

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VFS Top Task Research

Discovery Readout

Michael Manalo
mmanalo@thesocompany.com

Rebekah Hickey
Rebekah.Hickey@adhocteam.us

Jonathan Nelson
jonathan.nelson@adhocteam.us

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Background & Goals

Background

Content and IA team are working on Platform website documentation for VFS teams. User survey satisfaction from Q1 2020- Q1 2021, has received feedback from VFS teams that navigation and menu architecture is bulky and contains vast information.

Purpose of doing more ethnographic research around the IA of the Platform website is to determine pain points in information searches and knowledge share for product teams.

Research goals

- Better understanding of priority tasks for VFS engineers
- Use results to make recommendations for content structure within the Platform website prototype (Content and IA)

Hypotheses to be tested

- Conducting a research mix of online surveys will help determine content requirements for [subpages for the IA](#) of the Platform website.

Methodology

Methodology

Online Survey

We wanted to collect a sample size audit of targeted questions from around 10-12 users that are BE, FE engineers on VFS Teams.

Our recent internal review estimates that there are around 55 engineers spread across VFS teams.

Through the online survey, we wanted to synthesize notable patterns based on needs for their daily tasks within Platform tools.

Who we spoke with

- Internal Review of online survey with Platform Engineers (Ops, BE, FE) that have worked on support channel
- Participants for Online Survey: VFS Engineers

Research questions

- **What is your role?**
 - FE Engineer/Developer
 - BE Engineer/Developer
 - QA Engineer
 - DevOps Engineer
 - Accessibility Specialist
 - Product Manager
 - Designer/Researcher
 - OCTO-DE Lead
- **How long have you been working on va.gov?**
 - 3 months or less
 - 3 to 6 months
 - 6 months to 1 year
 - More than 1 year
- **Optional**
 - Are there any tasks that are missing from this list?
 - *Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up session with the Service Design team from Platform?*

Research questions

- **Key Question:**
 - “Select the top 5 tasks/resources that are most important to you when thinking about building on VA.gov.”
 - Cards of ‘top tasks’ were created from past user research and with guidance from Content and IA team.
 - Cards were also reviewed internally with Platform support engineers

Select the top 5 tasks/resources that are most important to you when thinking about building on VA.gov.

It's a long list, but trust your first instincts and spend more than 3 minutes on this exercise.

Only move 5 tasks.

44 of 48 remaining ⓘ

Move the tiles from the left column to the right column in the order that represents your view ✕

⋮ CMS overview	1 ⋮ Test users and mock data
⋮ UAT (manual testing)	2 ⋮ Accessibility testing
⋮ Getting Platform support	3 ⋮ Request help from Platform
⋮ Report something broken on VA.gov	4 ⋮ Automated testing
⋮ Add new feature to VA.gov (content page, application, widget)	5 ⋮ Performance/load testing
⋮ Aggregate application metrics	
⋮ Responding to Platform support	
⋮ About the Platform (org chart, strategy, mission)	
⋮ Set up development environment (locally, frontend, backend)	

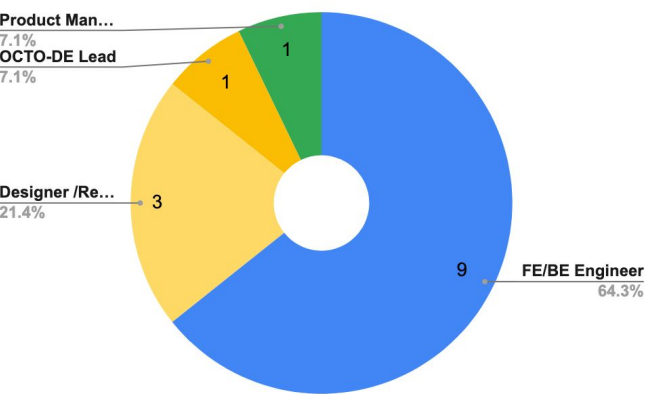
Research Findings

Research Findings

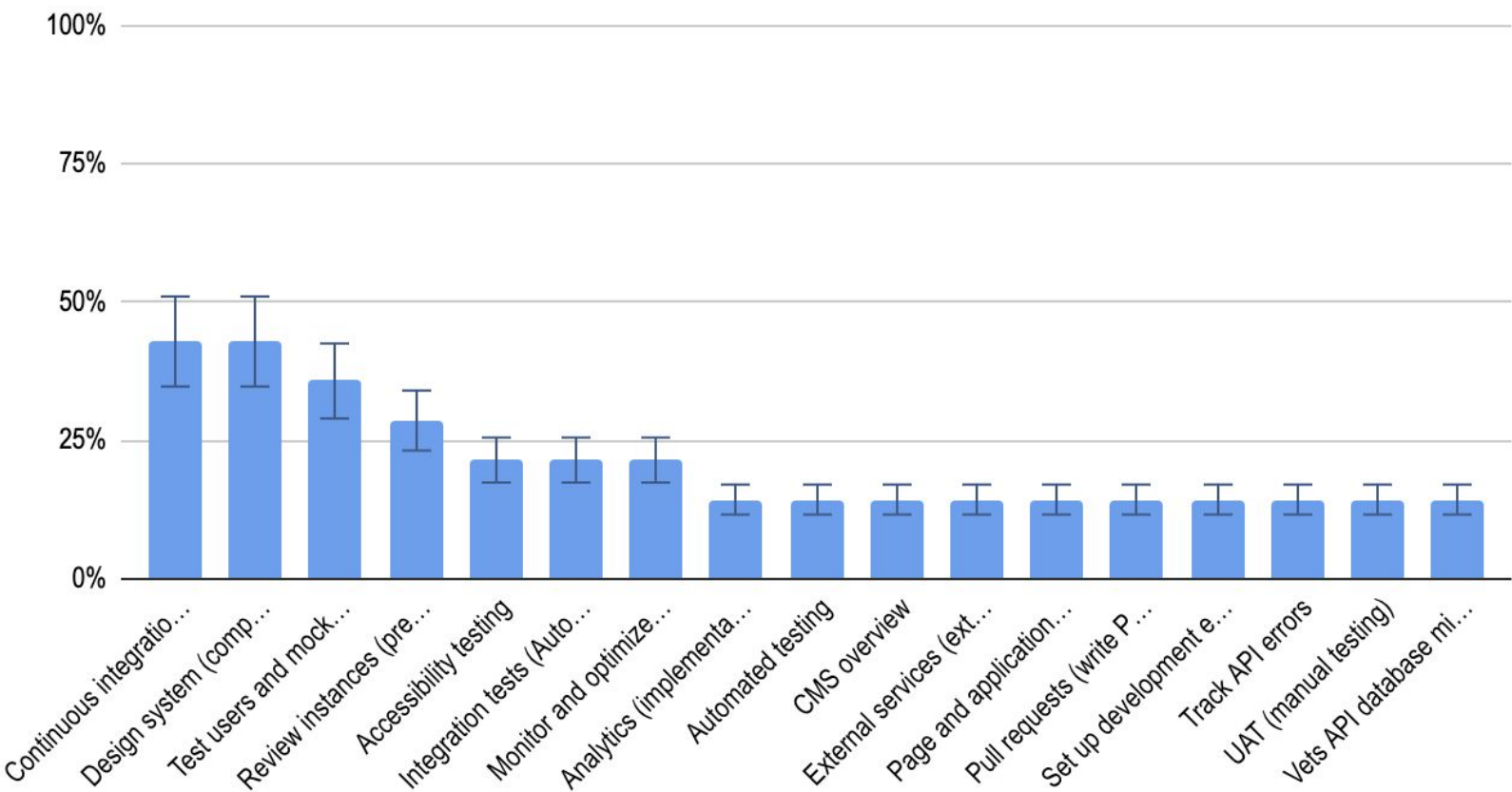
Key Findings

With the sample size of 14 participants, we are able to summarize top tasks selected to help inform Content and IA team with their efforts for the Platform website.

Participant breakdown:



Top Tasks - VFS Engineers



Key Findings

Top tasks that were selected (in multiple instances) by survey participants:

1. Continuous integration and development flows [43%]
2. Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples) [43%]
3. Test users and mock data [36%]
4. Review instances (preview & demo changes) [29%]
5. Accessibility testing [21%]
6. Integration tests (Automating testing) [21%]
7. Monitor and optimize code performance (tracking errors, triage, prioritize) [21%]

Additional Insights

We also provided an overview analysis of topic frequency based on the selections of the 14 participants:

- 16 Cards with 'Testing' and/or 'Test'
- 13 Cards with 'Code'
- 9 Cards with 'Automation'
- 8 Cards with 'Development Flows', and/or 'Development Environment'
- 6 Cards with 'API' or 'Review Instances'

participant id	1	2	3	4	5	Other
2	Continuous integration and development flows	Review instances (preview & demo changes)	Build a form on VA.gov	Monitor and optimize code performance (tracking errors, triage, prioritize)	Test users and mock data	
4	Review instances (preview & demo changes)	Continuous integration and development flows	CMS overview	Automated testing	Release a feature incrementally (feature toggles)	
5	Integration tests (Automating testing)	Review instances (preview & demo changes)	Pull requests (write PR, request PR review, best practices)			
6	Automated testing	Monitor and optimize code performance (tracking errors, triage, prioritize)	Accessibility testing	Test users and mock data	Continuous integration and development flows	
7	Report something broken on VA.gov	Review instances (preview & demo changes)	Integration tests (manual testing)	External services (external APIs, data sources)	Aggregate application metrics	
11	Set up development environment (locally, frontend, backend)	Track API errors	Debugging code errors from production	Page and application Javascript structure	Integration tests (Automating testing)	
12	Accessing tools (GitHub, SOCKS, Sentry, Grafana)	Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples)	Continuous integration and development flows	Pull requests (write PR, request PR review, best practices)	Set up development environment (locally, frontend, backend)	
14	Getting Platform support	Test users and mock data	UAT (manual testing)	Analytics (implementation in code)	Manual testing	
16	Monitor and optimize code performance (tracking errors, triage, prioritize)	Code organization	Code quality (automated linting)			
19	Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples)	External services (external APIs, data sources)	Track API errors	Performance/load testing	Test users and mock data	
21	Analytics (implementation in code)	Accessibility testing	Test users and mock data	Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples)	UAT (manual testing)	
22	Automated deployment schedule	Off-schedule deployment request	Continuous integration and development flows	Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples)	Vets API database migration	VSP user management process
26	Continuous integration and development flows	CMS overview	Request help from Platform	Vets API database migration	Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples)	

Sample Color maps were created identify most used key terms amongst the selected cards by participants.

Additional Insights

- Outside of the card sorting list, the following tasks were also suggested as important:
 - *Integration with contact center & IRIS, CMS API documentation, Understanding infrastructure (what, where, and how), UX and HCD research*
- Review from Platform support staff suggested to add 'Getting Platform Support' in card sorting questions.
- Support Teams also suggested to have the following top tasks (cards) reviewed or clarified for further context:
 - *Integrations Test*
 - *UAT, manual testing*
 - *Repository overview*
 - *Contract testing vs automated*
- Cards with either 'PR review' or 'CMS' were among least chosen

Recommendations

Recommendations

Inform the content strategy for Platform website. The results from the card sorting exercise can be used to help determine content and keyword searches for subpages.

Validate that there is a shared understanding of terminology. Survey results and recommendations from Platform support teams highlight need to review all current documentation for 'Testing' and associated terms.

Optimize for keyword searches. The results from the top tasks survey indicate that the following are the key engineering tasks the platform website content & IA should be optimized to support.

- *Continuous integration and development flows*
- *Design system (components, patterns, guidance, code samples)*
- *Test users and mock data*
- *Review instances (preview & demo changes)*
- *Accessibility testing*
- *Integration tests (Automating testing)*
- *Monitor and optimize code performance (tracking errors, triage, prioritize)*

Next Steps

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Assisting Content and IA team on next steps

Service Design team is helping Content and IA reconcile Top Task research findings with content migration order for Platform website.

Assist Content and IA team with content structure for Platform website and use the following to gather more feedback:

- *contextual inquiry (user interview)*
- *usability testing (w/ low fidelity prototypes)*