**Conversation Guide: Search Design Concepts**

*Start recording to the cloud.*

* **I have started recording**. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen and the audio as we talk today? Yes it is okay to record this session.

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Let’s start with a few questions...

* Where do you typically go to get information about VA benefits? Um I would normally start with a google search and try to confirm the information on va.gov website.
* How to confirm: well if the va website has the link that comes up on the google search I would go there to see but if it goes to a forum and talks about what they did and the benefits that have for them. I would try to find something on the actual va site that speaks about those and make sure it is part of a current policy. Make sure it still applies and that I understood it correctly.
* When was the last time that you remember going to the VA.gov website? A couple of years ago I needed to look and see where the vision clinic was in my area and how to setup the appointment there. I think there was something more recent because that was a while ago. We also looked at the whole health link but I ended up talking to the provider at the next appointment to get signed up for that. I don’t think I learned anything new on the website.

**Screen sharing**

What kind of device are you using today? I am on a tablet, an iPad so it is pretty close to a phone but it has a good size screen.

**Task 1: [Submit letter in support of your claim - Form 21-4138] - 5 minutes**

Let's say that in order to support your request for VA benefits, you plan to submit a letter from someone who has first-hand knowledge of your condition. You want to find the form for them to write the letter to support your claim.

Have you ever done this before? This looks familiar, same heading, pretty clear design here. No.

Can you look at the page in your web browser and tell me what you might do--but don't do it yet. What would you expect to happen? I think I would start by going to the upload evidence to support the claim even though I don’t have the form. It might lead to other links or provide information what to add and how to add things to support my claim.

Something else you might try to do: it sounds like I already filed for an increase but if I were going to, I think that link would tell me something about how to submit the letter about my condition.

Is there something else on the page you would try: probably all of the links under disability.

Opening them up and not having what you need, anything else to try: I might go to the top and click search.

Expect: I would expect it to display the text box where I type in a letter or form. You said it was a form. I would type in letter to support a claim.

Now go ahead and try it:

Before you do anything on this page, what do you think you can do here? I got my text box it asks for 1 key word so I type in letter and search that. This talks about how to upload supporting evidence, I don’t see something for what I want here. I could go back because I think I saw a link on the pervious back. I would click find a va form. That might be helpful. It says frequently used forms.

Now you can go ahead with what you wanted to do.

* *RECORD search query typed:*  enter in the key word letter here. (reading page) statement in support of a claim looks like the right one. The link here isn't good but I could download or go to an online took and those links aren’t really working.

**Task 2: [Find VA hospital in Knoxville] - 5 minutes**

Could you please go back to the original browser tab and click on the link for "Task 2"? it's showing the same screen as task 1.

Now could you please find out if there's a VA hospital in Knoxville, Tennessee?

Have you ever looked for a VA hospital in a city before? Um I have. I used google maps and I see here theres a find va location up here. I am not sure, I might have used this before.

Can you look at the page in your web browser and tell me what you might do--but don't do it yet. What would you expect to happen?

Now go ahead and try it:

Before you do anything on this page, what do you think you can do here?

Now you can go ahead with what you wanted to do.

* *RECORD search query typed Knoxville, TN. Am I looking for a specific type of service. It looks like the prototype doesn’t provided the option for facility type here. So I would click search. Okay, (reading page), it is tricky scrolling on my screen. It looks like they are outpatient clinics there.*

**Task 3: [College credit for military service] - 5 minutes**

Could you please go back to the original browser tab and click on the link for "Task 3"?

Now I would like you to see if you can get any college credit for your military service.

Have you ever done this before? No.

Can you look at the page in your web browser and tell me what you might do--but don't do it yet. What would you expect to happen? I guess I would go to search.

Now go ahead and try it:

Before you do anything on this page, what do you think you can do here?

Now you can go ahead with what you wanted to do.

* *RECORD search query typed:*  I am thinking of a search term like college credit. This talks about paying for college tuition, TAP.
* *Thinking:* I think this is not the right search term so I need to type in credit for military service/experience. I think there is college credit for military experience is dependent on the school you go to. You would need to talk to the school that you will be getting the degree from. Maybe it would be more about trying to find a good fit for school. I wouldn’t start on the va website.
* *Instead go through the school:* Yes or I would look for veterans comparing schools and the programs offered there.
* *Anything else to do from here:* select a college. You should want to look at what programs would fit where I was going.
* *Could you go back one page, anything on here that may help:* I might look here under more, it talks about GI bill school and yellow ribbon schools. It would help me choose the right school and degree program. Those links are not working either. I don’t think anything else would be helpful here when looking at a program.

**(if time) Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

*Type into #feedback-backchannel: "Any questions you want me to ask?"*

* What did you *like* about what you've seen today? Finding the form came up pretty quickly and that was straightforward. If I wanted to find a form I could go to search and below the search bar it has how to find specific things. I could see that and go search for forms and not end up with information about loans and other things. Then there was also a link for finding a va location and it was pretty helpful too. It was a good fit for the task.
* Where you found the link: Yes
* Any else on this page that could be helpful: you could go to resource and support. I don’t know what you’d find there
* Expect: there might be anything, a lot of information that I may already know. About things I don’t need to do, it might be able claims. It will probably have everything. If I tap on it, oh it has another search button that can do a targeted search and has a lot of topics. It does have a link for college credits for military service so click on that and see what it tells me.
* Term resources and support means to you: if I was something I really wanted to know and thought it was on here somewhere. I think I would try that. I think I would. I might need some help and it might be the second or third time I looked. I might try to get a few search results then take a break and come back to it after sleeping. Then maybe I would have more time to think and read through a few things and if it seems like its not on point it may lead to what I need. I think I would get there.
* Is there something else we could call that: I think it might be more of me checking the FAQ because there are questions that I don’t always think of and they may not be relevant to me but I see it and like oh year. That could be helpful I should also put that on my shopping list because I may need it or put it on my to do list.
* FAQ there is helpful: yes.
* Impression of grey boxes: it's really that they are search tools, then browsing information by category. You kind of go to a folder or reflection of informational articles. I don’t have a better term than that. It is nice that it is separated because if I wanted to know about burials I could look under there then if it is va account I can go to manage profile. I can browse and get closer to the article I want.
* What if you type into the box: it would give me articles that are linked to down here and the topic. It should help me get there faster. there are links and probably a lot of pages talking about different procedures and programs. I could spend awhile reading about how the va does things and where the applications need to go and then the information I need to fill into the forms.
* If you typed into the box, which results do you expect: I would expect it to be different. it would probably provide a lot of the same things because I think the other search bar provides results form these articles as well. It would not give me links to just a form without the explanation of when and how to use the form. It wouldn’t talk me to other pages/links. It would take me to a page to sign up to va profile.
* In the first task you didn’t find the form then clicked find a form. Thoughts on how you searched it , you didn’t find it but when using find a form you did: well I would think that if I had looked through the top 100 results I would have found the form but that going to find a va form is going to not give me a lot of things that were only slightly related to what I am thinking of.
* Expect find a form to be faster and targeted: Yes.
* Other search had results in there but not at the top Yes.
* What did you *dislike* about what you've seen today? No. I think this is good. Maybe put the word information somewhere in the resources and support box. Although step by step instructions is pretty helpful. Sometimes it can be a little to details so I hesitate to click on it.
* What would you like to *change* about what you've seen today? Under the resources and support, where it says if these two options were flipped and down right under search va.gov where I could have the first option being search entire site or search information resource. Put them under the search bar on the first page, that would keep me from having to load another page. Depending on the Wi-Fi, sometimes it takes time. Often I will have someone in the house on their own zoom call. yeah we can stay home a lot more now.
* Designed yourself which options do you want: I could also put a va forms button that would be good so you don’t need to go to that screen. If you wanted a healthcare application and click va forms button, it would bring up the form. That would be good.
* When you search you want to pick what to search instead of going to separate pages for tools: yes that show I would like it. I know that other people like it to be a little simpler and less cluttered.
* What improvements could make search easier or better for you?
* Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? I don’t think so. I am going back through this other thing we did. I am just thinking when it shows the results here, oh down at the bottom it shows you again. I didn’t notice those again. This time when I scroll down and don’t find the link I want to I can see and say oh maybe I could try these other tools. It reminds me I can use these to find more information.
* Hadn’t scrolled to the bottom until now, might be helpful: Yes

**Thank You and Closing - 1 minute**

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on improving the VA website.

Thank you so much again, and enjoy the rest of your day!