**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? Google.
* When was the last time that you remember going to the VA.gov website? It has been awhile. Probably about a week.
  + What were you looking for? Information on the caregiver program.
  + Where did you look? I searched google for the va caregiver program and I believe it brought me to the va main website. Then I just went from there.
  + Did you find what you were looking for? Yeah pretty much. I needed to do more research to find the person here to get the other number for the next person. It gave me a decent starting point I guess.

**Screen sharing**

What kind of device are you using today? I am using my iPad and connected through my Wi-Fi at home.

**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 don’t like the fact it is taking so long to load and the add to home screen is annoying. 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 would look to where there would be va letters well that would be support for a buddy letter in support for you to file for compensation. Then it would be under disability and upload evidence. You are asking for a buddy letter to support the claim.

Anything else you might try to find the form: um, I think it wouldn’t be under records or education. I would say file for va disability increase is the only thing I can think of unless I could click on contact us and try to talk to them directly if the link didn’t work.

Anything else: I don’t know. Maybe the search bar/tab next to contact us to search directly for buddy letter. That’s what I would look for and if that didn’t work I would just go back to google to see if I can find out what the form would be for the buddy letter or support letter.

Now go ahead and try it:

Before you do anything on this page, what do you think you can do here? I would assume I could search the entire va.gov. all of the resources, any forms, locations, any other things that would be considered under the search tools there.

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

* *RECORD search query typed:* buddy letter.

Because this is a limited prototype, you'll see what happens if you typed something slightly different from what you typed--"letter in support".

* What are your impressions of what you see? Well the results are maxed out at 999. What I searched changed, it shows that it would be listed under benefit letters. Un it also shows other links, okay it gives different options. All of those are the top choices if someone was wanting to search for a support letter/buddy letter. These would be the top options where you would want to start to search for a letter of support
* Most relevant here: Probably the top one, download va benefit letters.
* Looking for the blank form: correct so it wouldn’t be under benefit letters. It doesn’t show up. This has reference, forms, fast letters. That would probably be the closest one. Unless you go to find a va form at the bottom.
* Expect there: the form I am looking for, maybe a list of forms, categorized to give me the availability to find the form I am looking for.
* Try it: okay. so it gives me the option to look for a form my name, key word, or number. If I am a va employee and I know more or less a handful of va numbers I could go in there to find it and print it and be done with it. Being a veteran I can go here and type in the keyword or a form name or as it states a number and it should be able to pull it up. I think that is convenient instead of jumping through hoops to find things when it would just be burning my time.
* How to find the form: I would click the search bar, type in buddy statement letter, and click search to see what comes up. I expect to see what I search for then different result based off of that. The fast theres only 14 results vs 999 on the other page makes me feel better because it means I am closer to what I am looking for. Theres are about grants, the first two. That’s not what I was looking for. At least the top three, the statement in support of claim would be the form I would need in order to end my search and download the form.

**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?

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? I would go to search.

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

* *RECORD search query typed: va clinic in Knoxville TN. Okay. well I searched va clinic Knoxville TN, then Knoxville Tn comes up, that’s not what I searched. That almost makes me want to go in and type in if different results come up. The first few ones, gravesite isn't anything close to what I was looking for, you would think it would be one of the top ones. I didn’t search for prosthetics so it’s a little aggravating.*
* *Assume what you typed and these are the results, what now: I guess I would go to facility locations because I am looking to see if Knoxville TN has a va clinic. It shows on the second link that Knoxville is highlighted so if I were to click on the link, there would be something in regard to Knoxville TN.*
* *What about a hospital: then I click the second link and see if theres a hospital there.*
* *To see the other clinics that are available, anything else you might try: Find va locations or I guess the nationwide gravesite locator because it would tell me what’s located within that state.*
* *Please try find va location: I see the map and I want to click TN and hope it will pull up what I am looking for. It doesn’t so I would need to type in the search bar here, Knoxville TN. Okay so here it shows there are two, well there are serval locations. Theres clinics and it just shows clinics but I like the fact that it shows on a map where they are located so if you live in Sweetwater and you are in the middle there and you want to know which is closer you can zoom in and out. It also gives serval locations.*

**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? Yeah, after I got out. that was years ago.

How did you look for it: I can’t even recall; we are talking 2013.

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 would go to education. I would go to apply for education benefits, that’s the first thing I would do. Then I would look at view payment history I would think.

Expect there: well under payment history it should show the information as for funding for my school, possibly credits, what classes I am taking, have taken, wouldn’t have classes under payment history only those that were paid for as such and any balances I have. My awards as to books and tuition.

Anything to get college credit: no under view payment history

Anywhere else to look: well it wouldn’t be under healthcare. It doesn’t look like it would be under disability. Maybe under service member benefits or education/training. I would say education and training.

Other ways to find this: if the link isn't working I would go to the search bar.

Now go ahead and try it: college credit. I see a vast amount of links for college credit and then you have a lending page. Which is just an ad which is annoying then certifying offices covid 19 fasts. I would have to do a more detailed search to find something more towards what I am looking for. The other link is education and training benefits which I think would show information as to what I am looking for.

Try clicking it: okay. On this page it shows va (reading page), that would be under Gi bill benefits I would think so I would click that, it would fall under college credits to help pay for college.

What now: I would look other education assistance programs. If not then I would call the va and talk to them directly.

Anything else on the page: not that I am seeing. I am starting to get a headache from the screen.

**(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?
* What did you *dislike* about what you've seen today? I don’t like the excessive amount of search results; I know when you give a specific term you expect the keywords to be on top. You expect the va not to have ads. When you login it should be secure so nobody is paying for ads. I like that there is more than one way to find something on the page. If a link doesn’t work or the website is down, there is another way.
* How many results do you expect: 10-15 at max. You are already searching for something specific; you can’t get more specific unless you have the form number.
* If given form number, better results: yes, I would have expected it to be because I have the form I am searching for. I would think it would be on top without any ads. It should be the first link I can click on.
* Done before: no, normally it is the keywords.
* What would you like to *change* about what you've seen today? The ads is a big one. I mean it seems pretty straightforward.
* Can you show me the ad that got in the way: well I would need to go back on this. Right here lenders page for va home loans, it has nothing to do with college credit.
* Believe it is an ad: yes. I searched for college credit and a home loan page comes up. It’s not what I searched for, then covid 19 facts have nothing to do with college credits. It's looking at only one word to supply results to the page.
* Thought of other results on the page: VA education and training benefits, I like the fact it gives you the small paragraph explain which page you are on. Then it provides bullets as highlights to find on the page. Then it gives you the tool on the side, I like that. It gives different tools like an app you can use that you may be able to use offline or use as a reference later on. Then provides an option to call different numbers or ask them a specific question online. I can click as a question online then looking to see what college credits would be available to me based off of my MOS because I want to go to school. I could ask them directly instead of waiting on the phone dealing with the non-sense.
* Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? No it is pretty straightforward.

**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!