**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.

**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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) The VA or Facebook groups that I follow. I go through MHV because that is the easiest way for me.*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? It was communication to my PCP about medical records being sent from Portland, OR to my primary hospital in Miami.

**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...

#### Scrolls down looking for something says burial. Clicks on burials and memorials. Clicks the eligibility link. Reads page as scrolling down.

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

#### I would say 3 because when I look at this headline and I go below the way it is written that should be highlighted because that is the answer then you have the other people. That should be highlighted. I wouldn’t continue reading if that was bolded. It makes you read things you do not need to read for most people looking at this site.

#### 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...

#### Scrolls down to housing assistance.

#### Tell me what you are thinking? I don’t like the title.

#### What do you think would be better? I think the VA home loan should be a stand alone because the other stuff. You are making me go through things I shouldn’t have to go through.

#### What do you think it should say? VA home loan program. Housing assistance is separate. You have room for one more. I have to go through the crowd to find my answer. This is proving my point. I am wasting too much of my time here. Eligibility right here. Click on COE.

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

#### 2 because the same thing. It takes me on this long path that I forget what you asked me. I just need a short path.

#### 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...

#### Through messaging. Scrolls down page. I used to go through the other one, MHV. The layout is different. Here I don’t know so I would have to look it up. Going through all the headers. I don’t know. I don’t know how to find that answer on this page.

#### You are comfortable doing that through MHV, so you don’t know how to do that from this page? Yes, MHV has a big button on it that takes me to secure messaging. I do not see that on this page.

#### Is there anything else on this page that could help you find secure messaging? I would click healthcare maybe, I don’t know. Clicks healthcare. Scrolls page. Use VA secure messaging down at the bottom. Clicks link. Sign in again.

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

#### For me it was 1 all the way through.

#### 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 have never used that benefit. Let me see. Scrolls page.

#### Can you tell me what you are thinking? Clicks on file claim for compensation. I don’t think this is it. I am having trouble finding. Types in search box. Clicks VA travel pay reimbursement. I have never seen this page actually. So, I can get money for going to my medical appointments. That is what it says.

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

#### I had to use the search menu because there was no printed there. I spent a lot of time looking through the links. I finally gave up and used that little Google search thing on the page. So how good is that? For that task I would say 2 because if it was not for me using the search I would have given up.

#### How do you feel about using the search? I do use search on things on this VA thing I am using the headlines first to see where to go. Like are you selling what you are selling or selling me on using the search. If you want me to scroll down and read it all or do you want me to search. If you have a question you scroll through the page, then you have to search. I don’t like having to read the whole page.

#### 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 start reading all these things again. Scrolls the page. I would go back to the search. Types in change of address. That didn’t work out. Realized he spelled change incorrectly. Clicks on first link change your address. Reads through the page as scrolling down. You have to sign in to do it.

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

#### 3 if I used search and spell the words properly. The search seems to work better than the pages. It is easier for me to find things using the search. There is too much to read otherwise.

#### 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...

#### There is the crisis center if it is that bad.

#### Pretend it is not that bad. I guess the health care. Let me see the rest that are down here. You are talking PTSD, right? As you think. I guess call the VA or your doctor.

#### How would you reach out via this website? You would sign in or you could use the find a VA location.

#### What would this allow you to do? What would you be looking for here? A clinic and call the main number or mental health if that is what it is about.

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

#### 3 it took my interpretation to find it.

#### It seemed like you wanted to click on the healthcare button. That would have taken me to the same point of trying to get to my doctor.

#### 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*

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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? Search.
2. Anything else? Not really.
3. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? How do I state it? The whole page full of information that I have to read when I could have just used search. I have learned to just go through the search bar.
4. Search seems to work better for you to find things on this page. Oh yeah.
5. What would you like to *change or add*? I don’t know. I don’t have an answer.
6. 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? I hate the photograph because the photo is crummy, you don’t know what they are putting into that bag. They look like props. It is just a terrible photograph. These isn’t a lot of positives about this picture. They are getting free food, get housing assistance, so why is see all VA news here? It doesn’t fit. Not even fit.
   2. Where do you think it would fit better? The 3 don’t mirror each other. Why is it there? I don’t see a reason why that would be there.
   3. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? A different photograph if anything at all. Housing assistance, but you are showing them getting free food. Housing assistance and VA news don’t feed you.
   4. How often should the information be changed?
7. 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? It is a direct link to that page. I have no idea what a Yellow Ribbon is. Just quick links, you know. Those are fast. Find a form that is a quick link. That is laid out well. Those are common. Whoever wrote that title is giving more credit to what they are. Those are just quick links. Those are not tools.
8. Looking up a bit on the page, tell me about what you see in the bright blue box ("Access and manage your VA benefits and health care", "Sign in and create an account"). It is very obvious you just need to sign in or create an account. If you are going to be on here, you have to sign in or create an account.
9. Would you get rid of this? You already have the sign in button, why do you have it twice? It is too busy.
10. What would you get rid of to make it less busy? Access and manage, the 3 photographs, it is taking you off to some kind of political world. I would keep the search and get rid of the title other search tools. Combine common tasks and search tools. They are both the same thing. The rest is basically like a chain restaurant. It has that same feel.
11. I'd like to know more about how you usually look for information on web pages in general--not specifically VA or government websites. Can you tell me about a web page that you went to recently and how you found what you were looking for on it? If I am reading an article I would use links, if not I would use Google.
    1. RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ scan the page to see if anything jumps out because that page may not have a search option.
    2. Do you ever use a search box on the page?
    3. If so, when?
12. 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!