

A dark blue background featuring a faint, large American flag pattern with stars and stripes. Overlaid on this is the VA DIGITAL SERVICES logo, which consists of the words "VA DIGITAL SERVICES" in a white, sans-serif font.

VA DIGITAL SERVICES

Brand Research Report

VA | Atlas | frog

SEPTEMBER, 2017



VA | 

The VA and frog logos are positioned side-by-side. The VA logo is on the left, consisting of the letters "VA" in a bold, sans-serif font next to a small eagle icon. The frog logo is on the right, consisting of the word "frog" in a stylized, lowercase font next to a small frog icon.

INTRODUCTION

Through quantitative and qualitative research, we explored where VA and DoD's brand experience is excellent and where it can be improved.

We distilled our findings into key opportunity areas that support recommendations for a streamlined pathway to access and manage military service benefits.

Contents

- 02 Introduction
- 07 Research Findings
- 08 Qualitative Findings
- 45 Quantitative Findings
- 53 Opportunities
- 64 Recommendations
- 71 Appendix - Insights, Themes, Opportunities

Brand Discovery Strategy

Challenge

VA and DoD are deeply committed to serving the needs of current and former military personnel with the same integrity and excellence that they served our country. The digital experiences they provide for service members, Veterans, VSOs, and caregivers/advocates are currently disjointed and not meeting their multitude of needs.

Objective

VA and frog worked to explore users' awareness, perception, understanding, and identification with VA and DoD digital services to evaluate where brand experience is excellent and where and how it could be improved.

We aimed to gather insights around 4 key areas of investigation

1

Awareness

What level of awareness and perception do users have of VA and DoD's digital services? How do users find out about and understand them?

2

Use

How do they currently use VA and DoD online properties? What has been users' experience with these services to date?

3

Identity

How do users feel about naming of services and how they apply to their own self-perceptions?

4

Motivations & Needs

What are users motivations and needs? What do they expect from VA and DoD's digital services and how do they define the ultimate experience?

Quantitative & Qualitative Research

Our brand strategy recommendation combines our findings from both a quantitative survey and qualitative design research. Quantitative research data provides excellent insight into how people behave; qualitative design research seeks to understand the motivations behind that behavior.

Quantitative Research

- What people say
- Understanding behavior
- Validation
- Large samples
- Measure needs/attitudes

Qualitative Research

- What people do
- Understand motivations
- Exploration
- Small samples
- Empathize with need/ability/aspiration



Research Findings

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

We conducted field research in the D.C. area with a total of 14 participants that included Veterans, Caregivers, Active Service Members and VSO representatives.

INSIGHT 1

Veterans are confused by the fragmented and complex VA benefits ecosystem.



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Veterans are confused by the fragmented and complex VA benefits ecosystem.

Veterans find it frustrating and unnecessary to remember long usernames and passwords for so many different sites.

Slow processing (or complete lack of response) result in negative perceptions of VA as an organization.

Veterans feel that the current experience of navigating VA benefits is unnecessarily complicated and complex.

There is not a clear route or path for Veterans to find out about the benefits available to them.

INSIGHT 1



“

EZRA, VETERAN

“Make it simple. The world is at a high pace right now.”



“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“A lot of those sites are needlessly complex and not based on the user.”



“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“We give them a little checklist of things they need to do — it’s not VAs, it’s ours.”

INSIGHT 1

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“You have to come up with the 16-digit passwords, then you have a different username.”

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“It's a necessary evil.” (Referring to **eBenefits & MyHealtheVet**)

“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“Even I flounder on **eBenefits**. I don't know what to do next.”

“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“A few years ago, I got ahold of a VA specialist and they said ‘Oh we'll help you do it, so I filled out paperwork, went to VA and it took about a year and a half before I got disability.’”

“

ADRIAN, VSOR

“I came across **vets.gov** by accident online but I don't use it.”

“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“**TRICARE** is not helpful or easy to use. [I] have to figure out which of the seven websites and obscure passwords I need to use.”



“
It’s like some big secret, and if
you do find out about it, they
make it so hard you don’t want
to deal with it.

EZRA, VETERAN

Because Veteran's experiences are unique, they feel best served by people who are knowledgeable and experienced in navigating VA services.



Because Veteran's experiences are unique, they feel best served by people who are knowledgeable and experienced in navigating VA services.

The transition process is important and informational, but requires being proactive and vigilantly engaged.

Talking to someone else to learn about benefits is an easy and natural first step for service members and Veterans.

Benefits navigation should include guided walk-through assistance and needs assessment.

INSIGHT 2



“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“A digital experience is not the best
to walk Veterans through things....
you need to talk to someone.”



“

EZRA, VETERAN

“I had to do the research [to
learn about benefits.]”



“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“Word of mouth is a lot easier
than digging around in all
these websites.”

INSIGHT 2

“

JIM, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“I have never given any thought to thinking about **TRICARE** benefits after I leave the military.”

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“TAP is something they have to do to check boxes, they don't seem concerned with actually helping people.”

“

JEFF, VETERAN

“TAPs is very much like: I need to tell this person these three things, and once I do, they check the box and that's it.”

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“It would be great if the person running TAP had firsthand experience.”

“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“I think TAPS does a great job, so I paid a lot of attention.”

“

ADRIAN, VSOR

“They should present **eBenefits** at TAPs and have people sign up then.”

INSIGHT 2

“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

[When he separates, he plans to seek someone and ask them to guide him through the processes.]

“

ADRIAN, VSOR

[**Explore VA** is a] “great tool.” [It shows videos for help to navigate]
“Real good tool.”

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“If it says it’s there, it better be there.”

“

BETTY, CAREGIVER

“You need to do a population demographic to see who would be using this - you may need two different ones - your young Vets know how to do all this.”

“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“Needs to be interactive to explain to the Vets what to do.”

“

During TAPs, a guy from VFW came in and said ‘I am willing to help you and this is the best time to do this,’ but what if I didn’t follow-up with them or didn’t already know how important it was?

DAVID, VETERAN

Veterans are unaware of most of the sites available to them, and feel the names are redundant and don't help them figure out where to go.



Veterans are unaware of most of the sites available to them, and feel the names are redundant and don't help them figure out where to go.

Veteran awareness of VA digital properties is based on word of mouth (NCO, briefings, VSOs, recruiters, etc.).

Having so many different digital properties is redundant and confusing to Veterans.

There is little awareness of the VA digital properties and where/how to find them.

Some of the names of VA digital properties are misleading or alienating.

The names of VA digital properties don't tell Veterans anything about what their purpose is.

INSIGHT 3



“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“Heres one of my issues with VA - I have **VA**, I have **eBenefits**, I have **MyHealtheVet**, I have **Vets.gov**. How am I supposed to know where to go?”



“

BETTY, CAREGIVER

“I don't look at is as a name to catch my attention, none of the names mean anything to me.”



“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“It seems like you're getting very redundant with all these sites.”

INSIGHT 3

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“The main **VA site** is the only one I would probably trust.”

“

DAVID, VETERAN

[Most aware of **VA.gov** because he gets all services through them — but he's also unsure of everything they do]

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“Even if **Vets.gov** changed to Veterans.gov, I still wouldn't have a clue what their purpose is.”

“

JIM, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“I know what it is, but nothing is telling me that it's Veteran-focused... wouldn't know what that is.” (**eBenefits**)

“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“[I am] aware of **MyHealtheVet** from doing medical records online.”

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“Jesus Christ! What is this for?!” (**NRD**)

INSIGHT 3

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“There's no rhyme or reason.. you have seen the app Map My Ride? See the theme? Map my, map my, map my — I see 'Map My' and I know they're under that company.”

“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“I'd guess all of these have a fair amount of overlap.” (All the VA sites)

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“[**MyHealtheVet**] looks like they're trying to sell me cars...**eBenefits** sounds like one of those places on late night TV offering tax help.”

“

JIM, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“I prefer names with dot gov because it's more trustworthy.”

“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“If you're going to have **ExploreVA**, then get rid of these others.”

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“What is the purpose of **Vets.gov**? What is it for?”

“
Having 47,000 sites is just
confusing, half of them don’t
even look official.

JEFF, NON-VA VETERAN

INSIGHT 4

Veterans are proud of their earned title, but acknowledge that it is a loaded, politicized term.



Veterans are proud of their earned title, but acknowledge that it is a loaded, politicized term.

Reasons for joining the military are varied, and seem to not be influenced by benefits.

I think VA healthcare should just be privatized - I have confidence in their ideas, it's putting them into practice that's challenging.

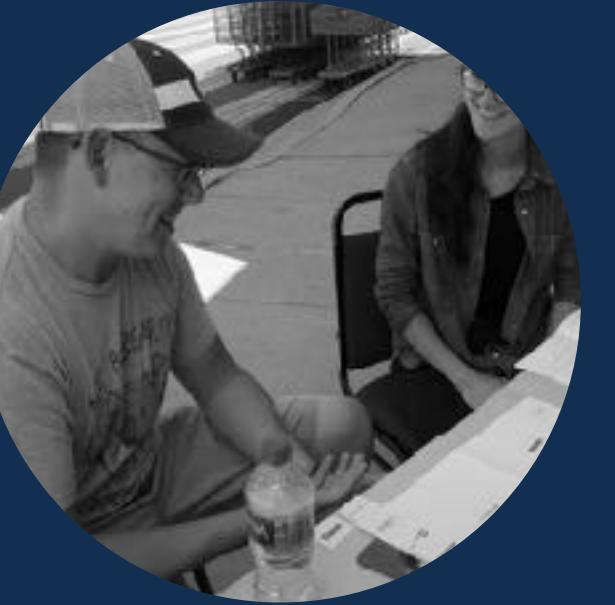
Active Service Members and Veterans alike are proud of the Veteran title, but don't feel that everyone has earned the associated character traits that come with it.

Many of Veteran's negative impressions of VA are based on second-hand experiences or accounts.

"Vets" is a nickname that sounds casual and lazy.

Veterans and Service Members feel that VA owes them empathy and quality care in exchange for their service and sacrifice.

INSIGHT 4



“

JIM, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“‘Vets’ is a more social, casual term — like that Vet humor site.”



“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“I would say I’d rather not be called a ‘Vet’ — it seems less respectful.”



“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“Veterans are people who have served. Heroes are people who have done exceptional things.”

INSIGHT 4

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“Someone who has served and
done so honorably.”
(Definition of Veteran)

“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“Veterans are often associated with
heroes. This bothers me. It's overused
and loses meaning.”

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“I don't like being called a vet
because it's slang it's lazy.”

“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“I would assume **Vets.gov** is for
connecting with others.

“

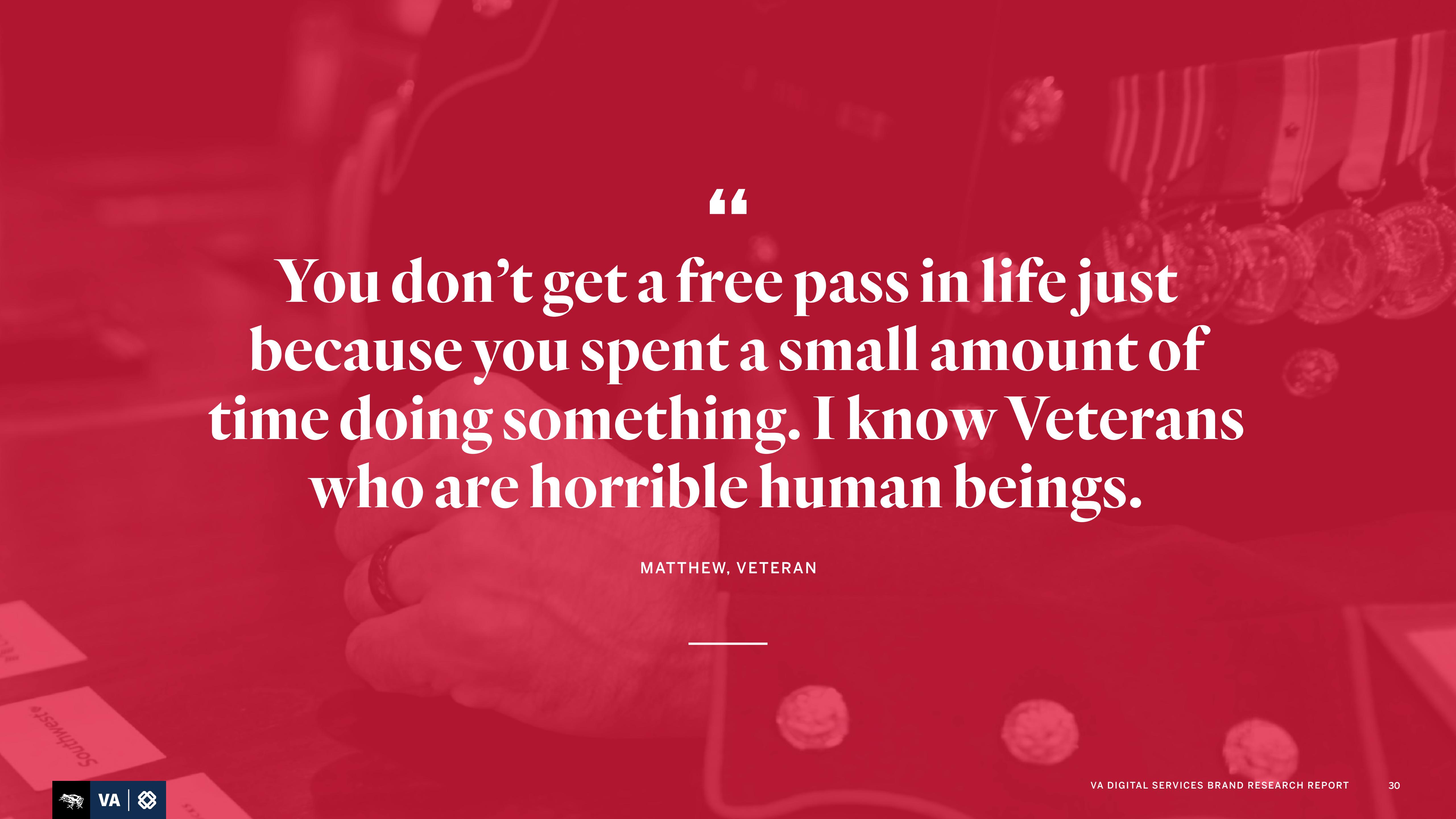
EDUARDO, VETERAN

“VA will be good if I stop hearing from
people who have trouble getting help
and care through them.”

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“You're not there when I wake up in
the morning—you're not there when
I go to sleep — I have PTSD.”



“
You don’t get a free pass in life just
because you spent a small amount of
time doing something. I know Veterans
who are horrible human beings.

MATTHEW, VETERAN

While Veteran perks are appreciated,
ultimately Veterans just want good,
customer-focused service.

While Veteran perks are appreciated, ultimately Veterans just want good, customer-focused service.

Veterans favor and trust companies that cater to or are owned by Veterans.

Veterans want the services they are using to care about them, and show that they're responsive to their needs.

Veterans and Service Members expect the same level of customer service from VA as they receive elsewhere - they want to be treated like a customer, not a Veteran.

Veterans recognize when companies have clear values and take action on them through their products, services, and customer service.

Companies that have clear lines of communication and seem to run efficiently have built a positive reputation among Veterans and Service Members.

Updates and changes to service and user experience are tolerated as long as Veterans can still find everything in one place, with the same login.

INSIGHT 5



“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“The customer service is unbelievable - you get on with someone right away and they treat you like royalty - you can tell they're a customer service-focused company.” (USAA)



“

STEPHEN, VETERAN

“Sometimes they don't treat you as a customer, they treat you as something considerably less.”



“

EZRA, VETERAN

“If there was one thing VA services could do better it would be customer service.”

INSIGHT 5



“

EZRA, VETERAN

“A lot of these places, they service the Vets real good. They cater — give 25% off on the shoes.” (Foot Locker)



“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“USAA seems to care because they’re responsive, courteous and useful.”



“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“I like Southwest because they think outside the box - they only do what works — I think that the VA needs to be practical.”

INSIGHT 5

“

JEFF, VETERAN

“You don't go there to get the cheapest rate, they thank you for your service and I've never been questioned.” (USAA)

“

STEPHEN, VETERAN

“I used USAA's website...they've stayed current with the security issues but have not changed the way the site looks and the access is the same.”

“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“They're horrible, horrible! they don't pay for anything. I had them for many years and had a home problem and they didn't give me anything so I dumped them -- disgusting!” (USAA)

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“The number they gave me ten years ago is still valid.” (USAA)

“

EZRA, VETERAN

Nike - “They don't man the equipment, they equip the man.”

“

I don't care if you call me “Sir”
if you can't help me.

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER



Veterans expect to find information about VA benefits & services in one intuitive place that organizes the information in a consumable way.



Veterans expect to find information about VA benefits & services in one intuitive place that organizes the information in a consumable way.

Veterans expect to find all the information they need about VA benefits and services on [VA.gov](#), even if that links off to other sites.

As long as it makes sense, it doesn't matter where the sites are and what they're called.

Veterans expect services to be connected and consistent.

Veterans are ok with going to different sites for different services, but expect there to be clear paths between and that they'll feel like the same place/same organization.

Veterans would find accessing benefits easier if they could go to one place to do so.

Veterans think that using eBenefits as the primary portal for accessing benefits makes sense because of the name and their current usage.

INSIGHT 6



“

JEFF, VETERAN

“You can call it **eBenefits**, but it should be on the **VA site**.”



“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“I’d go to the **VA page** to find all of these things.”



“

ADRIAN, VSOR

“**VA.gov** is a one stop shop and simple for Veterans.”

INSIGHT 6

“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“It should all be on [the **VA site**] because that seems like the logical place to look for info about VA.”

“

ADRIAN, VSOR

“The best VA site is **VA.gov** - its the first start for info - for healthcare, etc.”

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“The **main VA site** is the only one I would probably trust.”

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“So split between two - all my benefits or all my health.” (**eBenefits** and **MyHealtheVet**)

“

ADRIAN, VSOR

“The **VA site** is very helpful” - he pulls benefit info and manuals from it.

INSIGHT 6



“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“[I’m not for] multiple websites - running people around and spending more time online.”



“

EZRA, VETERAN

“If you do this right here, why not combine all of those together, or better yet, eliminate all three of them and make one, but they have these components in it.”



“

DAVID, VETERAN

eBenefits: “From my experience, that’s my portal for all of this. That’s my individual portal for VA services. It doesn’t work that well, though.”

INSIGHT 6

“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“[I] like the ability to link all appointments and see things in the same place.”

“

MATTHEW, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“It would depend on how easy the website was to navigate. We’re basing this on Veterans who maybe don’t have the skillsets to go through and navigate correctly and they’ll get frustrated and leave if it’s not easy.” (One site)

“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“I’d go wherever to do it, as long as it’s easy to use.”

“

JIM, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“**eBenefits** sounds like where I would go to access all the benefits: jobs, medical, etc.” but would prefer it be a “dot gov.”

“

SARAH, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER SPOUSE

“It seems like a lot of sites. Put it all in one place and it might be easier. Since you can probably get to the same place from only one of these.”

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“If one of the existing VA and DoD digital service names was to be used, I would choose **eBenefits**, because I’m used to it.”



“
It would be good to have these in one place, but it still has to be easy for the Vets to get on there and find something... not everyone has a PHD like me.

MATTHEW, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

Insights Summary

1

Veterans are confused by the fragmented and complex VA benefits ecosystem.

2

Because Veteran's experiences are unique, they feel best served by people who are knowledgeable and experienced in navigating VA services.

3

Veterans are unaware of most of the sites available to them, and feel the names are redundant and don't help them figure out where to go.

4

Veterans are proud of their earned title, but acknowledge that it is a loaded, politicized term.

5

While Veteran perks are appreciated, ultimately Veterans just want good, customer-focused service.

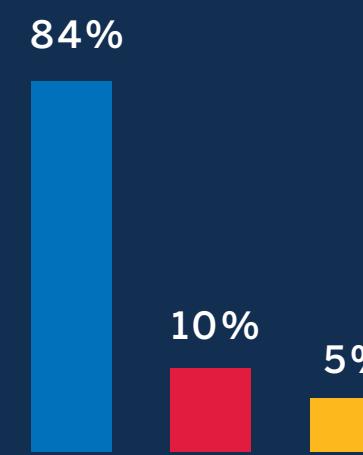
6

Veterans expect to find information about VA benefits & services in one intuitive place that organizes the information in a consumable way.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

We administered an online quantitative survey to Veterans, Caregivers, Active Service Members and VSO representatives and received over 3,400 responses over the course of one week.

A majority of responses came from Veterans, age 49 and under, with high levels of comfort using the internet, and who have interacted with VA within the last month.



MOSTLY VETERANS

84% of responses came from Veterans, 10% from active duty, and 5% from reserve/guard, with less than 1% from VSO representatives and caregivers.

79%

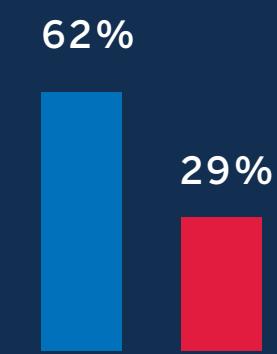
49 AND UNDER

79% of those surveyed were age 49 and under.

81%

COMFORT WITH WEB

81% said they do a lot on the internet, including paying bills and purchasing or registering for things.



INTERACTION WITH VA

62% said they interacted with VA less than a month ago, 29% said between a month and a year ago, and 9% said they either have never interacted with VA, or it has been over a year.

Participants identify strongly with their branch and feel positively about the term “Veteran,” with 97% saying they either do, or expect to identify as a Veteran.

83%

BRANCH

83% of those surveyed identify strongly with their branch.

87%

TERM “VETERAN”

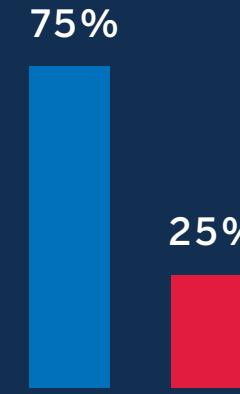
87% feel positively about the term “Veteran”.

97%

IDENTIFICATION

97% say they either do, or expect to identify as a Veteran.

Most participants have an understanding of what benefits are, and many feel that benefits earned through military service have made a large difference in their lives.



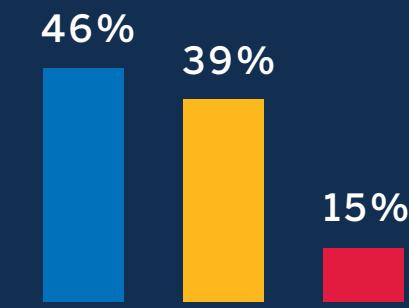
BENEFITS UNDERSTANDING

Most participants (75%) have an understanding of what benefits are available to them while the remaining 25% did not know or identified a single type like home loans or educational support.

83%

POSITIVE IMPACT

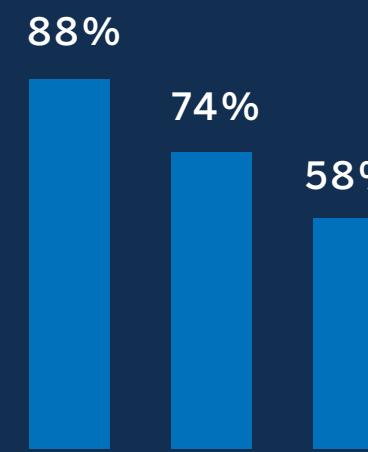
83% feel that benefits have made a large difference in their lives.



ALIGNMENT WITH PERSONAL VALUES

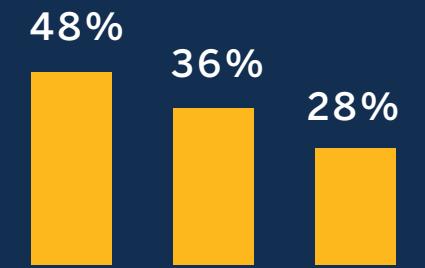
While roughly half of Veterans (46%) agree that VA represents their values, 39% are indifferent, and 15% disagree.

Awareness is clearly tied to use, which is highest for eBenefits, MyHealtheVet, and VA.gov.



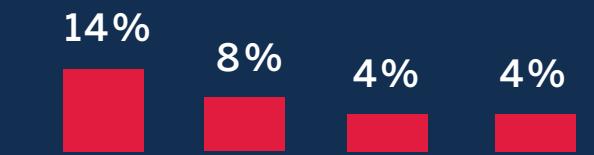
HIGH USE & AWARENESS

Awareness/use is high for **eBenefits** (88%), **VA.gov** (74%), and **MyHealtheVet** (58%)



MEDIUM USE & AWARENESS

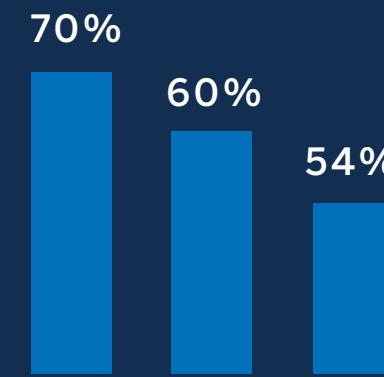
Awareness/use is in-between for **TRICARE** (48%), **milConnect** (36%), and **Vets.gov** (28%)



LOW USE & AWARENESS

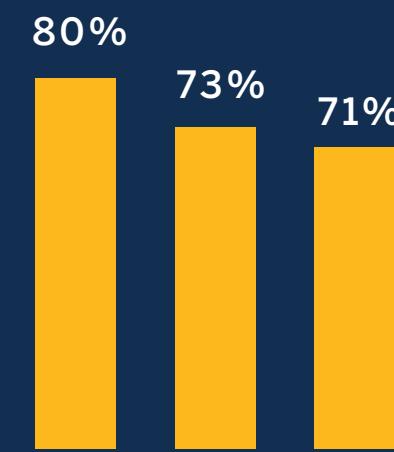
Awareness/use is low for **Defense.gov** (14%), **VA** (8%), **Mobile Apps** (4%), **Explore** (4%) and **NRD** (4%),

Participants' experience with the digital properties they've used is mostly neutral to somewhat positive, and over half reported that they couldn't easily find benefits information online.



POSITIVE

Responses were similar in the “Somewhat Positive” and “Very Positive” categories. 70% of participants rated their experience with eBenefits positively. MyHealtheVet followed, with 60% of participants reporting a positive experience, followed by VA.gov at 54%.



NEUTRAL

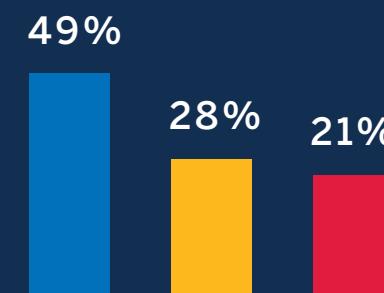
User experiences with the other sites they've used, however, were primarily neutral, with NRD leading at 80% neutral experience, followed by ExploreVA (73%), and VA Mobile Apps (71%).

47%

CAN'T FIND INFORMATION EASILY

47% of participants don't agree with the statement, “I am able to easily find information online to accomplish what I need to do for my military service benefits.”

Almost half of participants were in favor of one website, while 20% didn't care. Over half agreed that current and former service members should receive help from one organization.



ONE WEBSITE

49% of those surveyed said that they would prefer to file a health claim and apply for a home loan on one website, while 28% felt that there should be one for health care, and one for home loans while, 21% didn't care.

62%

SAME ORGANIZATION

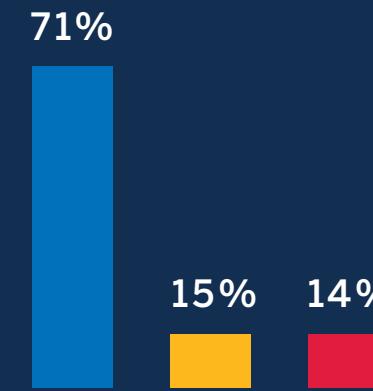
62% agreed that a former military service member should receive help for healthcare from the same organization as a current military member.

3%

SEPARATE SITES

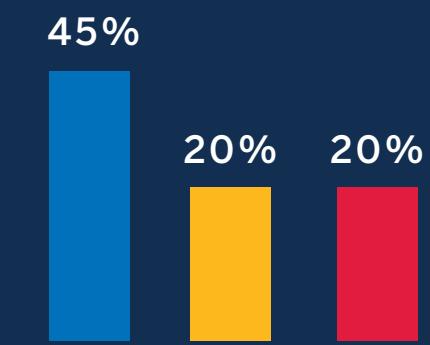
Only 3% of those surveyed said that they would want two websites: one for current service members, and one for former service members.

If all military benefits were accessed on one website, participants do not think it matters what it is called. When asked to choose the one place from a list of existing websites, most preferred VA.gov and eBenefits or said it does not matter.



NAME DOESN'T MATTER

71% said that if all benefits for current and former military members were accessed on one website, it does not matter what that website is called. 15% were indifferent, and 14% said the name does matter.



SELECTED EBENEFITS

When asked to choose from a list of existing websites, 45% of those surveyed would prefer to access benefits on eBenefits, 20% would prefer VA.gov, and 20% said it does not matter.”

53%

WANT ACCESS VIA VA.GOV

When asked as a follow-up, however, if they would want to access all their military benefits through VA.gov , 53% said yes and 33% are indifferent.

Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY 1

Guide Veterans through the benefits experience by establishing unity & simplicity among VA & DoD digital services.

47%

CAN'T FIND INFORMATION EASILY

47% of participants did not agree with the statement that finding information on military service benefits online is easy.

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“It's like some big secret, and if you do find out about it, they make it so hard you don't want to deal with it.”

Veterans are not aware of many VA & DoD digital services and had mixed reviews with those they do utilize. They desire expert guidance to navigate the digital properties because it is too difficult to find the information on their own. VA has the opportunity to create clear paths between services using consistent and consolidated nomenclature and design language to help users access their benefits experience confidently, and self-sufficiently.

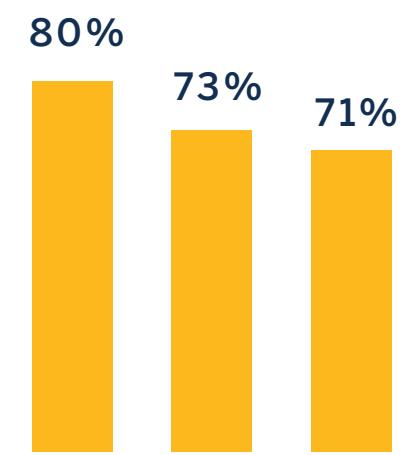


OPPORTUNITY 1

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“Heres one of my issues with VA - I have VA, I have eBenefits, I have MyHealtheVet, I have Vets.gov. How am I supposed to know where to go?”



“

NEUTRAL EXPERIENCE

User experiences with the sites they've used were primarily neutral, with NRD leading at 80% neutral experience, followed by ExploreVA (73%), and VA Mobile Apps (71%).

PHILLIP, VSOR

“We give them a little checklist of things they need to do — it's not VAs, it's ours.”

OPPORTUNITY 2

**Respect the term “Veteran,”
but do not employ it beyond its
label of recognition.**

87%

TERM “VETERAN”

87% feel positively about
the term “Veteran”.

“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“Veterans are often associated with
heroes. This bothers me. It’s
overused and loses meaning.”

While most former and active service members identify or plan to identify with the term “Veteran,” they feel that it is tied up in politics, stereotypes and in their own personal experiences. VA has the opportunity to leverage the positive connotation of “Veteran” and its association with military branches to connect and empathize with service members, while refraining from any nicknames like “Vets”.



OPPORTUNITY 2

97%

IDENTIFICATION

92% say they either do, or expect to identify as a Veteran.

83%

BRANCH

83% of those surveyed identify strongly with their branch.

“

EDUARDO, VETERAN

“I would say I'd rather not be called a 'Vet' — it seems less respectful.”

“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“You don't get a free pass in life just because you spent a small amount of time doing something. I know Veterans who are horrible human beings.”

“

JIM, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“‘Vets’ is a more social, casual term — like that Vet humor site.”

OPPORTUNITY 3

Showcase VA's commitment to serving Veterans by treating them like customers at every touchpoint.

83%

BENEFITS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

83% of those surveyed agree that benefits earned through military service have made a large difference in their lives.

“

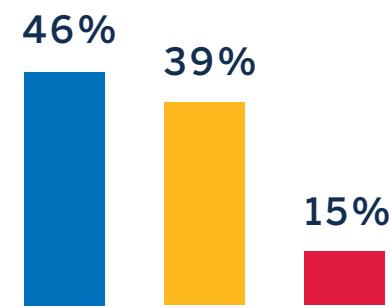
STEPHEN, VETERAN

“Sometimes they don't treat you as a customer, they treat you as something considerably less.”

Many Veterans have felt the positive impact of VA benefits on their lives, however, their expectations for great customer service have not been met. VA can reflect quality customer service through user-centered approaches to streamline their digital services experience, build more positive relationships with Veterans and increase use.



OPPORTUNITY 3



VA ALIGNMENT WITH VALUES

While roughly half of Veterans (46%) agree that VA represents their values, 39% are indifferent, and 15% disagree.

“

EZRA, VETERAN

“If there was one thing VA services could do better, it would be customer service.”

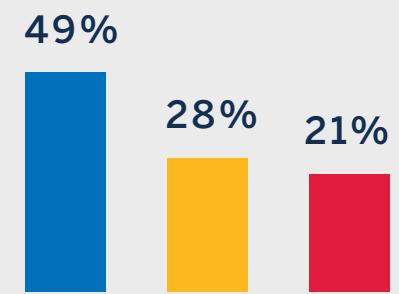
“

CALEB, ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER

“USAA seems to care because they’re responsive, courteous and useful.”

OPPORTUNITY 4

Give users of VA & DoD digital service a single access point for all the information they need, in a place that they expect & recognize.



ONE WEBSITE

49% of those surveyed said that they would prefer to file a health claim and apply for a home loan on one website, while 28% felt that there should be one for health care, and one for home loans while, 21% didn't care.

“

PHILLIP, VSOR

“I’m not for multiple websites - running people around and spending more time online.”

Veterans expect to find all information about VA benefits and services on VA.gov and eBenefits. VA has the opportunity to preserve VA.gov as an intuitive front door while continuing to improve the eBenefits user experience for managing benefits and maintaining consistency with users' mental models.



OPPORTUNITY 4

53%

WOULD ACCESS VIA VA.GOV

When asked specifically whether they would like to access military benefits through VA.gov, 53% said yes, and 33% were indifferent.

45%

CHOSE BENEFITS

When asked to choose from a list of existing websites, 45% of those surveyed would prefer to access to benefits on eBenefits, 20% would prefer VA.gov, and 20% said it didn't matter.

“

MATTHEW, VETERAN

“It should all be on [VA.gov] because that seems like the logical place to look for info about VA.”

“

JEFF, VETERAN

“You can call it eBenefits, but it should be on VA.gov.”

“

DAVID, VETERAN

“From my experience, [eBenefits is] my portal for all of this. That's my individual portal for VA services. It doesn't work that well, though.”

Opportunities Summary

◆ Unity & Simplicity

Guide Veterans through the benefits experience by establishing unity & simplicity among VA & DoD digital services.

◆ Customer Service

Showcase VA's commitment to serving Veterans by treating them like customers at every touchpoint.

◆ Terminology

Respect the term "Veteran," but do not employ it beyond its label of recognition.

◆ Single Access-Point

Give users of VA & DoD digital services a single access point for all of the information they need in a place that they expect & recognize.

IN SUMMARY

VA has the opportunity to enhance the user experience and perception of VA as a whole through one consistent, service-minded, and consolidated digital portal.



Recommendations

OVERVIEW

Incrementally transition each existing self-service tool into a unified and connected information and benefits management system with VA.gov as the primary access point.

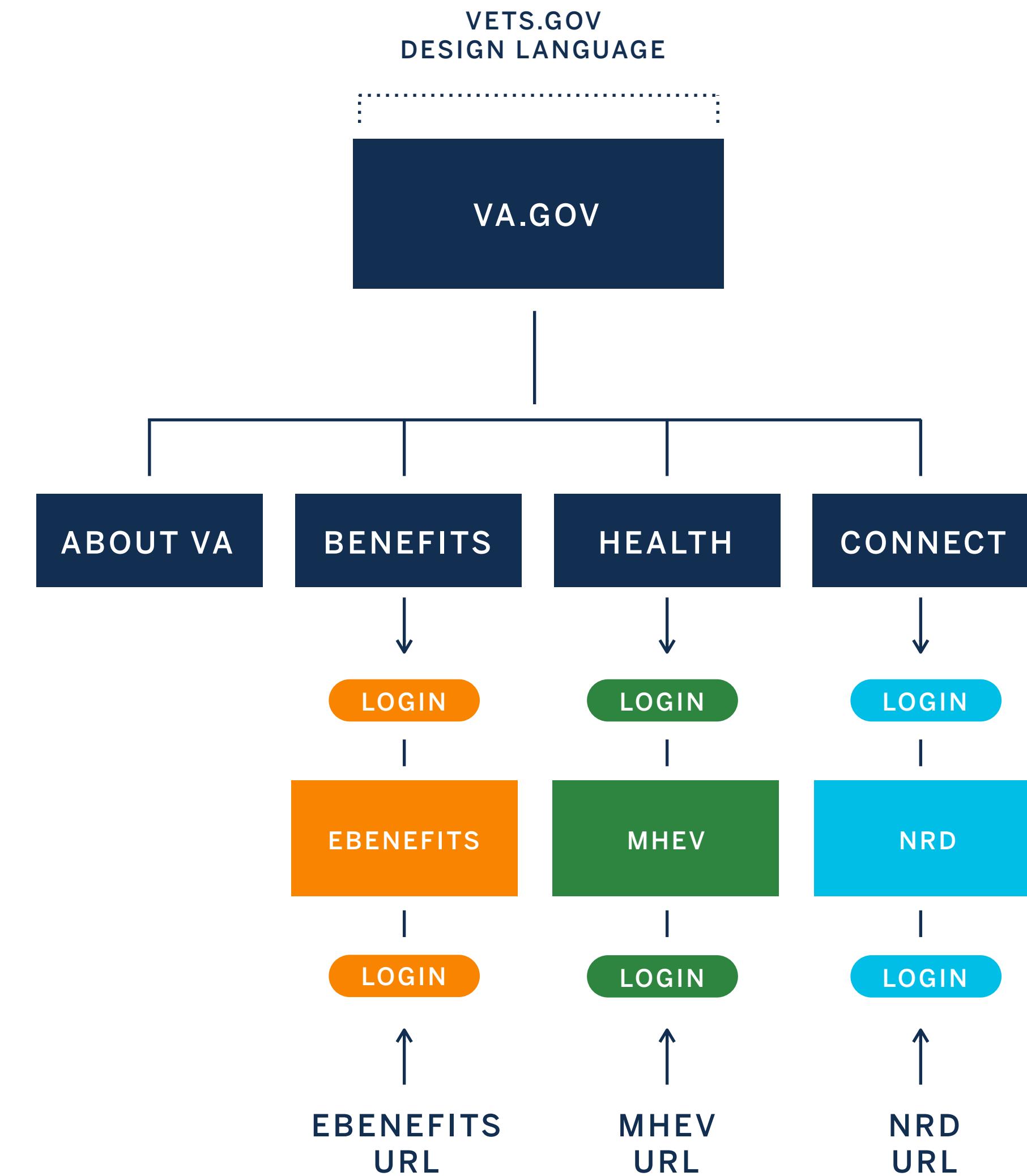


Short-Term

Establish VA.gov as the primary access point for information and self-service tools.

Simplify and adhere its content to the vets.gov design language.

Streamline its navigation bar to link users to the primary self-service tools currently being used for managing each service.



Short-Term

Single Access Point

- Establish VA.gov as the primary access point for information and VA self-service tools
- Link users to the primary self-service tool currently being used for managing each service.(i.e. eBenefits, myHealtheVet, etc.) from the corresponding page on VA.gov
- Maintain individual logins to start, but begin the transition toward a singular login for all self-service tools

Unity & Simplicity

- Establish global navigation using intuitive, human language: Benefits, Health, Connect, About
- Simplify and declutter VA.gov to ensure clear paths to information or action
- Change nomenclature of self-service tools following the model of “VA Benefits powered by eBenefits”
- Maintain each individual service’s look and feel for the time being, but begin to work on slowly transitioning to global standards
- Provide clear paths back to VA.gov

Terminology

- Refrain from using Veteran nicknames like “Vets” within the digital experience
- Audit the use of the word “Veteran” in copy, communication and naming to ensure that it is being used as its label of recognition

Customer Service

- Establish and launch a communication campaign for educating users in using VA.gov as a front door
- Establish patterns for language, messaging and tone among help and outreach services to begin working toward a unified customer service platform, no matter which service the help is coming from
- Maintain as much consistency as possible for the user as changes on the backend begin to take place

VA DIGITAL SERVICE MODERNIZATION PRINCIPLES

VA's self-service tools should be accessible from a single, online “front door” experience.

Each service should be modernized with direct input from Veterans and other VA users to ensure it is as clear and easy to use as possible.

VA's digital services should work equally well on mobile devices as desktop computers.

VA's self-service tools should address all of its users, including Veterans, Service Members, survivors, dependents, etc.

Existing outreach channels and contact centers should be maintained and equipped to support VA's modernized self-service tools.

Each tool should have a set of 1-3 clearly defined, quantitative success metrics. The tools should be continuously monitored and improved such that these metrics are increasing over time.

Long-Term

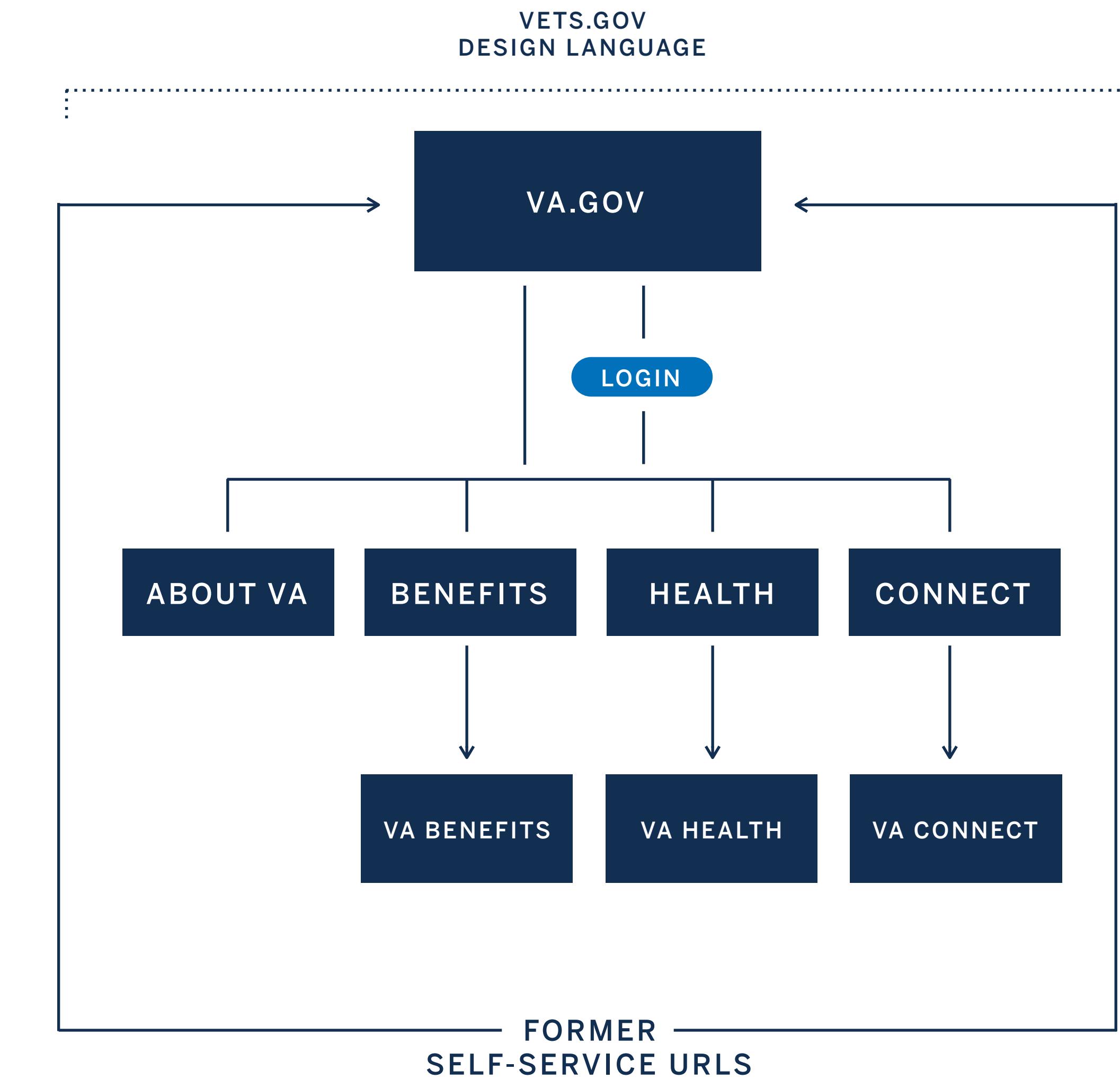
Reinforce VA.gov as the information and benefits front door.

Link users to a unified benefits management system with a singular login.

Implement a global navigation organized by service offering.

Institute design language, terminology, and customer service standards across all self-service touchpoints.

Ensure that Veteran-facing interactions allow users to achieve their goals without any attachments to existing business silos.



Long-Term

Single Access Point

- Reinforce VA.gov as the primary access point for information and VA self-service tools
- Allow users to use a singular login to access all self-service tools

VA DIGITAL SERVICE MODERNIZATION PRINCIPLES

VA's self-service tools should be accessible from a single, online "front door" experience.

Each VA service should be fronted by a single, high-quality self-service tool. Use of that tool should be the preferred way for people to interact with VA for routine transactions.

All of VA's channels should point to the same high-quality tools. Redundant systems and content should be retired.

Existing VA account holders should be able to use that account to access all of VA's digital services. If migration is needed, existing account holders should be given a user-friendly migration path.

Unity & Simplicity

- Implement global navigation across all services
- Align design language across all self-service tools to create a consistent look and feel
- Sunset individual names of self-service tools in favor of simple access points established by the navigation (i.e. VA Benefits, VA Health, etc.)

Each service should be modernized with direct input from Veterans and other VA users to ensure it is as clear and easy to use as possible.

VA's digital services should work equally well on mobile devices as desktop computers.

VA's self-service tools should share a common design standard with a consistent look and feel.

Terminology

- Implement terminology standards for the words "Vet" and "Veteran" across all user touchpoints

VA's self-service tools should address all of its users, including Veterans, Service Members, survivors, dependents, etc.

Customer Service

- Implement standardized language, messaging and tone patterns across all help and outreach service
- Personalize all services as much as possible
- Allow the connected VA digital services experience to be the first step in good customer service and users' positive interactions with VA
- Ensure that Veteran-facing interactions allow users to achieve their goals without any attachments to existing business silos

Existing outreach channels and contact centers should be maintained and equipped to support VA's modernized self-service tools.

Each tool should have a set of 1-3 clearly defined, quantitative success metrics. The tools should be continuously monitored and improved such that these metrics are increasing over time.

Whenever possible, VA's digital services should be customized to the individual using the service.

VA should protect its customers' online accounts and data with best-in-class security features.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short-Term

SINGLE ACCESS POINT

- Establish VA.gov as the primary access point for VA benefits and self-service tools
- Link users to the primary self-service tool currently being used for managing each service from the corresponding page on VA.gov

- Maintain individual logins to start, but begin the transition toward a universal login for all self-service tools

Long-Term

- Reinforce VA.gov as the primary access point for information and VA self-service tools
- Allow users to use a universal login to access all self-service tools

UNITY & SIMPLICITY

- Establish global navigation using intuitive, human language: Benefits, Health, Connect, About
- Simplify and declutter VA.gov to ensure clear paths to information or action and clear paths back to VA.gov from self-service tools

- Change nomenclature of self-service tools following the model of "VA benefits by eBenefits"
- Maintain each individual service's look and feel for the time being, but begin to work on slowly transitioning to global standards

- Implement global navigation across all services

- Align design language across all self-service tools to create a consistent look and feel

- Sunset individual names of self-service tools in favor of simple access points

TERMINOLOGY

- Refrain from using nicknames like "Vets" and audit the use of the word "Veteran" in copy, communication and naming to ensure that it is being used as its label of recognition

- Implement terminology standards for the words "Vet" and "Veteran" across all user touchpoints

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Establish and launch communication campaign for educating users in using VA.gov as a front door
- Establish patterns for language, messaging and tone among help and outreach services to begin working toward a unified customer service platform, no matter which service the help is coming from

- Maintain as much consistency as possible for the user as changes on the backend begin to take place

- Implement standardized language, messaging and tone patterns across all help and outreach service
- Personalize all services as much as possible

- Allow the connected VA digital services experience to be the first step in good customer service and users' positive interactions with VA
- Ensure that Veteran-facing interactions allow users to achieve their goals without any attachments to existing business silos.



Thank you.

BRAND STRATEGY

Appendix



APPENDIX

This appendix breaks down each insight by theme and documents every observation from which that theme was constructed.



Note: Observations and quotes pertaining to **specific** digital properties are denoted by a red diamond, and marked in **bold** within the text.

INSIGHT 1

Veterans are confused by the fragmented and complex VA benefits ecosystem.

Veterans find it frustrating and unnecessary to remember long usernames and passwords for so many different sites.

Slow processing (or complete lack of response) result in negative perceptions of VA as an organization.

Veterans feel that the current experience of navigating VA benefits is unnecessarily complicated and complex.

There is not a clear route or path for Veterans to find out about the benefits available to them.

Veterans find it frustrating and unnecessary to remember long usernames and passwords for so many different sites.

Doesn't like the redundant credentials of VA websites — wants to use touchID like his iPhone. V02

He finds the apps that use finger print identification easier to use vs. username and password. V02

"Because you have to come up with the 16-digit passwords then you have a different username" - He doesn't want to deal with it. Would rather make a phone call. V02

◆ "TRICARE is not helpful or easy to use. Have to figure out which of the seven websites and obscure passwords I need to use" S03

Slow processing (or complete lack of response) result in negative perceptions of VA as an organization.

If Veterans come to him to get things submitted “that day - if they do it online they don’t know when they will hear back” R01

Filing a claim - regional office – VSO office —> filled out claim form —> never heard back. R01

“A few years ago, I got ahold of a VA specialist and they said ‘oh we’ll help you do it, so I filled out paperwork, went to VA and it took about a year and a half before I got disability.’” V05

Everyone told him to apply for VA disability - he did and never heard back. A few years later he went to a specialist and they said he could qualify. They measured his scars, and 1.5 years later he was approved. V05

Veterans feel that the current experience of navigating VA benefits is unnecessarily complicated and complex.

"A lot of those sites are needlessly complex and not based on the user"
S03

He thinks a search field at the top of a VA website should be present to allow you to search for whatever you wanted. V04

"They should do it like map my... map my ride, map my run, etc., they all look and feel the same and start with the same thing." V06

"All of us have to pay extra taxes for them to send me the GI bill packets 60 times in 10 quarters" V06

"A lot of this stuff is being developed on the fly . Take this - develop your own opinion on how it's going to work." V02

"We give them a little checklist of things they need to do — it's not VAs, it's ours." R01

"Make it simple. The world is at a high pace now." V02

Veterans feel that the current experience of navigating VA benefits is unnecessarily complicated and complex.

◆ He has tried to apply for benefits three times and it has never been successful. He does not advise anyone to apply for **eBenefits**. R01

◆ **eBenefits + MyHealtheVet** - "it's a necessary evil. V03

◆ **eBenefits** - big complaint - locks you out and hard to navigate. R03

◆ **eBenefits** - Most veterans he helps get locked out and get confused — but overall he thinks it's a great tool. R03

◆ "I've dealt with that — it sucks" - **eBenefits**. V02

"VA sites are generalized and don't have the full story" R01

◆ "Even I flounder of **eBenefits**. I don't know what to do next." R01

There is not a clear route or path for Veterans to find out about the benefits available to them.

"VA stuff I learned on the fly. They make it so hard you give up" V02

He is proud to be a veteran and likes what he is doing now because he feels like he is contributing. R01

"In a sense it was like some big secret. Let's keep it to ourselves, we hope you don't apply to it, or better yet, if you do apply, let's make it so hard you don't want to deal with it" V02

"We never got notified when Choice came out" - V04

◆ He came across **vets.gov** by accident online but doesn't use it. R03

"Most veterans do not understand benefits - especially when they pass and the family calls, they have no idea." R02

Because Veteran's experiences are unique, they feel best served by people who are knowledgeable and experienced in navigating VA services.

The transition process is important and informational, but requires being proactive and vigilantly engaged.

Talking to someone else to learn about benefits is an easy and natural first step for service members and Veterans.

Benefits navigation should include guided walk-through assistance and needs assessment.

The transition process is important and informational, but requires being proactive and vigilantly engaged.

When he first signed up for military, they talked to him about immediate benefits (GI bill, college fund) but not lifelong benefits. P01

"It would be great if person running TAP had firsthand experience." V03

Thinks TAPs does a great job, so he paid a lot of attention. S04

He has "never give any thought" to thinking about his TriCare benefits after he leaves the military. S02

TAPs is very much like "I need to tell this person these three things, and once I do, they check the box and that's it." V01

◆ "They should present **eBenefits** at TAPs and have people sign up then." R03

He feels like he got a head start at transitioning only because he was proactive. V03

"TAP is something they have to do to check boxes, they don't seem concerned with actually helping people" V03

Opportunity at transition - "People need to start early because it takes so long to process" - went 15 months without care. V03

Marine corps TAP class was really important before his separation. V06

Talking to someone else to learn about benefits is an easy and natural first step for service members and Veterans.

"A digital experience is not the best to talk Veterans through things...you need to talk to someone" R01

When he separates, he plans to seek someone out and ask them to guide him through the processes. S04

"Word of mouth is a lot easier than digging around in all these websites" to find information about benefits. S03

When he wants to start learning about VA benefits, figures he'll talk to his NCO to find out about his options and go from there. S01

When finding out about new services, he likes to talk on the phone to get more advice and information specific to him. S01

He tells his veterans that VA is not health insurance — this it's treatment for military-related service conditions only. R01

"A lot of the stuff, I had to do the research." When it comes to learning about benefits — talked to coworkers and that's how he found out. V02

Benefits navigation should include guided walk-through assistance and needs assessment.

"Needs to be interactive to explain to the Vets what to do." R01

He thinks VA services should have a needs assessment and needs help that applies to them locally. R01

He thinks veterans should be walked through benefits and not a digital experience - may be a "generational thing." R01

"You need to do a population demographic to see who would be using this - you may need two different ones - your young Vets know how to do all this." C01

One website - "there would be too much to sort through — remember you're dealing with a bunch of old people" C01

◆ **Explore VA** is a "great tool." It shows videos for help to navigate.

Spends a lot of time walking veterans through things and thinks it would be helpful to have tutorials to explain each button. He thinks a tutorial when veterans first log in to a website is the answer. R03

"If they only look at this through one aspect - they will miss the mark again: only digital — only physical. R01

He would want something like the claims process explained on a VA website if there were to be one. R01

"If it says it's there, it better be there" (in response to VA services). V02

"You need different programs for different folks. I do not think it can be just one site." C01

Veterans are unaware of most of the sites available to them, and feel the names are redundant and don't help them figure out where to go.

Veteran awareness of VA digital properties is based on word of mouth (NCO, briefings, VSOs, recruiters, etc.).

Having so many different digital properties is redundant and confusing to Veterans.

There is little awareness of the VA digital properties and where/how to find them.

Some of the names of VA digital properties are misleading or alienating.

The names of VA digital properties don't tell Veterans anything about what their purpose is.

Veteran awareness of VA digital properties is based on word of mouth (NCO, briefings, VSOs, recruiters, etc.).

He accesses info about GI bill through computer labs on base. S02

◆ Aware of **TRICARE** because he uses it for free healthcare. R01

◆ **VA** - most aware because he gets all services through them — but also unsure of everything they do. V03

◆ He is aware of **MyHealtheVet** from doing medical records online. R01

◆ Aware of **VA**, **DoD**, **eBenefits** and **MyHealtheVet**. V03

◆ “I might be on **eBenefits** look at GI bills.” S03

◆ “There are websites — it’s all dot mil or dot gov.” S02

◆ Heard of **vets.gov** and **MilConnect** in a briefing once, but didn’t know much more than that. S01

There is little awareness of the VA digital properties and where/how to find them.

- ◆ **App store** - “Could potentially allow you to download express care app.” V05
- ◆ His guess as to what **eBenefits** is for are benefits entitled to members after service. S02
- ◆ He has no idea what **NRD** and **vets.gov** are. R01
- ◆ “Never heard of the other four, I could google it...” (**ExploreVA**, **VA apps**, **milconnect**, **NRD**) V03

- ◆ “Jesus Christ! What is this for?” (**NRD**) V02
- ◆ “Where am I going to find this at?!”
VA App Store. V02

THEME 3

The names of VA digital properties don't tell Veterans anything about what their purpose is.

She is more concerned about what the service does than what it is called "I don't look at it as a name to catch my attention, none of the names mean anything to me." C01

"I prefer names with .gov because it's more trustworthy" - S02

"I don't know, they all sound the same to me...why do I need another brand?" V06

"The names of the websites don't tell you anything about it." S02

"I guess that anything with VA or Veteran in it will apply to me" S01

"Even if **vets.gov** changed to veterans.gov, I still wouldn't have a clue what their purpose is." V03

◆ Doesn't think it's useful if the name doesn't imply what it does - **National Resource Directory**. V05

◆ "What is the purpose of **vets.gov**? What is it for? V02

◆ **eBenefits:** "I know what it is, but nothing is telling me that it's Veteran-focused - wouldn't know what that is." S02

"There's no rhyme or reason.. you have seen the app map my ride? See the theme? Map my, map my, map my — I see 'Map My' and I know they're under that company" V06

THEME 4

Having so many different digital properties is redundant and confusing to Veterans.

Finds it hard to believe that **vets.gov** encompasses everything. "it's a little redundant." V05

"It seems like you're getting very redundant with all these sites." V05

◆ Thinks **NRD** and **Explore VA** are the same - but Explore is for things in the area and NRD is national - SO2

"I'd guess all of these have a fair amount of overlap - all the VA sites.
S03

He thinks all the services are separate because "somebody didn't do their research...that's the legit answer - the research wasn't done"
V02

"Why do they have all these?"

◆ "Here's one of my issues with VA - I have **VA** I have **eBenefits**, I have **myHealtheVet**, I have **vets.gov**. How am I supposed to know where to go?"
V06

"Having 47,000 sites is just confusing people - half of them don't even look official" P01

◆ "If you're going to have **Explore VA**, then get rid of these others" V05

Some of the names of VA digital properties are misleading or alienating.

◆ **MyHealtheVet** - "Looks like they're trying to sell me cars." V01

◆ **VA app** must be a generational thing. R01

◆ "eBenefits sounds like one of those places on late night TV offering tax help." V01

Veterans are proud of their earned title, but acknowledge that it is a loaded, politicized term.

Reasons for joining the military are varied, and seem to not be influenced by benefits.

I think VA healthcare should just be privatized - I have confidence in their ideas, it's putting them into practice that's challenging.

Active Service Members and Veterans alike are proud of the Veteran title, but don't feel that everyone has earned the associated character traits that come with it.

Many of Veteran's negative impressions of VA are based on second-hand experiences or accounts.

"Vets" is a nickname that sounds casual and lazy.

Veterans and Service Members feel that VA owes them empathy and quality care in exchange for their service and sacrifice.

Reasons for joining the military are varied, and seem to not be influenced by benefits.

"First of contact is first to contract."
Had the intention to join army but ran
into a marine recruiter first - V02

When joining the military, benefits
didn't matter to him. He was just
looking for a way out of his living
situation. V02

He wanted to join the military
because he thought it would be cool
to fly. V05

He was driven to join the military
because he felt like giving four years
of his youth for his country. S04

Active Service Members and Veterans alike are proud of the Veteran title, but don't feel that everyone has earned the associated character traits that come with it.

He is proud to wear the title of Veteran. R01

"I identify as a Veteran and am proud of it." P03

If he could define veteran, it would be a sacrifice. V02

Definition of Veteran - "someone who has served and done so honorably"
V03

He feels that the term Veteran is a title he earned and feels pride. He had to spend time away from his children.
V02

He loves the term Veteran. It means he served. R03

Veteran - "it's a title I earned" means "individuals who made a sacrifice"
V02

"Veterans are people who have served. Heroes are people who have done exceptional things" S04

THEME 3

“Vets” is a nickname that sounds casual and lazy.

“I don’t like being called a Vet because it’s slang it’s lazy.” V03

Thinks ‘Vets’ refers to Vietnam-era veterans. S04

“I would say I’d rather not be called a Vet. It seems less respectful” V06

◆ Would assume **vets.gov** is for connecting with others. S04

“Vets is more of a social, casual term. Like that Vet humor site. Veteran is more official — I would look for it.” S02

Is ok with being called a vet. Thinks it’s a nickname. V05

THEME 4

I think VA healthcare should just be privatized - I have confidence in their ideas, it's putting them into practice that's challenging.

Thinks people who can govern VA talk big but don't address issues. S04

Doesn't feel like going to VAMCs.
Would rather go to private provider
because he doesn't like the hospital
feeling of a VAMC - P03

"It's to be expected. Something with that much government control - get it out of government hands — too many restrictions" S02

THEME 5

Many of Veteran's negative impressions of VA are based on second-hand experiences or accounts.

Has heard bad things about VA from the news - S04

He hears complaints about how VA mishaps regarding payment negatively affects veteran credit ratings. R01

Most vets that he has heard that have used VA for routine check ups had a good experience — specialty appointments, not so good. R01

"VA will be good if I stop hearing from people who have trouble getting help and care through them." V03

Veterans and Service Members feel that VA owes them empathy and quality care in exchange for their service and sacrifice.

Thinks that VA should “make me whole after I put so much on the line”
V06

“If you want to thank people for their service, call a rep or volunteer.” S04

Extremely frustrated at VA that vets are being mistreated. S04

After leaving the military, he felt like he was “done” except for “having to fight with VA about getting benefits related to my motorcycle accident” V02

“You’re not there when I wake up in the morning—you’re not there when I go to sleep — I have PTSD” V02

He has dealt with VA employees who don’t believe he has a disability and thus don’t deserve a high service rating. V02

Doesn’t like it when people say ‘thank you for your service’ - it isn’t genuine, it’s too casual and too trite. S04

“Being in the military is like being a professional athlete”. It’s a sacrifice - using an tearing up his body. V02

“Government doesn’t really care about Veterans. You’re no longer part of the government after you separate.” V03

While Veteran perks are appreciated, ultimately Veterans just want good, customer-focused service.

Veterans favor and trust companies that cater to or are owned by Veterans.

Veterans want the services they are using to care about them, and show that they're responsive to their needs.

Veterans and Service Members expect the same level of customer service from VA as they receive elsewhere - they want to be treated like a customer, not a Veteran.

Veterans recognize when companies have clear values and take action on them through their products, services, and customer service.

Companies that have clear lines of communication and seem to run efficiently have built a positive reputation among Veterans and Service Members.

Updates and changes to service and user experience are tolerated as long as Veterans can still find everything in one place, with the same login.

THEME 1

Veterans favor and trust companies that cater to or are owned by Veterans.

USAA - "They use my rank, which is odd - nobody else does that — I guess I like it." V06

USAA "They make things easy, plus if you belong to them for a certain amount of years each year you get a rebate." C01

"A lot of these places, they service the Vets real good. They cater — give 25% off on the shoes." (Foot Locker) V02

USAA - "They're a good company and it's run by military folk - we lost our tree in a storm and all I did was call them and they sent me a check." C01

Likes Home Depot because he gets a Veteran discount. V05

Veterans and Service Members expect the same level of customer service from VA as they receive elsewhere - they want to be treated like a customer, not a Veteran.

He expects respect and professionalism from VA. V02

He has dealt with condescending VA staff on the phone. V02

He refers to himself as a Veteran but when interacting with VA he wants to be seen as a customer because he wants to be treated with respect. V04

"Sometimes they don't treat you as a customer, they treat you as something considerably less." V04

He expects the same experience as active duty as he would as a Veteran when it comes to medical services. S02

What VA could learn from Nike + USAA - customer service. V02

"If there was one thing VA services could do better it would be customer service." V02

Loved USAA - felt like their customer service was good and likes that he had the same number as when he joined 20 years ago. V06

THEME 3

Companies that have clear lines of communication and seem to run efficiently have built a positive reputation among Veterans and Service Members.

USAA - "Less apps, people to talk to, and numbers to call." S04

USAA - Mutual company "well run, reasonable." C01

USAA - "Have been serving for a while. They know what they're doing." S04

USAA is "flexible and reliable" heard about it through word of mouth. S04

Had only flown southwest a couple of times, but knew a lot about the company and liked how they run their operations efficiently.

"I like southwest because they think outside the box - they only do what works — I think that the VA needs to be practical." V06



Veterans want the services they are using to care about them, and show that they're responsive to their needs.

USAA - "you don't go there to get the cheapest rate, they thank you for service, and I've never been questioned." V01

Likes Navy Fed because they are professional. Great experience on phone and in person. V02

Loves southwest because their process works and they're not assholes. V01

USAA - "The customer service is unbelievable - you get on with someone one right away and they treat you like royalty - you can tell they're a customer-service focused company." V06

USAA - "Good management and great customer service - they answer the phone." C01

"USAA seems to care because they're responsive, courteous and useful." S04

Chose USAA for brand. "They are easy to get ahold of and get what you need." V03

"I don't care if you call me sir if you can't help me." S01

USAA "They're horrible, horrible! they don't pay for anything. I had them for many years and had a home problem and they didn't give me anything so I dumped them -- disgusting!" V05

Veterans recognize when companies have clear values and take action on them through their products, services, and customer service.

Nike - "They don't man the equipment, they equip the man." S04

Thinks Nike's mission aligns with being in service. S04

USAA - "We know what it means to serve." V03

Didn't like Starbucks because doesn't care about coffee but also doesn't like that they're political. V06

USAA - "If you're a Veteran and you need insurance or banking, you go to them first — USAA costs me more than any other company but I go to USAA." V06

Starbucks - "I don't like their politics. They refused to send coffee to Veterans in the first Iraq war." V05

His Marine Corps gives everyone a default Navy Fed account, but he went out of his way to get USAA. S04

Starbucks - "dislike because they are not Trump fans. I'm a Trump fan." V05

Updates and changes to service and user experience are tolerated as long as Veterans can still find everything in one place, with the same login.

"I used USAA's website...they've stayed current with the security issues but have not changed the way the site looks and the access is the same." V04

He has had Navy Fed since 1992 and has had no problem using them. V02

Her kids college sites are so much easier to use (pay tuition, register, etc.) than military/VA sites. S03

Pen Fed (Pentagon Federal Credit Union) re-did their site and it took her an hour and a half to log in. V04

USAA - "They've developed it to the point where it's more user-friendly, guess they've taken the cue." V02

USAA - "The number they gave me ten years ago is still valid." V06

Veterans expect to find information about VA benefits & services in one intuitive place that organizes the information in a consumable way.

Veterans expect to find all the information they need about VA benefits and services on [VA.gov](#), even if that links off to other sites.

As long as it makes sense, it doesn't matter where the sites are and what they're called.

Veterans expect services to be connected and consistent.

Veterans are ok with going to different sites for different services, but expect there to be clear paths between and that they'll feel like the same place/same organization.

Veterans would find accessing benefits easier if they could go to one place to do so.

Veterans think that using eBenefits as the primary portal for accessing benefits makes sense because of the name and their current usage.

Veterans expect to find all the information they need about VA benefits and services on VA.gov, even if that links off to other sites.

- ◆ “You can call it **eBenefits**, but it should be on the **VA site**.” V01
- ◆ “It should all be on [**the VA site**] because that seems like the logical place to look for info about VA.” V05
- ◆ He thinks the best VA site is **va.gov** - “its the first start for info - for healthcare, etc.” R03
- ◆ “I’d go to the **VA page** to find all of these things.” S03
- ◆ “The **main VA site** is the only one I would probably trust.” V06
- ◆ “**VA.gov** is a one stop shop and simple for Veterans.” R03
- ◆ “So split between two - all my benefits or all my health.” (**eBenefits** and **MyHealtheVet**) V06
- ◆ “Simple for Veterans to go to **VA.gov** to get to other sites.” R03
- ◆ “The **VA site** is very helpful” - he pulls benefit info and manuals from it. R03
- ◆ He is very familiar with **VA.gov** - he can access VBS, Share and other things. R01
- ◆ Thinks of **MyHealtheVet**, **vets.gov**, **NRD**, **milConnect** and **VA app store** as sub tab of **ExploreVA** and **VA.gov**.
- ◆ He thinks **VA.gov**, **VA app store**, **eBenefits** and **ExploreVA** apply best to Veterans. R03

Veterans expect to find all the information they need about VA benefits and services on VA.gov, even if that links off to other sites.

- ◆ He mainly directs Veterans to the **US Department of Veterans Affairs**.
[website] R01
- ◆ He could see finding out about something new (for example, the self-scheduling tool) through the **Department of Veterans Affairs** or would just Google it. V05
- ◆ Loves VBM. Uses **VA.gov** for others.
R01
- ◆ “When you go to something that’s within the government, it’s supposed to look official.” S02

Veterans expect services to be connected and consistent.

"I'm not for multiple websites - running people around and spending more time online." R01

"One source is a singe 800-number you can call - that's a good thing." V04

He likes the ability to link all appointments and see things in the same place. S04

"They should look and feel the same - MapMy always feels the same." V04

Veterans would find accessing benefits easier if they could go to one place to do so.

"It seems like a lot of sites. Put it all in one place and it might be easier. Since you can probably get to the same place from only one of these." S03

Would want a pamphlet, a book "something that is available to find out about all their benefits." C01

"If you do this right here, why not combine all of those together, or better yet, eliminate all three of them and make one, but they have these components in it." V02

He thinks the best online experience includes a checklist for a Veteran of all the benefits they could use or things they should do. R01

As long as it makes sense, it doesn't matter where the sites are and what they're called.

"It would be good to have these all in one area, but it has to be easy for the Veterans to get in there and find something. You have to remember not everyone has a PHD like me." V05

GI Bill - "Just send me an email and give me the options to opt out, and then send me to eBenefits." V06

All in one - "it would depend on how easy the website was to navigate. We're basing this on Veterans who maybe don't have the skillsets to go through and navigate correctly and they'll get frustrated and leave if it's not easy." V05

"I don't have any problem with VA trying to push things on me since they have to know everything about me, and if it concerns my health, I don't have a problem with it." V06

"I'd go wherever to do it, as long as it's easy to use." S03

She would be happy to go to a Veteran-centered website as a spouse. S03

"I am willing to go to the computer if they tell me to go there to get the information." C01

Veterans are ok with going to different sites for different services, but expect there to be clear paths between and that they'll feel like the same place/same organization.

"If you want details, it seems like you would go to each individually." V05

"If the government is handling it, I think it would be too cumbersome to find something specific all in one place." V05

"Make them all disappear - you can go see what you need and who will help you." C01

"I'm ok if it links off to other sites but it has to be obvious - those should be the first thing it offers me." (**eBenefits** and **MyHealtheVet**) V06

Ok with linking to other sites as long as they look and behave the same way. V06

Veterans think that using eBenefits as the primary portal for accessing benefits makes sense because of the name and their current usage.

- ◆ “**eBenefits** sounds like where I would go to access all the benefits: jobs, medical, etc.” but would prefer it be dot gov. S02
- ◆ If there was one service, he would go to when leaving service, it would be **eBenefits** because it's something that benefits him. S02
- ◆ He guides his clients using **eBenefits** and thinks it's a multi-purpose tool.
R03
- ◆ “If you click on **eBenefits** it's got to come up with the major categories of benefits and what's under that.” V04
- ◆ **eBenefits:** “From my experience, that's my portal for all of this. That's my individual portal for VA services. It doesn't work that well, though.” V03
- ◆ If one of the existing VA and DoD digital service names was to be used, he would choose **eBenefits**, maybe because he's used to it. V02