**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? Um typically I go to google first then end up on va.gov. recently I met a VSO and asked them questions last week but normally it is internet.
* When was the last time that you remember going to the VA.gov website? Just a few weeks ago I was helping one of my Marines with the GI bill information.
  + Where did you look? It is on va.gov. the calculator and resources. I think I typed the website in directly.
  + Did you find what you were looking for? I did, yes.

What kind of device are you using today? It’s a MacBook Pro, my personal laptop.

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

Could you please click on the link for "Task 1"?

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. I have not, 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? SO in my head it deals within healthcare or disability. As I look under healthcare it doesn’t apply but under disability trying to find letter maybe upload evidence to support the claim would be the closest thing I would thing. This says download letters but I need to provide the form. My gut still says that’s the closest thing. Maybe they would have options once I click on it. I would search if I knew the form or exactly what I was looking for or this drop down menu. Those are the three things I would do.

Now go ahead and try search: oh well this part is good. Find a form. That’s what I’m looking for right. If I don’t know the form name I would click here but if I knew what it was I would type it in. I would go to find a va form.

Before you do anything on this page, what do you think you can do here? This is helpful if I didn’t know what I was looking for. Not those two, is it related to disability. I would probably click this to see if there would be other forms. I would still probably check this one out first.

Expect there: this says file a disability claim, I assume it will give a link to download the forms or will have it willing the website to apply online. Then if other forms are there that need to be provided to others there would be external links.

How to find the link for someone else: va records seem like it's directly related to me. maybe under DoD forms. If I click on this and its as easy as calling someone without an hour wait if I can’t immediately find it under this section or if theres a chat feature where you can ask the robot.

What else could you do: this says va forms. Yeah I guess I would check that out.

Anything else to try on this page: nothing over there. No. probably just try contact us. I don’t really know anything about the form or I would type it in and search it. its for a reference for disability claim.

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

* *RECORD search query typed:*  letter of support for claim. Let's see what pops up. Okay so supportive service for veterans, to me when I read it this says application then renewal. Then statement in support of claim. I think it's that one. If I knew it was for PTSD that one maybe. Okay so we get very specific. Those three so far are the closest. I assume for me I didn’t have any other specifics I would check this one. Its generic statement.

**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"?

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? I have not, 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? So specific a va hospital, when I see find a va location, maybe that’s any location because in my head I think offices as well. I might check that out but I would look if there were any specific ones. Nothing else applies so I would click there then hope for an open for the type of va service I am looking for. Otherwise if I type in Knoxville it will show everything.

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*
  + *Participant's expectation? I think these will be dropdowns on the actual site so I can get specific. The map shows me there and there looks like there are outpatient clinics and va clinics. They are all medical clinics. Wonderful.*
* *Clicked link , have you sued it before: no I have never used the link before*
* *Tried because nothing in the boxes: right.*

**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? I have not, 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? Under education, (reading page) maybe closest would be apply but not really. I think if I didn’t see what I needed underneath. I would think there would be a general education page with more options. If I don’t see it there I would just search for it.

Now go ahead and try it: college credit for service.

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:* college credit for service. (reading page) I don’t think so far I am finding what I am looking for. Let's make sure theres nothing down here. Yeah no. I might check the second page of hits before I would try to research with it worded differently or contact and ask. I feel like its on milconnect to get my service transcript. I feel like some of that it is up to the college if they will provide credit for what you did in the military.
* *Might want to search, go to second page, anything else you’d try:* I might click on one or two of these to see where it takes me. looking at the urls. This may be a general educational page so it might be under there. I could try it. (reading page) maybe more information and resources. I feel like what we are talking about its not directly related to that. Anything about the GI bill I would rule out. not the tool. That’s all related to paying for them. VA education forms and fact sheets, maybe there would be something there or other helpful resource link like this one. Other than that I am not sure where else I would look or search for getting credits.

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

Scrolled to the bottom, anything there: maybe this other link, unless I went to resources and support.

What might you get to from here: these four, I imagine resources and support, if clicked it would be a webpage with FAQ or a dropdown box of FAQ or categories looked for. That’s all I envision in my head.

Would that be helpful here or not what looking for: if nothing here jumps out at me then I would go down here because when talking about college credit it wouldn’t be a form. In my head I wouldn’t go there naturally to find it, then location nothing and then these four down here don’t apply. At least to me they don’t.

Click it: (reading page) I would leave it on resources and support to see the responses and if it wasn’t good I would change the toggle. Well that was perfect. Yup good. I would just click on that then.

Bottom of search page, saw boxes but went back up to refine the search, thoughts: that might be a subconscious bias in my own brain that the stuff at the bottom being a last resort other than going first. That could just be me, I cant say that everyone thinks that way. I am trying to think if it were at the top if I would still click on it. I don’t know.

Maybe if it were further up: possibly if it was at the top I would just go here to see. It makes sense now with FAQ and step by step. I was just stubborn trying to find it on my own. This is the first thing you see so its natural to try to find it and if nothing is there then I am in the wrong place or it doesn’t exist.

Where would you think be more like to click for resources and support: Yeah, I guess I realize the boxes here are bigger, theres no reason they can be smaller and fit in the white space so yeas you can search here or click these buttons. Maybe stick them there or even if it was a s simple as this section is moved to the top under search va and option to search yourself below. That way if you thought based on the search filter , vets may not find what they look for with keywords then at least these are at the forefront to click here before you do anything else. It is also interested that the algorithm when I did it under this tab it immediately popped up because it makes sense. Maybe because it is resources where I had the radio button. Once I got to this one a search it popped up.

Expected to find that in the search results originally: I would have hoped to.

Assume it would be there: right, maybe that link is on the second or third but the odds to go to 3 or 4 is slim to none.

Second page but that’s it: yes.

Looking at boxes, decided the only one could be resources and support, is there something that we could do with the box to make it clearer: Um, I think I am looking for education resources so just seeing recourses is very general. I initially didn’t go there because I didn’t know if it was specific for education or a board category for everything in the va. this is obviously a board category, find a va location. Va forms is broad. So I assumed recourse and support was board so I first tried the search feature because I knew I was only talking about education.

Box made you want to click it: cues are helpful. I really do. If it is an exhausted FAQ page it is good and hyperlinks to other text, links, and programs so that in itself is a good tool and step-by-step instructions is good but what drew me in was FAQ.

 What are your impressions of what you see?

What would you do now?

**(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? The initial webpage we started at was simple, the original four boxes is broken apart into categories that make sense. Simple and streamline so I like the main page. I like that if I can’t see what I am looking for there’s a search button to get what I am looking for. Broken apart nicely that it makes sense. There’s enough, 4-5 under each isn't overwhelming. It’s enough that you can browse quick and if not search for what I want. In my head for some reason I could see where this is something you click on and it takes you to the web page like education, where you can see an extensive list of FAQ or things to do if these aren’t what you need.
* Click title and see longer list, made sense to you: yes or takes me to the main page. Whatever it could look like.
* Seen page like that before: I am imagining it. I don’t know if they have a main education page. I use the comparison tool a lot I don’t know if there is a roll up. Even this for records I imagine there is more. Theres only 5 things but I imagine theres more than that and then if it is hyperlinked there would be a longer list.
* What did you *dislike* about what you've seen today? I don’t think so. This location one is very typical or standard of what I have seen on external pages. This is spot on I don’t think theres anything to change or that I don’t like. I think this task was hard for me because I haven’t don’t it before but I don’t see anything I would change.
* From first page you clicked on search and instead you went to find va form: right.
* Why there instead of typing: I have a feeling because the task itself. Just because to me forms can be specific in how they are names so I could search and not get what I need so this would be an exhaustive list. I don’t know the actual number so if I just search it won’t populate because its not the technical name whereas I think this will give me a list
* Form you found, if you instead typed in the box, would you find it: I doubt that it is different content, at least I hope it's not different. I just don’t trust my ability to word it how it needs to be worded.
* Not confident for a search query but va form seems to be more likely: right
* What would you like to *change* about what you've seen today? Um, hmm. No I mean the search feature is in two spots in case I am stuck. At the top and this one down here.
* Thoughts it would do, same as above: I hope it would do the same thing. That’s what I would expect it to do.
* Notice it before: Yes I did notice it before. Because this drew my eye to it but I definitely like it up here better because I am more likely to click on it.
* Used website before, have you used search before: that’s a good question. I can’t say for certain that I have used it on here before. I would go to google then go from there.
* Google gets you to the right place: Yup
* 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? No, this worked great. This worked fine, provided feedback on these. That was too easy. The layout is great and it’s what I expect. No I think we covered it all.

**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!