**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

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Let’s start with a few questions...

* Where do you typically go to get information about VA benefits? I normally logon to my HealtheVet and click the links form there.
* When was the last time that you remember going to the VA.gov website? About a week ago
  + What were you looking for? I think I was looking to see where I can upload my vaccination card.
  + Where did you look?
  + Did you find what you were looking for? I think I did but I didn’t upload it yet then I was also looking for an answer for my pending review. It is still in pending review
  + My HealtheVet: yes then it took me to va.gov it seems like I use to have to login to multiple so I ca just login with my HealtheVet which I love because I use to forget the others
  + Find status: it still says pending review.

**Screen sharing**

I would like you to share your screen with me so I can watch you use a specific website. I'll need to see your web browser. If you want to share your whole desktop, first close any other applications that you don't want me to see. *(refer to Screen sharing instructions above, if needed)*

What kind of device are you using today? Laptop.

**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?  I have not

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? Looking at the options I would go to disability and think if I want to find a form I would click upload evidence first to see if the form is there or if that’s where I can upload the letter.

Something else you might try: well let’s see. i can’t think of anything else, I thought secure message but I think I have a coordinator in there because I use it for oncology and my PCP. If I can’t find it I would go to search.

What would you click: upload evidence

Second choice: search va.gov

Now go ahead and try it: Let’s see I would go to find a va form then I would click on this.

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:*  upload letter maybe. Let’s see it is in support of disability. I have already filed a claim correct. I might go to read more under file a disability claim to see if it asks me if I shave supporting letter. Well no because I am looking for a form. Here I am stuck because I don’t know what to search for. I was going to type in upload document but I don’t want to upload yet because I need to download the form to be filled out in support of my claim.
* *How to find it:* let’s see. well I could look for disability forms. I would look for the form statement in support of claim. It would be that one right there.

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

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? No because I am in Oklahoma city and I know the one here I go to. I haven’t searched for on in a different location.

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? Let’s see, I would go to find a va health location. I think I would find a search bar to type the city and it will tell me the one closest to that area.

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. Then facility type. Looks like I found an outpatient clinic then the va clinic. And then the hospital, outpatient clinic, va clinic. I don’t see a hospital but I see lots of clinics.*

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

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

Have you ever done this before? Yes, but it has been 15- 20 years.

Did you get college credit: Yes.

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? Let's see. I would start with the education tab here, to see if I can use my military service for credits, maybe benefits. I think I would either go to service member benefits or the education, maybe even careers and employment because it could let me see what I could apply for credit hours

You would go to education first, which one to click on: None of them seem like it fit unless is click apply for education benefits and it would lead me to discovering which college credits I have for my service

Something else you might try: I would maybe see. I don’t know if it would be under the benefits letters here but I might search for credit hours.

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:* translate military service to college credits. Maybe under TAP, probably what I think it might be. No that would be core requirements. Let me start back at the top and see. I would start with va education and training benefits and hope it leads me to where I can see what my service translates to for college hours.
* *Go ahead:* I am looking to see if I can find something that says time in service transfers to college credits. I was specifically looking for something with college credits. (reading through the page) if I wanted to know my college credits before to see what I have now I would keep looking. Maybe a career scope assessment to find your career path. It might tell you what your rating was and how it would translate to a degree you are going for. By looking at everything here I might call the hotline or as a question online to see or go to more information/recourse. It may tell me what my credits would be for the rating I had.
* *Try to find it yourself without contacting other:* I would go to search again.
* *Tell me what you’d do at this point:* That seems like the most appropriate link so let me go back to training and education. I think I guess i would click about GI bill benefits and maybe it will let me know about credits that translate for the degree I go to. Somehow I thought we could get a copy of our transcripts but I don’t see that either. I would go about benefits then hope there would be a link there that directs me to how to translate time in service to college credits.
* Could you go back to the search for me, anything else at this point: I would search for something else or hit contact us I would think. that’s what I would think. Or education/training, choose va. This might say something about the time in service and how to get the transcript of that which translates to college credits. Seems like before the college actually did it for me. I told them I was in the military and this is what it translates into. That was 15-20 years ago though.
* Anything else: contact us or search for military transcripts to see if that brings up something closer to what I am looking for. This is telling me about home loans, schools, and benefits. The va education and training benefits or the va.gov. that might be it.
* Can you go back one page, anything else that you might try From home page: maybe compare by school but once I picked one I would have that information beforehand. Apply for education benefits I would make sure I was eligible and I think it would tell me my military credits. Careers and employment could be helpful if they could tell me how many credit hours I have then click on education/training and records might have a copy of transcripts I could provide to a college. I think bootcamp was general credit hours. They might have some of that stuff. Just looking here to see if theres something else, you can always go to social media and ask other vets. Recourses and support you could get answers. It looks pretty general it could be for anything.
* What would you find there: probably another search engine for maybe college, financial resources. I see some of the resources for women veteran or new veterans, I am not sure. Or support if you have any questions, maybe a local va office that could help you.
* Go ahead and click on it: oh step by step instructions for va tools. That’s interesting. Here we go, how to get college credits for military service. I should have clicked that first. It seems like what I need, hopefully there would be a link for the transcripts to provide to the college then apply for the program.
* A number of ways to get to it, footer, first time seen: that I recall yes. I always go to the bottom, normally they always have something down here.

**(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? I like that there are multiple ways to get to the same answer and the resources in multiple places. If I don’t see what I am looking for I always go to the bottom. That’s where I found it and how I will go back and look for where I skipped it. that was good that I finally clicked on that. I like the search engine and that you can put in keywords and it pulls a list of possible matches. If you aren’t getting what you need you can alter it or use a question. I haven’t ever tried to do that before.
* What did you *dislike* about what you've seen today? That I couldn’t find it at first for college credits. I know there’s only so much you can put under the descriptions. I find myself click on several things and going back to a previous page or open it in a different tabs so I don’t lose my spot.
* What would you like to *change* about what you've seen today? Well, I do like how it is laid out as far as the header, being able to search. I like going in the bottom to see if theres something closer to what I am looking for. As far as changing it I really like that I am able to sue one login. If I am on my HealtheVet I can just go to check my claim and it takes me to va.gov. I think I had a separate login and it was crazy. Before I have to keep track of 2-3 logins but now I don’t and it’s much more convenient.
* Home page, under white boxes search va.gov. click on it. what do you see: well I like that it asks for a form, resources/support, location and maybe if you were looking for a career. I like the separate boxes so if looking for the location I can do that instead of searching all of va.gov.
* Second time looking for college credit and sued search, did you read the boxes, thoughts: I didn’t read it, at a quick glance I didn’t see anything related to education or something like that. I guess if I would have scrolled down I could have seen more options but I still would have went to the keyword or went to resources/support. it didn’t catch my eye
* When exhausted other options: Yes.
* What to make the link more enticing: I think I was focused on exactly what I was looking for. It has resource and support so I thought maybe it was a duplicate so maybe that’s why it didn’t stand out. resource and support so if looking for the credits here I think it would just come up. I was thinking if I entered it here it would be the same search engine as this one is. If I am searching here I would think I was searching there as well
* Searching anything in resources and support as well: yes and the same for the other one. Knoxville TN I went to the locations because it was specifically what I was looking for
* Don’t bother with general tools when focused on something specifically: exactly. I would think if there were general tools I would think it would be a general tool.
* What improvements could make search easier or better for you? No but now that I know about resources and support I will sue it more when looking for things in the future. Other than finding forms, resources/support, and more search tools would just be additional search engines for more specific items like an appeal decision or a specific school/career.
* For those tools, box above would search those contents: I would think so but I don’t know if it actually is. I guess if I searched here for Oklahoma city jobs I don’t know if it would come up. I would go to va careers first and search.
* One place to search or specific tools that assist in content: I guess that’s how I think of it. if I am looking for the va form here then what’s this, is it a secondary search engine or will it only look at the forms. I don’t know them by heart besides the dd214. I would click up here for the specific form but it would make more sense to search va forms if I didn’t know the number
* Multiple ways to look for something, thoughts: it would just be if I missed it the first time. Instead of the key word here , if I put it here it could bring up so many things but since looking for a location I would click on locations.
* Try that: these are related to the va (reading page) these would be like what I was thinking, all things related to Knoxville TN not a va hospital or clinics.
* More focused from find va location: yes.
* Found the link part way down the page on homepage: yes, I guess cemeteries still popped up on the search engine.
* See anything in the header: find a va location.
* Did not see it first: nope I didn’t see that one.
* Focused on page below: yes the white boxes then scrolled down because it didn’t look like what I needed. I kept going to find a va health facility.
* Other times looking at the bottom, how you normally look at webpages: Yes my brain is backwards. That’s how I have been doing it.
* Any other changes to this page: No I don’t think so I am normally drawn to the white boxes and I keep going down looking for the next things and it tells you what you expect to find then keep going down to the bottom to see what is there.
* Top of the page, links in the top that you noticed or that you would try: theres a contact us which might give me an umber or email. I have been checking my disability and it just says pending review for the past 3 months so my personal next step is to call and ask them if they are able to see anything else since it has been awhile. I got a letter 3 months ago letting me know not to worry they are still working on the claim and haven’t heard anything. Sign in and it asks me how I want to login from there.
* Link to the left : search, that would take me to the same search engine again where I can search for it. I would rather look to see if I can narrow it down then go to search
* Did look at but found below: I went right past it. maybe if it had a text box there instead of clicking search
* Not eye catching: yes did not stand out.
* Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? No I think that’s it. I am successful at finding what I need I am happy with my healthevet using messages, it had a drop down and they are quick to get back to me

**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!