**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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_None I can think of right now that I am looking for anyway.*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) For quick questions I will Google it. I may go in person. VA app because it is faster.*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? Last time I used the app to make sure I wasn’t missing any of my appointments and to check on an appointment I had just made. The app has the list of appointments with date/times and contact information. Actually, I used it today because they sent me a reminder. I have an Android and my phone is a year and a half old.

**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...

#### Guessing I would go to VA benefits and healthcare drop-down menu. Manage my health scrolls that tab. Maybe I would go to disability. I can check my claim or file for a disability increase. Clicks on link. Gives me the form number. Scrolls page. This looks like I would be applying for a new claim. It doesn’t look like an increase. Wants to sign in.

#### What would you expect to do if you could sign in? I went to disability, file for an increase, and if I were to click on this it would be what I need. There is also a link on this page that I could click on as well.

#### Is there anything on this page that would tell you that you are filing for an increase? I know I am going through it fast, but I do not see anything that stands out to tell me it is for increasing. There is just a lot of information to read.

#### Would you typically read through it or zip through it? I would typically zip through it until I get frustrated then I would read. In the title it should state that this is a form to increase as well.

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

#### I would give it a 3 because it wasn’t too hard once I took my time, but it would take some troubleshooting to find it. I want it to be clear and not have to guess.

#### 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 do see in the middle find a form. If I did not see that I would just type it into the search bar. I would just type it into the search bar. It took me right there. Want me to keep going? Sure. Clicks on first link. It took me back to the original page, and I would click on sign in to start my application.

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

#### 5 that is definitely a 5.

#### 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 go to payment history. Then once I sign in it would pop up.

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

#### I would give it a 5.

#### 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 go to VA drop-down menu. Goes to disability. Starts going down the headers. I would probably put it into the search bar to see if something popped up there. The first link he clicks on. There we go.

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

#### I am going to give it a 4 because once you type it in it popped up. Without the search bar it would be difficult.

#### It does not seem like the search bar was your first option. Right, just clicking it would have been easier. If you are looking for something on YouTube it is easier to click on something rather than typing words into a search engine.

#### 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...

#### Education benefits. I would go to manage my Veteran education benefits. It says to check my GI Bill benefits. I would sign in and all the information would be there.

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

#### I would say 5.

#### In this situation you found a link and you didn’t have to search. Right it was right there and gave me what I was looking for.

#### 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 look for locations and see there is one at the bottom. Clicks on link. I can enter the city, state, or zip code.

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

#### That was easy, I would give it a 5.

#### Is this a feature you have used before? It seems like most companies normally put that information or contact us at the bottom.

#### 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...

#### Benefits and healthcare, records, request your VA medical records, and then I am scanning through to see if it states anything about sharing records. This would be it right here. Next, I would sign in.

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

#### I would give it a 4 because I guess it was a little easier for me because I did something similar recently. It would be more difficult if I hadn’t done it recently.

#### Did you actually use the VA.gov website to request your medical records? I was actually looking for the form to release my medical records to a non-VA medical center.

#### 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...

#### Go back to healthcare, scrolls drop-down menu, and clicks on send a secure message to healthcare team. Once you sign in you will have that option.

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

#### That was pretty easy that was a 5.

#### 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...

#### That is something I am working on now, so that is a good question. Honestly, I would search that. Travel claim first and see what comes up. I see the form pop up. I would click on travel pay made easy. I would click on VA travel reimbursement, and it gives me a link to get that done. Sign in and it would take me there.

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

#### I would give that a 5 because once I typed that in it popped right up.

#### 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 am thinking that is under letters. I should be able to go to Service member benefits. Here is the COE but that is not it. I just saw that. On the app I know where that is. Goes to the drop-down menu. Going through each header. It would be under disability, clicks VA payment history, but I don’t think that it is. I know on the app it has a section for all VA letters. Types into search VA letters. Download benefit letters. There we go. Sign in and you would have the option.

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

#### I am going to say that one is a 3. Again, just clicking on something that gives me a link to take me there. Thank God for the search bar. You had to hit a bunch of drop downs. Now that I am looking right at it says download benefits letter. It was right in my face the whole time. I glanced at it, but I never took the time to read each line.

#### 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...

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

#### Which task? (select one)

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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? That search bar. Finding healthcare, contacting a provider, and making an appointment was pretty easy. You clicked right there.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? That last one was being I was having to click through. I could have done it a lot faster, but I thought I could find something to take me directly to it. If I really needed the information, the last thing even if it was right there it just did not stick out to me. There is just a lot of information on the page that does not stand out.
3. Is there anything we can do to make it stand out better? Maybe space it out because there is a bunch in that area.
4. It seems like sometimes you noticed it just not all the time? Right.
5. What would you like to *change or add*?
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 don’t know what the PIT count is. I guess if you are someone who needs assistance this is a quick link to it, but I do not know why I see VA news there. I don’t know why that would be in that section. That is all I can say about that.
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? Maybe for donation, volunteers, shelters, and maybe it would pop up in the search so I can find it somewhere else.
   3. How often should the information be changed? Maybe slight changes, but not very much. Maybe yearly.
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? I actually didn’t see that. Even though it was right there, somethings there is information that you really are not looking for. I just ignore it. I do that on Google as well if it is not what I am looking for.
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 looks like another place to sign in but that is weird because there is another place to sign in right above it.
9. When you were going to sign in when you got to certain pages, is that how you normally navigate? I use the app and I am already signed in. When I go on it from the site it asks me to sign in as well.
10. Does it prompt you to sign in or do you go to the sign in? When I think about it does not do that right away. I go to where I am going and then I sign in when I get to where I am going. To be honest I just noticed there was a sign in right there when you told me to look at it.
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? I normally use Google on my phone. I would just Google something.
    1. RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ looking for keywords on what he is searching.
    2. Do you ever use a search box on the page? Like YouTube maybe. You kind of have to. Most of the time no I just click. If the option is there maybe.
    3. If so, when?
12. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? I think that is pretty much it. I think the app makes the things I use the most it makes it simple. I can’t do everything from the app so I would go to the website.

**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!