**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 Cindy.

**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. *Do you currently work for the VA? No, I currently work for the DoD.*
7. *What kind of work do you do? A motor vehicle operator. I drive a truck to pick up materials to take from one side of the base to the other. I am retired military, I used to be a Police Investigator. I took a break in that and tried to start my own business with a tractor trailer. I am trying to get back into my old position with background checks and fingerprints for the VA. We do submit everything to OMP. I am not a VA employee currently though.*
8. 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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ No those are my two main things learning what is coming out of the pipeline like housing benefits and burial benefits.*
9. Where do you typically go to get information and benefits from the VA? *(Google / Facebook / MHV / eBenefits / Contact center call or email / VA.gov / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
10. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? Once a month I go to different websites and navigate around. I have two appeals currently. I also have a VSO to help me work the case. When you go in to check the status it tells you where you are in the line.

**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...

#### He tries to sign in. \*Audio issues\* When I go to a page like this the first thing, I do is sign in so I can go look at whatever I want to look at. When you go to any VA websites you have to log in.

#### [What would you expect to see on the screen?] It would show me the different categories I could go look at. You can get all your personal information.

#### There is a link that educational benefits and you could even pick which era you served. Clicks on education benefits. I would scroll down to eligibility and click on that. It would tell you on here about the GI Bill, Post 911 GI Bill, and about the Montgomery GI Bill.

#### Have you seen this page before? Yes, I have been on it before.

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

#### I would rate it a 5 because if I have an idea of what I am looking for once you click on it they tell you exactly what you need to do next. Everything is there.

#### \*Audio issues\*

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

#### Scrolls the page. I would probably first go to careers and employment to see if I can find anything on here. Scrolls page. That is not what I am looking for. Other VA educational programs. Reads page and scrolls. I don’t see anything about what colleges that the VA can assist you with. I see something that says Yellow Ribbon program. Clicks on that. I have never heard of that before. Reads the page. It still doesn’t tell me. Goes back to education and training. GI Bill comparison tool. Here it says you can search by name.

#### What are you searching? When it says school, I wanted to see if my old school was still in the system.

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

#### I would say on this one it was maybe a 3 because I got sidetracked. I was thinking along one path, but once I saw the comparison tool I got to where I needed to be.

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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? If you have an idea, you want to search for you make it easy to find. It has everything you may want to research right there.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? Probably if I where it says other search tools. If I were to just scroll down, it has everything already highlighted. It would have got me there quicker rather than the education benefits links. I really like the lower section that is bold, icons, and descriptions.
3. What would you like to *change or add*? Honestly, I would probably take out where it says search bar and the other search tools out. Where it says common tasks those are pretty much what my buddies do. If you took that common tasks and just kept the lower area and add those common tasks down there. It is not shown down there that I think is important. Some of it is redundant, but someone older may need that. It could be confusing. Just make it a little bit clearer.
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?
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here?
   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?
6. 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").
7. 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? Normally what I do is go to my search bar and hit Google. Types in rental homes in Dublin. Search through the results. I usually use Google for everything.
   1. RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Starts using drop down menus on rental site and filling out the filters.
   2. Do you ever use the site search bar? Usually when I am on the internet, I am looking for a specific thing. Goes back to Google and types in Camp Lejeune water study. This one really doesn’t have a search bar. If I was looking for something and it had a search bar, I would use the search bar because it would get me to where I want to go faster. I do use that. I just have not found one lately. Since I have been on the VA site so much, I know everything is right there that I am looking for. I guess if I wanted to find something about common things, I would use the search bar. You actually helped me out because I was not aware that the VA site had information on Camp Lejeune water study. I normally do not do that because I see the other topics on the website. When I come on here it is usually for healthcare and disability. I never used the search bar on here before. Thank you, Cindy. You need to keep that search bar. I never thought to go to the search bar. I typed into the search bar into the homepage.
   3. Do you ever use a search box on the page?
   4. If so, when?
8. 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!