



Information architecture at VA.gov

Meg Peters and Mikki Northuis | June 17, 2020

We want to talk with you about IA.

- How we will help you
- What we've learned
- Our plan
- Your thoughts on ^

Because this is a lot, our top goals are to:

- 1) show you what we're doing, and
- 2) talk again next Wednesday at 12:30pm.

How we will help you

There are many ways! 😊

How do you define IA?



How information is structured.

For websites, this would not only include the navigation, but also how information is structured at all levels, whether that is on a page or how URLs are organized.

- One of y'all

What else can we say about IA?



IA is foundational.

It's the structure for every user interaction.

- Meg and Mikki

We will help you by designing and testing:

- **Navigation system:** Top nav, header, on-page links, side nav, footer, user flows, etc.
- **Structure:** Site structure, page templates, etc.
- **Search:** Search flows, page templates, and search tuning
- **Names and labels:** Page titles, navigation labels, URLs, facility names, and more (think SEO!)
- **Taxonomies:** Structured metadata to help users find things

What we've learned

From analytics.

Top tasks on modernized VA.gov for the past year:

1. Check VA claim or appeal status
2. Sorry — we can't find that page (facilities)
3. Sign in
4. Go to MyVA
5. Download VA letters
6. Search
6. (Tied with ^) Check education benefits (Post GI Bill)

^ From Google Analytics June 3, 2019 to June 3, 2020 (modernized pages). [See the task summary.](#)

More top tasks on modernized VA.gov for the past year:

7. Find VA locations
8. Apply for healthcare benefits (includes check eligibility)
9. Get veteran ID cards
10. Find out how to apply for GI Bill and related benefits
10. (Tied with ^) View profile or account
11. Find out how to file a disability claim

^ From Google Analytics June 3, 2019 to June 3, 2020 (modernized pages). [See the task summary.](#)

Top tasks on all of VA.gov for the past year:

Because of quirks with Google Analytics, this is a summary.

- **Track claims**
- **Healthcare tasks** (includes My HealtheVet):
 - Send messages
 - Refill prescriptions
 - Get lab and test results
 - Schedule appointments
 - Download my data
- **Find VA locations**
- **Apply for education benefits**

[^] From Google Analytics June 3, 2019 to June 3, 2020 (all pages). [See the page views report.](#)

Mobile + tablet use is 45%.

- Mobile: **39.59%** or 33.8M
- Tablet: **5.11%** or 4.3M

^ From Google Analytics June 3, 2019 to June 3, 2020 (all of VA.gov). [See the report.](#)

[^] This is a living map. Let us know if we've missed something. [See the IA planning roadmap.](#)



About the IA planning roadmap...

We created the roadmap to understand the full “landscape” of IA work.

We highly recommend looking at it to see how your projects relate to other efforts. (Downloading is best.)

Happy to give tours!

This is a living map. Let us know if we've missed something. [See the IA planning roadmap.](#)

Our recommendations for IA

Where to focus now.

Our #1 goal:



Create a holistic, seamless experience for veterans every time they interact with the VA.

And help teams do this, too.

- *Meg and Mikki*

DEPO – Meg focuses on strategy, research, and design.

Working with teams on public-facing initiatives and improving global IA.

IA strategy

- Facilities naming
- Services taxonomy
- Learning centers
- Notifications
- Search

Research and evaluation

Top tasks research at regular intervals (includes authenticated)

IA design

- Navigation system
- Homepage (authenticated and unauthenticated)

Platform – Mikki focuses on support, design, and debt.

Supporting VFS teams and working with existing site content and functionality.

Support/documentation

Documenting standard user flows (online tools and apps)

IA debt

- Updating migrated tools with legacy URLs and breadcrumbs
- Reviewing VAMC IA

IA design

- Separating auth tools (fed by research)
- Templatizing benefit hubs (defining standard core content)
- Refining left nav and applying to benefit hubs
- Simplifying benefit hubs (w/Danielle)

Your feedback drives change.

Come to our IA planning discussion Wednesday, June 24 at 12:30pm.

We would love ideas and feedback on what you heard today!

Come to the IA roles & responsibilities workshop Monday, June 29 at 4pm.

Help us define DEPO versus Platform IA roles and responsibilities.

Visit the #ia-forum on Slack.

And comment!

Check out IA activities on Github.

See analytics, the roadmap, and what we're up to:

<https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/global/IA-strategy%2Bplanning/information-architecture-activities.md>

See you Wed, June 24 at 12:30pm!

#ia-forum on Slack

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