

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Collaboration Cycle v1

VFS Research Readout

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## 1. WHO WE'VE TALKED TO

### **We talked to people from**

- 6 teams
- 4 organizations
- 5 practice areas

### **With different levels of experience working on VA.gov**

- 22% were new
- 56% were moderately experienced
- 22% were longtime team members

## 2. WHAT WE DID

# Directed interviews

- 8 - 1 hr remote moderated interviews inquiring about
  - General experience with new Collaboration Cycle
  - Specific Collaboration Points
  - Collaboration Point Tracker

# Qualitative survey

- 7 responses

**What we learned**

## THEME 1

# VFS teams value VSP ensuring quality

“Helps us build better products. Invaluable input and catching things we may not have been looking for. It's like having a bigger team of clever people. ”

- *Product Manager*

“The intention is right - ensuring we delivering quality and gets a lot more people involved in the process. ”

- *Product Manager*

“Made teams a lot more aware of accessibility requirements earlier.”

- *Product Manager*

“Now we know what QA wants and can do that next time and engage with him better. ”

- *Product Manager*

## THEME 2

# Process is better than before

“I much prefer knowing what's expected. Much more clarity than before”

- *Product Manager*

“The new process is more meetings, but less of a big dog-and-pony show and this is much more conversational and I like that. ”

- *Product Manager*

“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*

### THEME 3

## QA and Accessibility Checkpoints

“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*

## THEME 4

# Feedback that is not cohesive or actionable causes confusion

“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*



## THEME 5

# Process burden

“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*

## THEME 6

# Some find the Collaboration Tracker helpful, but can be simplified

“I find it useful as a "checklist" reminder -- and a tracker.”

- *Anonymous*

“I set up an epic with all of these things ahead of time and keep them in icebox until it's time”

- *Product Manager*

“Wish I could just check a box and move on.”

- *Anonymous*

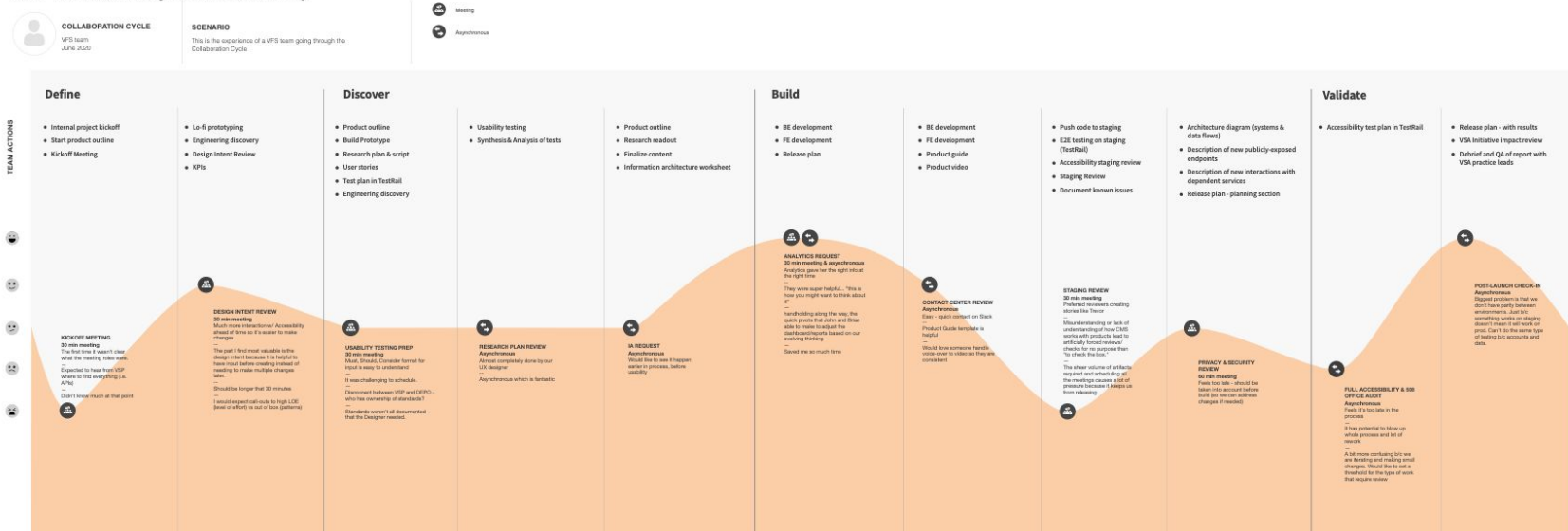
“The level of detail to provide at each stage feels like a lot.”

- *Anonymous*

## PROCESS DEEP DIVE

# Collaboration cycle user journey

### Team - Collaboration Cycle Customer Journey



## 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?

# Discussion



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Thank you.