**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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) Normally through email or online advertisement. Military organizations. Retired Officers Organizations. MOAA (Military Officers Association of America. I am a life member. Not VA websites. I have gone there, but I do not use it on a daily basis.*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? Wow, the last time. I can’t remember that actually because my issue is trying to get disability, but I have not done my part of it. I went through it and didn’t get approved, so I never went back to get a second opinion. I don’t have time to do it again. Health wise I am in pretty good shape so there has been no big push for me to do it.
9. Was your home loan from a long time ago? Yes, 1988-1989 timeframe. I was still active duty at the time. I retired in 1999.

**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 see other search tools and education tools staring at me. I would click on that. Reads the page and scroll down. I misspoke earlier I did use the education benefit in 2001 -2002 after I retired. You have eligibility and click on that. Am I eligible and I would read through that. Reads the page. I don’t see where I am eligible when it comes to the education.

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

#### I would say 5 because it just jumped out at me.

#### 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 the page and looks at the headers. Types in VA funded education schools in Virginia into search bar. School locator and reads the page. Clicks on use our WEAMS link.

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

#### I would still give it a 5 because I am already at the list of schools. It was pretty easy the hardest part would have me go through the list of schools.

#### 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...

#### File a disability compensation, clicked on the link. Start the application process.

#### What would you expect to do? I would log in and go through a series of questions. I would guess they would tell me I am missing information.

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

#### 5.

#### Which task? (select one)

1. *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...

#### The search bar is always a great place to start if you do not see what you are looking for. I would type in the search bar to get me there. Reads down the results. I would go through them and click on the one that be the one I need to do. I would click the first link because it is the most used one. Reads down the page. I would scroll through this to see what I need to do and see how long it takes to make the decision. About half a year. I think that is a long depending on what your disability is. I know some people wait for years to get approved if they get approved at all.

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

#### A 5 because you give me multiple ways to get to this data. I can’t complain about that part.

#### 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...

#### You have a lot of common things on this site. I would scroll down and click on healthcare. Scrolls down the page and reads the list. Clicks on access and quality healthcare. I think I could find out pretty easy about finding a provider in my area. Find a provider, search his states, clicks on each of the drop-down menus, and then looks for the directory. I was hoping to see a providers’ list. I guess I think I have gone down the wrong path. I was hoping it would give a list of clinics and providers in my state.

#### I already put in a state.

#### [What I would like you to do is to sign up for VA healthcare.] Is there a way to do that on here? Can you go back to the homepage? It says access and manage your VA benefits so I would need to sign in or create an account.

#### [What would you expect to happen if you did that?] That would open up and coming up with a provider is what comes to mind. I do not have VA benefits so that limits what I can get to. Clicks on service members benefits, reads the page to see where he falls to get VA benefits. Reads the page. Clicks on search and types in health care. Clicks first link VA healthcare. Eligibility. Reading light blue box about am I eligible for VA health care benefits. I am eligible for VA healthcare.

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

#### I would still give it a 5 because there is a ton of information on the website you just have a bunch of ways to get there. I could have gotten to the information sooner if I would have listened to the question better.

#### 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...

#### Family member benefits, let's check that out. Reads the page and scrolls down. Sign up for benefits. This doesn’t tell me how to let them know. Keeps scrolling. Goes back to homepage and types into search marriage. Reads the page and clicks on important information on marriage. Reads page and scrolls down. Reads the FAQ. I am kind of lazy so I would probably call and tell them.

#### Say you didn’t want to call, and you wanted to submit it online, what would you do? Continues to read the page. Goes back a page. Types into the search bar marriage notification. Clicks on SEP FAQs. It is not jumping out at me as far as notification of marriage.

#### Can you just put marriage into the search bar? I want to see the results. Goes to the 2nd page of the results.

#### I want you to look down the list to see if there is anything else that may help you. He continues to read the list of results.

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

#### 1

#### 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 the page. I don’t want to do that; it was too hard. Goes to the search bar and types in address change. Clicks on the first link. Sign in and update my profile.

#### 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...

#### It said something about mental health down here. I don’t want to do that. I do not want to read through that list and the bottom of the page. Scrolls up the page and types in mental health counseling. Clicks on VA mental health services. Reads the age. I think this is pretty straight forward.

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

#### I say 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...

#### Types in proof of military service into the search bar. Reads the list of results and clicks on access your documents and records and you can review your documents in DEERS. Clicks on service member personnel information. I would want me DD-214. I would have to log in to get to that.

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

#### I would give it a 5.

#### Have you used this site before? The Ebenefits site. It has been a while since I have been on that 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*

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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? The search worked very well besides the marriage.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? Marriage information, who I would notify. That is the only information that did not work well.
3. What would you like to *change or add*? My initial thought is nothing. There is a wealth of information here. If someone had the time to read through it they would be able to get to where they want to go.
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? My initial thought is it definitely needs to be on the homepage because it is a huge issue. We could argue about the placement but at least it is on the page. I do not have enough experience with homeless Veterans to tell you what other information should be there.
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? Nothing comes to mind. The beauty that comes to mind is that there is a wealth of information on the homepage. I would not change anything from what I am looking at now. I think it makes sense the way it is laid out now.
   3. 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? I click a VA location and education benefits. You have multiples paths to get to that information. My thought is it is another way to get to that data. I think it is good to have it that way.
6. You like having different ways to get to the same information? I do because we all process information in different ways.
7. How do you feel about clicking on things rather than search box? I would rather click on links because the data I want would be on that link. The search bar just sends me to list of information that may be related to what I want to get to.
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"). I did. If I had an account, I would be able to access all my personal information. It is good that you can’t click on the site and all your information comes up because of privacy reasons.
9. 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?
   1. RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ My favorite site is Google; I type in what I am looking for. It depends on the site. If I am on Home Depot, I would type in what I am looking for. On a car site I would use the drop-down menu. I don’t think there is a common answer, it really depends on how the website is site up. It depends what mood I am in as well. I am more fluid on how I navigate through the site.
   2. Do you ever use a search box on the page?
   3. If so, when?
10. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? I have covered all the points you wanted to cover, that is all that matters to me.

**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!