**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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I am not sure, I feel like I explored everything.*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits? That would be with my VA claim. I logged into my Ebenefits and VA.gov to check my current status.
9. Are you still waiting on that information and the current status? Yes, that is and I was able to check my status.
10. Where did you look? I started at Ebenefits because sometimes it is easier for me to information and most of the time it redirects me to VA.gov.

**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...

#### Oh, that is a good one. Clicks on drop down menu VA benefits and Healthcare. Education and training. View your VA payment history. I think this would show me the payments to the school maybe. That is what I think. Clicks link to home.

#### Can you please go back? Sure.

#### I am going to have you stop right here. What would you do from here if you wanted to check the payments? I would log in and probably click on education benefits. Scrolling.

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

#### Now is that what it relates to what you asked me for? I would say a 3 because I think I would have to search for that specific payment.

#### If you would do that on your own, would you log in and check? Yes I would log in to check.

#### 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...

#### \*Drop down menu\* I would go back to education and training, manage my benefits, check post 911 GI Bill benefits.

#### Talk aloud. I would go where it says check your eligible, I would find the tool once I logged in to see what benefits I had available.

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

#### I would rate this a 5 because it was straight forward on what you are looking for. It explains what you are going to find there.

#### 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...

#### Actually, I would just Google that, but looking on here I would click on disability. From there to find the rates I am not real sure actually. I would think it would be somewhere in the drop-down menu under disability. I am guessing somewhere on this page it would have something about the compensation rates.

#### Take your time to look for it if you think this would be where it is. Scrolls. Receive VA disability compensation rates. Veterans’ disability rates. There it is. If I wanted to see what’s what, I would scroll to see if they have what I am looking for.

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

#### I would give it a 5 because it was fairly easy to 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...

#### I would go to find a VA location and put in where I was going. City, state, and zip code.

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

#### It is a 5 because it was easy to find because it is right there highlighted.

#### Have you used that before? I have not used that before. I know where all the locations in my state. I don’t go out of state to go to VAs.

#### 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 know I can do a release of information. There should be a form on the page. Goes to drop down menu. View all in healthcare. There is a form you have to fill to release your VA files. Scrolls. Still looking.

#### What are you looking for? I am looking at how you can share your records with an outside provider. I know there is a release information form that you have to fill out to do that. I do not see anything on this specific page. I would probably go to my medical records to see if there is anything on there that allows me to do that.

#### How would you do that? I would log in and click get your medical records. Scroll down through here. Here it is share digital copy. I am not sure if that is for VA doctors. I will keep going. We have this. Veteran health information exchange. I have to read about that because I have never used it. I am guessing that is where that can be done.

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

#### I’d give this one a 3 because it took me a minute to find it.

#### 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 know you can do that through secure messaging. I would go back to healthcare information. Drop down menu and click on VA secure message. I have done that before. Once you log in you go to healthcare, select secure messaging, and send message.

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

#### I’d give it a 5 because it was easy to find. I think it right there on that page when you go to your medical benefits.

#### Have you done this before this way? Yes, I have. I go to the drop down and manage your benefits. I have done it this way and on Ebenefits. I have done it multiple ways.

#### 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 a good question. I would go to the drop-down menu. Health care again. View all in healthcare. I would look to see what I have to choose from. Scrolls. I am looking on here for travel pay. Okay here we are getting travel pay reimbursement. How to file a claim. I would read through it to find out what I need to do, and find the form so I can file my claim.

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

#### I would give that a 4 because I had to look for it a little bit. I had to search all the way at the bottom of the page.

#### So you were reading the page from the top to the bottom and realized it was closer to the bottom? Yes.

#### 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 guessing where I clicked on before. The one that was on here was a little bit different for releasing your information digitally.

#### You were expecting a paper form? Yes. \*Audio technical difficulties\*

#### You would come over here to find that form? Yes.

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

#### I would give it a 3 because you have to go through some things to find it.

#### You stated you have done this before it was paper form, did you find it on here or did someone hand that to you? I want to say someone handed it to me or mailed it to 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...

#### I would go to disability and manage your benefits. There should be a document in there that shows what you receive in disability compensation pay on a monthly basis. I know there is a formal letter you can get. Right here at download your benefit letter. Depending on what you need to show you download that specific letter.

#### Have you gone through this process before? I have for different things. As far as for mortgage I am not sure if there is a different one.

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

#### I would give this a 4 because you have and to search for it a little bit. I had to look for it on the page that I have been here a couple times I still had to search a bit.

#### 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...

#### Back to the drop-down menu, I never had to use that. I would look for something where I can add my dependents. I would have to sign in for that. Maybe family member benefits, hopefully there is a place where you can add family. I am looking for somewhere I can add my family. I am not finding what I am looking for on this page. Clicks benefits for spouse or dependents to see if there is something on here. Am I just adding them in general? \*Yes, add them in general.\* Let me go back here.

#### Can you go back that is a different page? Okay, let me go back here. Try records, and search more in records. I do not want to get any records, that is all that is here. I am not sure where you would go to add your family.

#### Anywhere else you would try looking. I can’t help but go back to family member benefits because I would think you would add them somewhere in here. I am looking through what I have to choose form because i have already looked there before. At this point, since it is all about adding random family members, I would just click on something to see if there is a way to add them. Here is eligibility so I would click on that. And this is geared towards the Veterans so I will just move on and read through here to see if it states anything about adding family members. Here is family health benefits, let's see. That is all kind of specific. This looks to be related to the Veteran again. Let me try managing benefits to see if there is anything there. They could make this a little bit bigger because it is tiny. \*The text?\* Yes. This all seems to be related to the Veteran as well. I would then click on more resources, and it does not say anything. I am not sure where I would go.

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

#### That was a 1 because I never found what I would 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...

#### 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? I would say in general knowing exactly what I was looking for and where it would be located works well.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? I would say a few too many categories and drop downs. Having to get pass the information that does not apply to me to get to the things that do apply to me was a little difficult. Families are important to us and not being able to find that easily [how to add a dependent] is not the best.
3. When you log in can you find things easier? I think when I am logged in it is easier to find things that are tailored to me.
4. What would you like to *change or add*? Actually, outside the size of the text, I think it is okay. It has the main things that Veterans look for. It is pretty easy to understand.
5. What text are you finding too small? Just the descriptions under the main headers that is really small. And the links are really small. They look small to me. The hyperlinks are smaller than that.
6. Do you have that issue on other sites as well? I think it is just this site. I would think it would be a lot bigger on this site. The black text needs to be bigger.
7. 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? Outside there are highlighting it I do not have any thoughts.
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? I think here I am okay with what is here. I would like to see any new updates or changes, like the burn pits, should be here.
   3. How often should the information be changed? They have multiple things that you can scroll through. Maybe weekly so we can see things that would be helpful to Veterans.
   4. Would you look through if there were multiple topics? I would through it. I would like to see any changes, information for caregivers, and information that affects Veterans.
8. 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 can see it when I focus on it, but it did not stand out to me right away. I do not know why you would have Fnd a VA location or education benefits would be down here if it was already on top. I think having information beneficial to Veterans should be down here that aren’t already on the page. Resources could go in this area. Yellow Ribbon is a program that works with VA to help Veterans additional help with education costs.
9. Can you tell me about how you usually look for information on web pages in general? (not specifically VA or government websites) *RECORD: type into search box / click on links (browse) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* I look at what is on the page depending on what I am looking for. I would see what is on there to see if it is featured, if not I would look for a search bar like here.
10. When do you use the search bar? I usually try to look on the page before I try the search bar. I will use it if what I am looking for is not featured or been looking 3 minutes.
11. Why did you not use the search bar on this page? It really didn’t stand out to me. I am so used to using the drop-down menu on this page. I know I would go to manage my benefits. I am used to navigating this page that way.
12. You mentioned you start off on Ebenefits and get redirected to Va.gov, you also mentioned that you would Google something, how do you determine which you would use? If there is a form, I would usually just Google that to find a fillable form. That is usually the only time I would Google anything.
13. You also mentioned you are used to using the drop-down, have you ever used the search? I cannot say I have.
14. Can you scroll down a little bit, is that the type of content you are interested in be something you would come to VA.gov to find or would you like that to be sent to you? I would probably not come to VA.gov to find that, and I do not want that sent to me because I would probably not read it. If it was featured here, I would probably read it but wouldn’t come here to find it.
15. 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!