**Conversation Guide: VA.gov Home Page Redesign Usability Testing**

*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, I am.

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Let’s start with a few questions...

1. What kind of device are you using today? *(Computer / Tablet / Smartphone)*
2. I will be sharing a web page link with you during the session. How would you prefer to receive the URL? I could dictate it to you, or put it in the Zoom chat. *NOTE how to share URL: dictate / Zoom chat*
3. *(If using assistive technology:)* How would you rate your level of experience with using [specific assistive technology, such as a screen reader]--beginner, intermediate, advanced, or expert?
4. *(If using assistive technology:)* How long have you been using [specific assistive technology]?
5. What VA benefits, if any, do you have experience with? *RECORD: health care / education / career services / disability / housing loans / pension / life insurance / burial benefits / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
6. What VA benefits that you *don't* have experience with might you be interested in exploring? *RECORD: health care / education / career services / disability / housing loans / pension / life insurance / burial benefits / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Not really at this time.*
7. Where do you typically go to get information and benefits from the VA? *(Google / Facebook / MHV / eBenefits / Contact center call or email / VA.gov / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)* I usually go through the mobile portal and VSO individual. VA app, and you can go to the healthcare part of it. It may be the website and not an app. I am using the website from my phone. I am VA.gov through my phone and from there I use the healthcare hyperlinks to look at appointments.
8. *Do you have a VA mobile on your phone? It is not something that I use.*
9. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? Probably 2-3 days ago I had to reorder some medication. I logged into VA.gov and used the hyperlink to get into the secure site.
10. Once you logged in you were able to refill your medication? Yes, I was.

**User Tasks**

Now I'm going to ask you to do a number of things that you may or may not have done before. For each task, I will stop you at a point when I feel like we've done enough, and I won't ask you to sign in.

### RECORD FOR EACH TASK...

#### Which task? (select one)

*go back to school to get degree / compare universities / qualify for disability / find a form / increase disability rating /* *amount of disability or education payment / current disability rates / GI Bill money left / find a hospital / get medical history /* *question for doctor / travel expenses / learn about health care / proof of income / new spouse / new address / talk to someone /* *burial in VA cemetery / VA home loan / proof of military service*

#### What participant does and says...

#### I would probably look for a hyperlink. I did see education and training down on this page and I would click on that link. Scrolls down that page. I would read through this here. I would continue to read here to see if anything is the same thing for what I am looking for. I would probably click on this link here educational and career counseling. Reads through the next page. This screen is talking about education counseling.

#### Tell me what you are thinking now? I guess I am trying to figure out where on this site I would be able to get that information. Reads through the page. It seems it is asking if I have left the service this past year. I could check and look for a phone number to call. I think one screen back there were someone contact information that I may be able to message them to have them point me in the right direction.

#### Can you find something on this website that can help you? It looks like this one is talking about the GI Bill primarily. When I was in the service I signed up for the GI Bill and they gave me a certain amount of money to use by a certain time, that I did not use because I was in a long time ago, I lost that money. This would not apply to me so I would keep looking to see if they would still pay for my education. At this point I would reach out by calling or asking online. I am not sure what I am seeing online would apply me.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### I would say a 2 because the question you asked was point blank and I do not see that on this page. It is not right here in my face.

#### Was there anything else on this page that you would want to click on? If I wasn’t looking for that question I would maybe search or click on more resources.

#### I just clicked on more information and resources. I am just reading through it really quick to see if something jumps out at me. And it doesn’t look like it is there so I would have to go to education resources. I am looking for a link that would point me in the right direction in regard to the question that you asked. Maybe the financial aid link would be the next link I would go. It looks like you could go to state specific and maybe from there it would tell me from here if I would qualify. It looks like it took me to my home state VA site. It looks like I may be able to go through here to find some information. I may also reach out to my VSO officer to get information.

#### Which task? (select one)

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#### What participant does and says...

#### That’s a good question. Scrolls down the page. Right here it says apply for and manage your GI Bill and other education benefits. It says right here to help finding the right school. Get GI and other educational benefits. It talks about applying for. Check here to find out the eligibility. It would tell me what I am eligible for and to see if I am eligible for it first and where I would go next.

#### Finding out if you are eligible sounds like what I was asking for before. We found it just a little bit later. You can apply for the GI Bill. I could go here to this form.

#### What do you think the form would tell you? To apply for the benefit now so you can get started with which form is right for you. Once I start reading, I get lost and forget what I am looking for.

#### I am asking how would you figure out which school to go to, compare their tuition and housing? It says education and career counseling. That link may tell me where to go, or I may be able to search colleges and that may help me. Again, it sounds like it is pushing me to find out more about the benefits before I can find out about the schools. It is telling me to apply for the benefit. It would push me back to call or get in contact with the VSO officer to point me in the right different.

#### Is that how you usually use the VSO officer? When I go in the office, I always see the flyers about different benefits, so I always look at them as another source for me to get information about the VA from.

#### Can you go back a page and scroll up, you originally went on this page to compare colleges, is there anything on this page that would help you with that? Again, when I read it what sticks out to me is get the GI Bill and benefits and when I click on that it wouldn’t apply to me because I do not have the GI Bill. It is talking about.

#### So, you are trying to find information that does not mention the GI Bill? Yes, like right here under other educational assistance programs.

#### You stated you signed up for the GI Bill when you were in the services but after a while you lost it. Is that money available for you to still use it? I don’t think so, but I have heard that the government is looking into getting us some of our money back for the lost GI Bill.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### I wasn’t able to find it so I would say a 2 because the site is pretty easy to use but it is hard to find specific information.

#### Do you want to change your rating for the previous task? I would rate it a 3 because I was able to find the information later on.

#### Are you currently using disability compensation? I am.

#### Which task? (select one)

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#### What participant does and says...

#### I could go into search the VA.gov and see if it pops up there. I would type in education benefits. Apply for GI Bill benefits and apply for other education benefits. I am guessing I would go to apply for other education benefits. Reads the page. Here is the form here that I could fill out. Clicks on find your education benefits form. I would click on applying for new benefits. Another question pops up. I would just continue to answer the questions.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### I would say 4 because once I put in the information it came up even if it was a couple links down. It was pretty easy to find.

#### Which task? (select one)

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#### What participant does and says...

#### I could view my payment history, but I don’t know if I would have to sign in. I could also download my benefit letter. So, my guess is they would want proof that I was in the military. Goes back to the first page. I would need my. Okay. I guess I would need a letter that shows I am a Veteran and proof of income. I would probably. Scrolls down the page. Housing assistance, reads the description underneath. I would guess it would be in this area. It says I could do it here if I am eligible here. I would request the COE to show them I am eligible to get it.

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

#### I would say that was a 5 because once I got down to the housing assistance it pointed me in the direction I needed to go. Once I was on the page, I knew I was on the right place and once I read down it was easy to see what I needed.

#### You went to the payment history first, why did you leave that page? Well I was thinking the bank would want a proof of income but then I thought about your question and realized that was not what you asked.

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#### What participant does and says...

#### Ease rating (1-5) and why:

**Post-Task Interview - 10 minutes**

1. What worked *well* for you? It was easy to use. If I knew what I was looking for I could go to the search bar and type it in. The layout is nice and user friendly. I like that it has a contact us link.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? Nothing really, I guess I am used to looking at it on my phone. Looking at it on my computer everything is here and a good landing page. I know if I am going to scroll down, I would find out all the information I want to see. If I wasn’t a computer user, I would not be aware I may need to scroll down to see all that helpful information. Maybe put that information in that white area so you can see it earlier. Almost like the common questions or common tasks. There is a reason they are there. I like this area down here because it was easier to find what you are looking for down here.
3. What would you like to *change or add*?
4. I'd like to ask you about a specific part of the first page that you looked at: the dark blue section on Veteran homelessness.
   1. What are your thoughts on what you see here in this section of the page? As far as the picture in the middle? Yes. I guess if I was homeless this would be very important to me. I like that it is here. I like that there is an update and how you could get into housing right now. I know the homeless with the Veterans is an issue. If I had access to a computer and the internet this would be beneficial to me.
   2. Would you skip right over this? Right because it talks about the numbers and get housing assistance now. Homelessness is bolded and then it states get housing assistance now. Say I was going to buy a house I don’t know if I would click on this because I am thinking this is about homelessness.
   3. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? Being a computer user, I like the scrolling feature and I saw something scrolling through here. Other news. Maybe one slide would be homelessness, something you can learn about, medical, and basically the updates on what the VA is doing. I would think someone coming on this site is coming here for specific information. I would like to see a slideshow or news going through. Instead of it being on this one page I would like to see that on the slideshow of news articles.
   4. How often should the information be changed?
5. Now I'd like to ask about another part of the page: under "Search VA.gov" where it says "Other search tools". What does that mean to you? If I wanted to search for other things/subjects, I could click on those things, and it would take me to another search page to find something within that subject. Say I am visiting my brother I could click on find a VA location and it would help me find one where I may be.
6. Can you tell me about how you usually look for information on web pages in general? (not specifically VA or government websites) *RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* If I am Googling something, it depends on how the page is set up. Say I was searching for cars, I would Google the type of vehicle, and the links would have descriptions of each website and click on what I want from there. I would read the description of the link before clicking on the link.
7. Do you ever use a search box on pages? I do the find feature, but it is more on large PDF documents. I usually don’t use that on the search page.
8. Do you tend to click on different things and go to different pages? I would not use the find feature on a web page—only on a document. I just tend to type in what I am looking for, and if I don’t see what I am looking for, I would go back and refine my question and click on a link and read the page.
9. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know?

**Thank You and Closing - 1 minute**

Well 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 learn about Veterans so we can improve the online tools that we provide.

If you know any other Veterans, caregivers, or service members who might be willing to participate in a future research session like this one, you can pass along the email blurb that you'll receive from our team.

Thank you so much again, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of your day!