**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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The travel expense use to be covered up until 2014, maybe. It is a two-day trip and I have to pay for flight and a hotel.*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I don’t know of any that I could get in the Philippines. Here I can only get seen for my service connected disabilities.*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) Over the internet. I am a member of the VFW over here. I have a listing of sites that I go to, I can’t name them off the top of my head.*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? Yesterday one of our post members had a leg problem that is developing into a hip problem. I was helping him look into appealing his claim. I was giving him the phone numbers to ask for assistance.
9. Did you use any online resources to get him those numbers? The VA sent out a PDF with a list of phone numbers to get assistance to all the offices you may need.

**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...

#### Under common tasks it says file a claim for compensation. Something that irritated me was the find a VA location would not show me the regional office in the Philippines—it would not give me any information from the “use my location” link—just send me on a constant loop. There are Veterans throughout the world that would be left out of this VA locator.

#### What would be helpful for you? I would expect it to tell me information on the regional office and the outpatient clinic here. Getting back to filing a claim for compensation. Clicks on link. I am at that location and normally I could also use these forms to pull down other forms for burials, appeals, and new flags. I use the VA forms to pull out other forms.

#### Do you find any resources if they qualify? If I end up on a page without the information, I am looking for I will Google it.

#### Do you see anything on this page?

#### \*Kicked out of the meeting\*

#### Do you have your military records so we can reference it. If they do not have the military records we will tell them to get that information and their DD-214.

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

#### I would say it was at least a 4 because I could normally find what I am looking for but I have to dig.

#### Which task? (select one)

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

#### Find a form, clicks on the link, and then I would either enter in the form name or number if you know the number.

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

#### I would say 5.

#### Which task? (select one)

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

#### I would go under education benefits under other search tools. Depending on the Veteran if he is on the GI Bill or the other education benefits, and I would marry him up with whatever plan he lands other.

#### And if you want to see how much money they have left? He would have to log in and get that information himself because it would not give me that information.

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

#### Because I am not that familiar looking up education benefits, I would rate it a 4 it may change to a 5 once I got more comfortable with it.

#### [Is this not normal help you would help other Veterans with?] No, I would normally help with filing disability or appealing claims.

#### Which task? (select one)

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

#### Drop-down menu, records, and in all honesty, I would call and ask how I would do this.

#### [Earlier you mentioned everything someone would need to file for a disability or an appeal, have you not tried that before?] No that is not something I have done before.

#### [Anywhere else you would explore?] I would keep looking at the menus until I found what I am looking for. For sharing it with an outside civilian hospital I would have to call and ask someone.

#### [Could you find a place for you to find your medical records?] I would go to MHV and download the blue button. On the top toolbar you have My VA button, on the old VA site there was another button missing I would use for this. Do you want me to sign into the other site and see what that button was? No, I do not.

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

#### I would say 4.

#### With looking at the page now not going to MHV. If taking my time and going through each of the options, I am sure I would find what I am looking for.

#### [I have time if you want to go through. Can you just tell me what you are thinking as you go through?]

#### \*Kicked out of meeting\*

#### Which task? (select one)

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

#### Goes to drop-down menu and go under housing assistance and VA loan types. Reads the page. If I want to purchase a new house, I would go here.

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

#### I would stick with my 4 nothing is perfect.

#### Which task? (select one)

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

#### I am not signed in so I would not be able to go to my profile where I would normally do it at. Drop-down menu, records, and change your address. This tells you how to change your address at your profile, but since I am not logged in, I cannot do that.

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

#### \*Kicked out of meeting\*

#### Which task? (select one)

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

#### At the top of the page, I would click on the talk to the Veterans crisis line or call the regional office and talk to someone there.

#### [Is there anywhere else you would point them to?] I would hand them off to the outpatient clinic if they did not want to talk to the crisis line.

#### [How would you suggest they get in contact with the outpatient clinic?] I would give them the contact information so they can talk to someone in the center.

#### [Is there a way you can find resources on this page if they could talk to someone?] Goes to drop-down menu, health care.

#### [What are you looking for?] I am looking for something related to online help.

#### [What do you mean by online help?] You wanted me to give them advice on medical opinions on something that caused them stress. Depending on what their problem was, this resources list here is a good shopping list of what may fit their need.

#### [Which would you point them to?] Is it is someone that needs women’s health, do they want to do a disability claim, you have the wellness program here.

#### [They want to talk to someone about how they are feeling.] I would shoot them to the crisis line or to the mental health services here.

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

#### 4 nothing is perfect it can always be improved on.

#### Is there an easier place to find that information? I can’t really find a more convenient place to park it.

#### 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? It seems like it would be easy to navigate, it gives you options, and you have to follow the trail. You should be able to find what you are looking for.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? I would like to be able to be pointed to the regional office and clinic in the Philippines.
3. What would you like to *change or add*? On one of the other sites, they had a better system to download your DD-214, military records, and personal records. I have not found an easy way to find that.
4. Where would you like to see that? Ideally if you could order that online for the VA to send them to you on a CD. Some are small enough that you would be able to download a file.
5. 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? The homeless program does not exist in the Philippines. We do not have access here. I don’t see that vantage point being useful to me. Unimpressed. I have not looked at this before.
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? We need to be informed about wars in our area. Changes to benefits to our family members or ourselves, changes to benefits, and changes to filing an appeal.
   3. How often should the information be changed? If there is a change it should be updated for users of that change. It would depend on what is changing. Sending something out every quarter is just junk mail. People would get in the habit of just deleting it.
   4. Would you rather receive this information in your email or on VA.gov? I usually get my information on the internet. I have Facebook groups that I follow for my VA news. I don’t count on the VA for my source of news.
6. 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? Basically, what it is saying, if you are looking for something this is a good place to start. Depending on what you are looking for. If you were looking for something on disability it does not look it offers help with that.
7. What type of tools do you think would be helpful? VA disability made easy, ratings table, requirements for the different ratings, burial information, and contact information to stop different payments if Veteran passes away.
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").
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? Normally I narrow things down what I am looking for on Google. I would go through my options and click one.
   1. RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Depends on how the website is designed. If they do have a search bar that would be a good place to start. If not, see if there are links to click on to find what you are looking for. I feel better with going through the links to get to where I am going to. A lot of the search engines are user friendly, and you have to use certain terms in a certain order for it to function correctly.
   2. Do you ever use a search box on the page?
   3. If so, when?
10. Are they any organizations that would provide help if the VA cannot help you? VFW, DAV, there are a lot of Veteran groups that have their own Facebook groups that can provide advice on what I may be going through.
11. 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!