

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Collaboration Cycle v1

VSP Workshop Readout

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WHO PARTICIPATED

VSP Practice Area Reviewers

- Design
- IA
- Content
- QA
- Accessibility
- Analytics
- Contact Center

Reviewer Feedback

- Gathered feedback from all reviewers in a retro of the current implementation of the Collaboration Cycle

[See FunRetro Board](#)

Workshops with DEPO

- 3 workshops

[See Mural](#)

Workshops with VSP

- 5 workshops

[See Mural](#)

What we heard

VSP Reviewer Feedback

Themes

Organizational tension between
VSA and VSP

Timing issues

Lack of clarity of roles

Practice areas missing from
collab cycle

Documentation doesn't account
for all edge cases and scenarios

Tracking and accountability

Scalability problems

Artifact misalignment VSA/VSP
(e.g. QA, Accessibility)

Workshops with DEPO

Themes

Too many meetings

Artifact misalignment VSA/VSP
(e.g. QA, Accessibility)

Workshops with VSP Reviewers

1. Understand the landscape

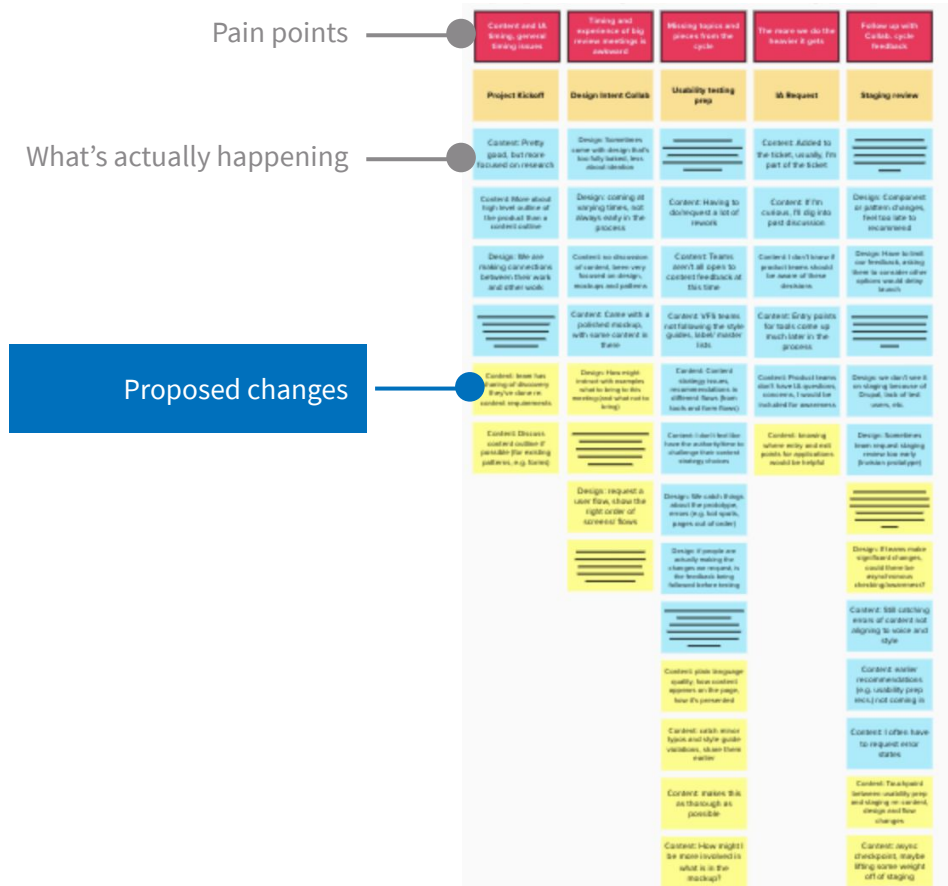
Collaboration Points

What's actually happening

Workshop

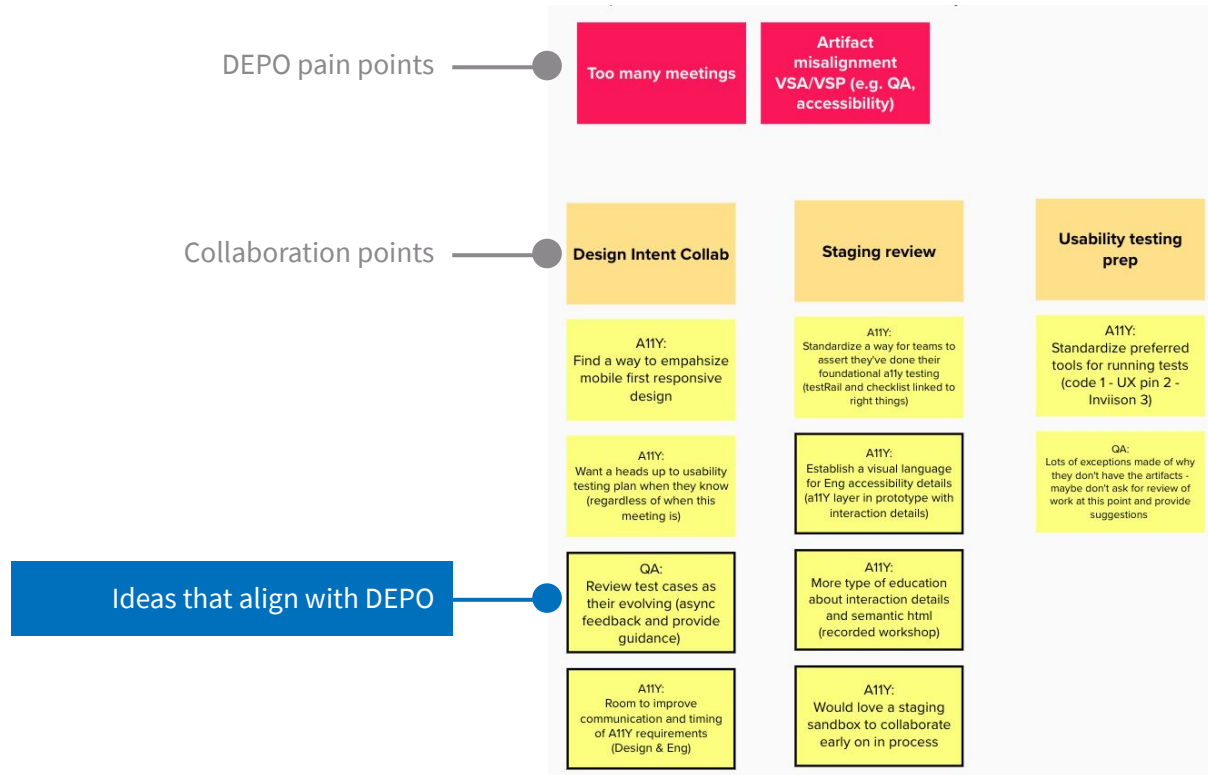
2. How can we address the delta?

Participants chose 5 themes or largest pain points (from reviewer retro) and discussed possible changes



3. How do these align with DEPO?

Of the ideas gathered, participants selected those that also aligned with DEPO's prioritized pain points



VSP COLLABORATION CYCLE WORKSHOPS

Combined ideas

	Project Kickoff	Design/Intent Collaboration	Usability testing prep	Research plan review	UX Request	Analytics request	Contact center review	Staging review	Privacy & security review	Launch!	Accessibility/508 office audit	Postlaunch check in
Design and IA (7/15)	<p>UX: Every project regardless of size or focus has a kickoff</p> <p>Use the kickoff to determine which parts of the collaboration cycle are necessary</p> <p>Combine kickoff and design intent calls for some teams</p>		<p>UX: Coming to a meeting in the process (design team or external usability)</p> <p>UX: How might we integrate content changes into the next design cycle?</p> <p>Design: How might we make this asynchronous?</p>					<p>Staging review: Do Feedback Only</p> <p>UX: Could this be asynchronous?</p> <p>UX: How might we integrate content changes into the next design cycle?</p> <p>Education paths for feedback differences</p>				
Design and Content (7/30)		Content: Don't lose this process meeting	<p>Design: Work could be done in parallel (e.g., research & content development)</p> <p>UX: How might we integrate content changes into the next design cycle?</p> <p>Design: How might we make this asynchronous?</p>									
QA and Accessibility (7/31)		<p>UX: What is the next step in the process? (e.g., research & content development)</p> <p>UX: Review the content in the next meeting (e.g., research & content development)</p> <p>UX: Review the content in the next meeting (e.g., research & content development)</p> <p>UX: Review the content in the next meeting (e.g., research & content development)</p>										
Analytics (8/4)		Analytics: KPIs set up from workshop to set				Analytics: Make the analytics more relevant to the business context						
Contact Center (8/6)		Contact Center: Observe user testing					Contact Center: Be alerted when product is launched				Contact Center: Be alerted when product is launched	Contact Center: Be alerted when product is launched

What we learned

Project Kickoff

- This is a critical point for VSP practice areas to learn about the project
- Should be used to determine which parts of the collab cycle are necessary

Design Intent

- All VSP practice areas would benefit from being involved at this stage
- There is a desire to align design and engineering
- VFS teams would benefit from examples of requested artifacts

Usability Testing Prep

- VFS teams would benefit from clear standards for prototypes
- VSP reviewers want to be kept in the loop after usability testing

Staging Review

- VFS teams would benefit from clear expectations for this collab point
- Consider making this collab point asynchronous
- VSP should be mindful to only give feedback that is required for launch at this point

Next Steps

- Synthesize this research along with VFS research to gather final insights
- Prioritize pain point themes
- Propose “How might we” statements for those themes

Discussion



DIGITAL SERVICE at VA

Thank you.

Final Insights

What we did

- **Grouped** all feedback into themes
- Looked at those themes through the lens of **scalability** and **quality**
- Ideated on how we might solve those pain points
- Prioritized statements to start finding solutions

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?

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?
- better represent QA and Accessibility in the collaboration cycle
- get buy-in with 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)

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*

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?