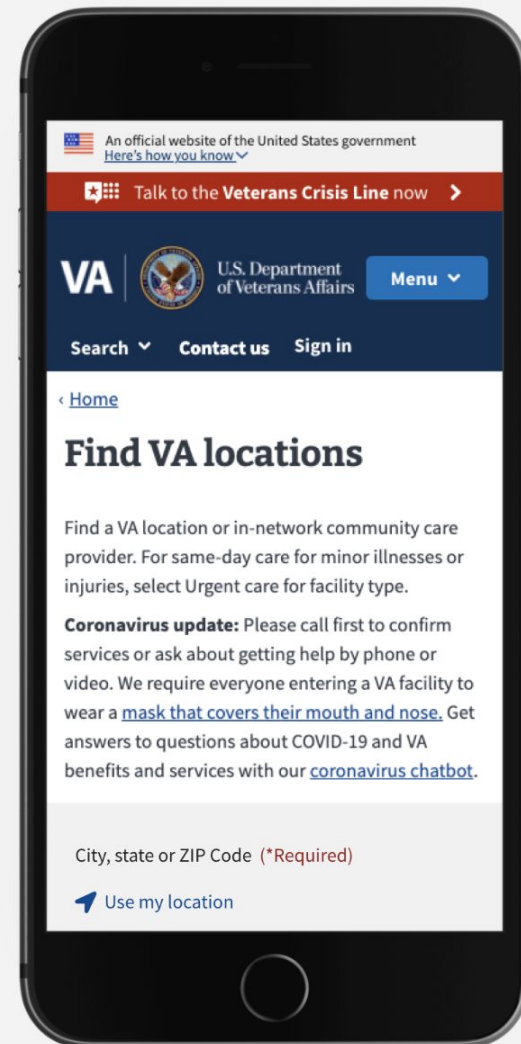
Goals

The main goals for this study:

- Understand how Veterans expectations for Find a VA Location search results differ for mobile vs desktop users
- Understand how industry standards impact Veteran expectations for the Facility Locator search experience
- Evaluate new designs created for geolocation, map view, and clear fields
- Validate if veterans are interested in using the map view of the Facility Locator (validate findings in the mobile month study)

Methods and structure

The method we used:

- A remote, moderated, task-oriented usability study, using Zoom
- Participants logged into Zoom with their mobile device, shared their screen and opened up the prototype for us to observe their interaction.
- The participants had to imagine a couple of scenarios and were given tasks to perform within the prototype on their mobile phones.

The structure of the study:

- 2 minutes for introduction and helping participant to share their mobile screen on Zoom
- 2 minutes for warm-up questions
- Approximately 20-30 minutes with usability tasks and questions
- 2-4 min for exit questions and wrap-up

Participants

The participants in this study:

- 10 veterans participated
- 5 male and 5 female
- 4 from rural area, 6 from a major metropolitan area
- Between 35 and 83 years old (8 of 10 was 55 years or older)
- A mix of educational level
- 5 used Android and 5 used Apple phone

Summary - Key findings

- Participants **had a variety of past experiences with the VA facility locator,** from "...it was a nightmare" to "...it was pretty easy".
- Most participants **did not utilize the "Use My Location" link**. A few did not notice it but said they might use it if they noticed it, a few do not want to use location services at all, and a few participants noticed it and thought it could be useful, but found it irrelevant to the task/scenario given to them.
- Most participants **did not use the "x" icon to clear their address** and retype a new address.
- **Choosing Facility type and Service Type was easy for most participants** when given the task to look for optometry.
- **Most participants found both the list and map view to be useful** depending on their circumstance.
- **About half the participants did not notice the map view on their own** without prompting.
- **Most participants understood that they could tap on a pin to view details in the map, however after that, they didn't seem to understand overall how to dismiss and view other locations.** Overall there was awkwardness in the way participants interacted with the new map view designs and switched between map and list views.
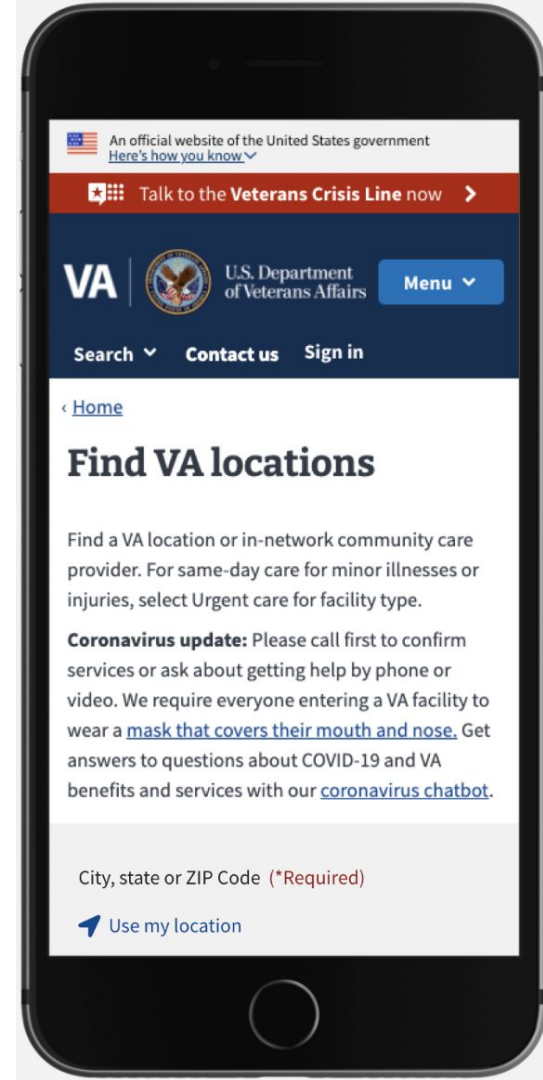
Findings

Previous experience with VA.gov

Findings

Participants have highly different (previous) experiences with the VA facility locator.

- All participants had used VA.gov at one point.

- 6 of 10 had tried to find a VA facility on VA.gov (mobile or computer). The experience ranged from *"...it was a nightmare"* to *"...it was pretty easy".*

Use my location feature

Findings

- Most users (8 of 10) did not click on the *Use My Location* link. They wanted to type in a Zip code or an address. (3 of 10 are hesitant to using the location feature on their phone in general).

- 3 participants said they saw the *Use my location* feature, but they did not think to use it, as the scenario was about a different location (Washington).

- 7 of 10 would be comfortable using the location service on VA.gov, but not on all types of websites.

➔ Needs research: will participants discover and use the location feature in a real life situation? Our task/scenario might have directed their behavior.

Facility type and Service type

Findings

- Most participants (8 of 10) had no problems tapping *Facility type* and choosing *VA Health*. 2 of 10 participants choose *Community Care Providers,* thinking this option would give them more local facilities.

- They have no problems tapping on *Service type* and choosing *Optometry*.

- One participant suggested to ask for *Service type* first and then provide all the *Facility types* that had this service.

Opportunities

- Consider if presenting *Service Type* before *Facility Type* has value. (It is consistent with changes done within the Facilities team.)

Facility type and Service type 2

Findings

- 3 of 10 participants used the "x" icon to clear the address field. The rest deleted the previous address manually.

- A few commented that the *Facility* and *Service types* were not alphabetized.

Opportunities

- Consider making the "x" icon more prominent.

- Consider presenting search results alphabetized.

List View

Findings

Overall users found the list view to be quick and easy to understand.

- 7 of 10 prefer (or at least prefer to start with) the *List view.* Participants find it to be a quicker, simpler solution.

- Only one participant prefer the *Map view* over the *List view.*

- 5 would potentially use both, especially if they are in an unfamiliar area.

- Three participants value *both* a *List View* and a *Map View*. *List View* - a quick overview of info on facilities and distance. *Map View* - good when in a unfamiliar area, or to see more details about locations and directions.
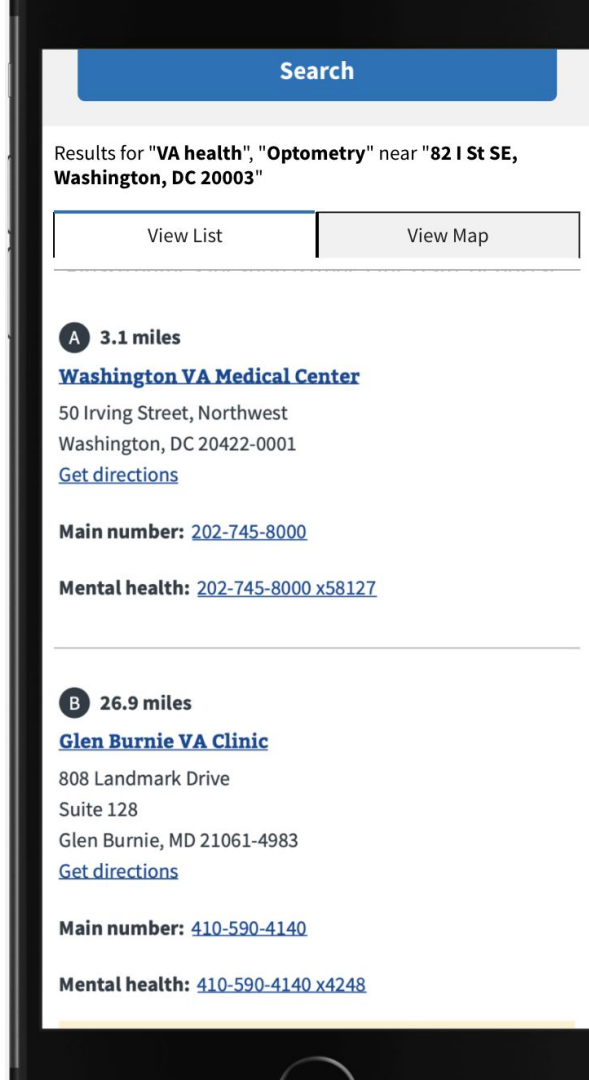
List View 2

Findings

- Two participants did not see that they could scroll down for more results. They suggested a visual clue for scrolling down to see more content.

- A few of the participants wanted to see the hours of operation and the services available right on the info card.

Opportunities

- Consider if scrolling down to see more facilities is self-evident, or if there is value in adding a visual cue.

- Consider adding hours of operation and services provided should be present on each info card (in *list view* and *map view*).
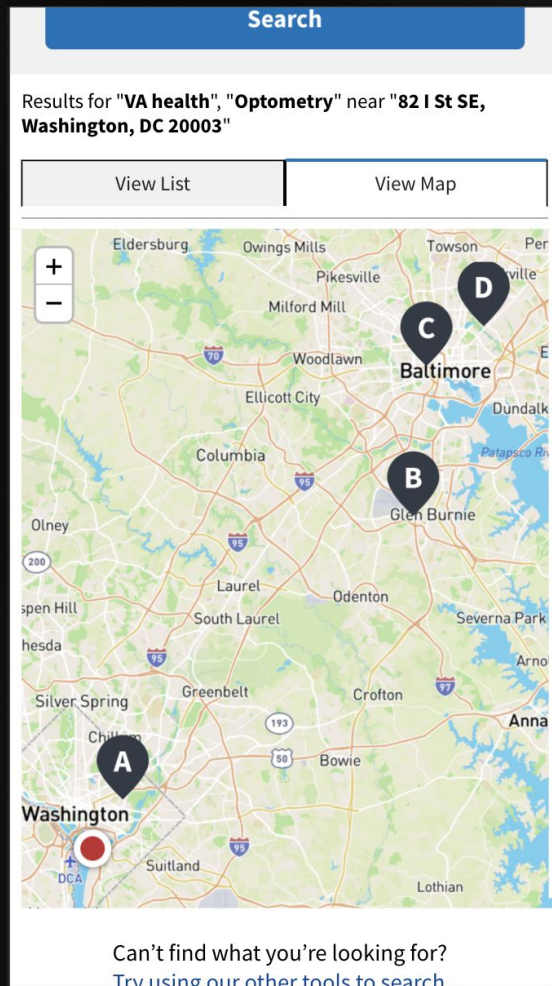
Map View

Findings

Overall participants found the map somewhat confusing to use.

- 4 of 10 users clicked on the map on their own accord.

- 6 out of 10 reported to actually *see* the *Map View*, but two participants said that they decided against tapping it due to our (Washington) scenario.

- 6 of 10 understood that they could zoom (either by pinching or using the zoom buttons).

- 8 of 10 participants tapped the letters on their own. Two needed a prompt.

Opportunities

- Consider making tabs for *Map view* and *List view* more prominent.

Map View 2

Findings

- Most participants would travel 25-50 miles to a facility.

- A couple of participants would travel up to 100 miles if the appointment was important enough.

- People in rural areas willing to travel further than people in a major city.

- Most participants think the map should show facilities between 20-75 miles from their location.

 - Participants in rural areas prefer a higher number (up to 100 miles).
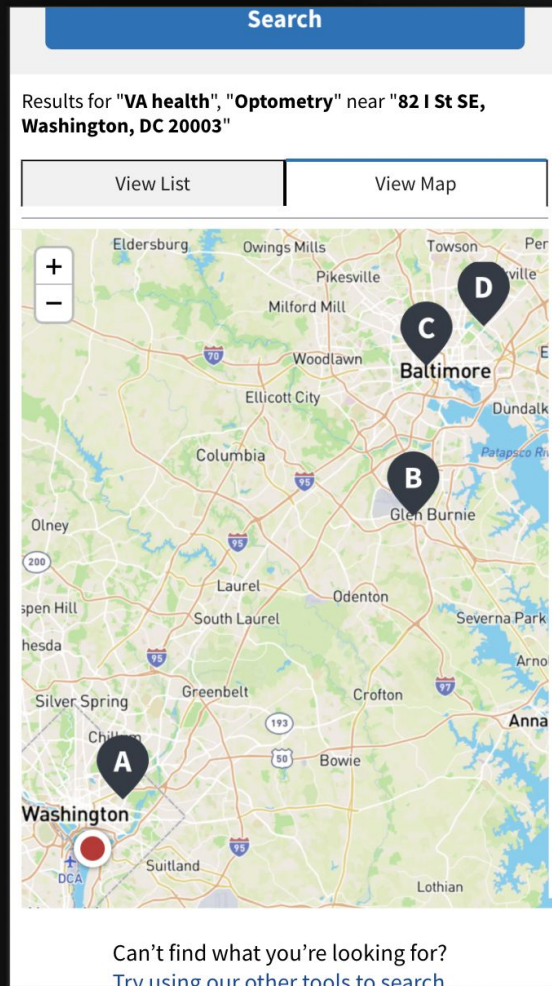
Map View 3

Findings

- Most participants (7 of 10) did not understand they could swipe right or left for the next facility. A couple of users suggested a visual clue for swiping.

- A few participants would like to see the hours of operation on the infocard, and perhaps also services provided (or at least click to see this info).

- 6 of 10 participants click outside the info card to close it. One closed it by clicking on *View Map* tab. Two closed it in s more or less random fashion.

- One participant suggested an "x" icon on the info cards for closing them.

Opportunities

- Make swiping feature as well as "close the card" action more discoverable.
- Integrate info cards and map better. (See Google Maps and AirBnB).
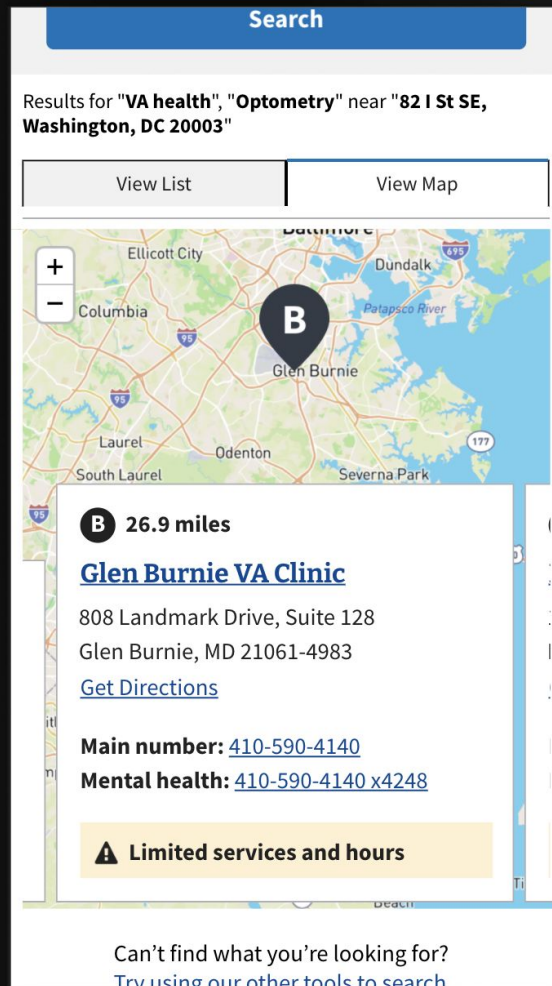
Research: Next Steps

Next steps:

- Additional research and design thinking needed:
  - Is the *Use my location* link prominent enough?
    - If users do not want to use it, what is the reasoning for this?
  - How can *Map View* be redesigned to be more intuitive?
    - How can the info cards in the View Map page be integrated better?
  - How can the *List View* and the *Map View* better support one another/work together?

End

Questions? Email: Laurel.Lawrence@adhocteam.us, shawna@adhocteam.us, cvalla@governmentcio.com