# VA.gov CMS: Facilities Operating Status VX research

**Research plan**

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| Project Name: | Facilities Operating Status VX research |
| Date: | August 14-28, 2019 |

This research focuses on evaluating the semantic and usability implications of presenting **facility** **alerts**, which occur in various ways: **banner alerts** (for system-wide alerts) and **on-page alerts** (operating status e.g., normal hours and services, limited hours or services and closed).

We’re assessing the user value in presenting a **series of alerts** and subsequent updates for a single event (e.g., a hurricane) on an **alert detail page**—and evaluating the basis for sending **email notifications** to subscribers concurrently. And lastly, we’re exploring the necessity for alert **expiry dates**—including the option to be **dismissible** by viewers.

# Goals

* Overall goals:
  + Inform the frontend design and content of alerts that communicate details about VAMC operating statuses.
  + Inform how to provide a series of alerts/updates for a single event, such as natural disaster, on an alert detail page.
  + Uncover how the user experience changes when alerts stack, so that the business can inform Drupal logic.
* Background:
  + Authors need the ability to publish operation status alerts on the Drupal CMS, with the intention of answering questions around general safety, availability of VAMC services, and abnormal events. VAMC website users need clarity on whether or not they are able to access services at any given time - especially during abnormal weather or infrastructure-related events. External web sources (Google, other sites using the API, etc) should be immediately updated with operational status alerts.
* Major research questions
  + How do users differentiate facility alerts and system alerts?
    - Facility operating status will be tied to an on-page Facility alert. These will be the Facility operating status options in Drupal:
      * Facility notice=blue info alert
      * Limited services or hours=yellow warning alert
      * Facility closed=red error alert
  + How do users react to multiple alerts relating to multiple events?
  + How do users expect to find a series of multiple alerts relating to one event?
  + What other kinds of information should alerts provide to Veterans?
  + How can we improve the experience of being notified about operating statuses through an email?
* Research null hypotheses:
  + Participants will be able to verbally distinguish system-wide notifications from facility level notifications upon seeing both notifications on the same page.
    - Participants will be able to tell that in-body notifications relate to facility specific events while header-level notifications relate to system-wide events.
  + Participants might not immediately refer to VAMC webpages to research operating statuses, but might rather use a search engine for similar content.
  + Going to the Pittsburgh page from an email will feel natural as an entry point for participants.

# Method

* Remote, moderated, task-based usability testing using high fidelity designs in an Invision prototype.
* Participants will use their own machines for testing purposes and connect with researchers using a Zoom conference call.

# Participants and Recruitment

* This study will include 7-9 total participants: half being Veterans currently enrolled in VA medical care and half being Veterans not yet enrolled.
* Since this study is evaluating content of presentation of alerts relating to abnormal events/occurrences, we want participants who come from regions in order to account for different kinds of geological and atmospheric events, such as hurricanes and earthquakes.
* Recruitment will be done through our outreach specialist’s personal contacts.

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| **Attributes** | **Justification or qualifier** | **Number req** |
| **MAIN ATTRIBUTES** | | |
| Veteran (enrolled in VAMC healthcare) | Represents users who might be seeking info for return visits. | 7-9 |
| **OPTIONAL SPLIT ATTRIBUTES** | | |
| Coastal and Non-coastal | Seek perspectives from multiple regions to account for different kinds of geo-specific situations (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc) | - |

# When?

* Recruit outreach: August 14-16, 2019
* Research sessions: August 20-23, 2019
* Research materials: August 19, 2019
  + Moderator guide (Eric Chiu)
  + Content (Kate Saul)
  + Design files (Ryan Thurwell)
  + Invision (Eric Chiu)

# Team Roles

Please list the people who will be serving in each role. Include the primary phone number for moderator and the emails for moderator, notetaker, and observers.

* Lead: Eric Chiu <[eric@navapbc.com](mailto:eric@navapbc.com)>, (706) 951-2110
* Research guide writing and task development (usually but not always same as moderator): Eric Chiu
* Participant recruiting & screening: Howie Brand <[howard.brande@agile6.com](mailto:howard.brande@agile6.com)> and Eric Chiu
* Project point of contact: Andy Lewandowski <[andy.lewandowski2@va.gov](mailto:andy.lewandowski2@va.gov)>

# Resources (complete after research)

* [will be included following research activities]