**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 (SGLI is through VA) / 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 don’t know what else there is besides the ones I have.*
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 / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) I get mail and I get an email from the VA. They used to have a thing at the VA where you could fill out a form to get travel pay. Now you must go online to get your travel pay which is a difficult process. The travel pay system online is horrible. The old system is what I prefer. It was a direct result of just checking into my appointment. They had to screw it up and do it online.*
8. Can you tell me about the last time you were looking for information or trying to do something with your VA benefits?

**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...

#### Probably check your claim or appeal status. Then I would sign in with my account.

#### What would you expect to see there? You are saying I already have a rating and I want to increase it. There should be a link on there about appealing one of your disabilities. I would assume it would have all of them there and click on it then instructions on how to increase of appeal for that.

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

#### That was pretty easy about 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...

#### There are two things I see benefit letters and payment history. I would first look at the benefit letter first and then look at the history to ensure I have all my payments up to date. I should download benefit letter first then go to history.

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

#### That was a 5. That was easy.

#### 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 page. Drop-down menu. I don’t see a Q&A but I would have assumed it would be there. Otherwise, I would search it in the bar. Clicks on VA disability compensation rates. You have to go to one of these depending on which applies to you.

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

#### Probably a 4 because I had to do the search.

#### You would prefer to find it without having to search? Yeah. It should have been under the first tab (VA benefits and healthcare) under compensation tab. I think a lot of people would be searching for a table with that information on 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 my guys always talk about MHV and to go to that website. I would assume it would be under healthcare tab. Scrolls page. Clicks use VA secure messaging. I would sign in and then I would assume at some point it would allow me to type in a message or start a chat.

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

#### I would say a 4 it is pretty good.

#### What does pretty good mean? If there was a way to add it to a hot button with the main page.

#### 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 page. Clicks VA benefits drop down menu. There is another place to get a message to my healthcare team. You know what I do not see it. Maybe go to MyVA. I would log in and then go from there. I don’t see an easy way to get travel pay.

#### Can you back up in the browser, you are on a different version.

#### You looked at multiple areas and you didn’t see anything for travel pay? No, I did not and I do not see any where else that it would be. I would search the thing again for travel reimbursement. I would go to this form, this is interesting, go to the online tool. That must be what I showed you. I would click here on file travel reimbursement and try to fill it out.

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

#### That is probably a 2 because I had to do a search for it. It was not very easy to find it. Once I searched it moved me forward.

#### You would prefer to find that link without searching? Yes, because they have changed the process 3-4 times within the last 8 months so they should make it easier to access.

#### 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, family member benefits, I will be honest because it is not up front, I would probably call the VA benefits hotline and they could direct me to it.

#### If you really wanted to find it on here, would you search it? Yes, I would search it and there it is. It just popped up.

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

#### It was 2 because I had to use the search again.

#### 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. Scrolls down the page. Clicks on service member benefits. Honestly instead of looking around I would use the search button because it is probably easier. Change your address here it is.

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

#### That is probably a 3 because the search is easier to use. I think the search has an auto fill option.

#### 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 the mental health talk to someone now [VCL], but I think that would not be for this situation. I would probably click find a VA location and try to talk to someone since it is not that urgent.

#### How would you find the services you are looking for? I clicked on all services and click on the one I want to go to and call.

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

#### 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...

#### Down here I just saw it burials and memorials. It would be right there. Clicks on get VA burial benefits and go through the process.

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

#### That was easy, that would be a 5. That is a major category, so it was easy to find.

#### 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 assume it would be downloading your benefit letters. I would type in DD214, but I didn’t know you could get that on this page. I would have to go to mil connect and request my file.

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

#### That is a 4 that is pretty easy.

#### 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...

#### The DD-214 would be fine. There is the housing assistance to see if you are eligible for a VA loan, you could also get the certificate of eligibility also. I went to housing assistance at the bottom, then I clicked on how to request certificate of eligibility.

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

#### I would give that 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 is right up here find a VA location, the same one I used before. Put in the city and state.

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

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

#### 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 never go out of network with the VA because they stated they would pay my doctor bills and they never did. I am not sure about this one because I would never look at it. I would do the search again and look for VA referred clinics.

#### The task is not about the referral it is about getting your medical history. Records, there you go. I would go to VA medical records and get it from there.

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

**Post-Task Interview - 10 minutes**

1. What worked *well* for you? The search because it seems it knows what you are looking for if you put in a general search term.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? The way I looked at it some of the things you asked for should have been within the 11 categories. If I couldn’t easily find something within what is provided you had to look around in here to find where it is.
3. You liked to use these headers, but you couldn’t always find one that related to what you were looking for? Yes, exactly. You could add a miscellaneous category that would have everything you asked me for that I couldn’t find. Travel reimbursement would be a big one. Why is Yellow Ribbon here when that could be replaced with travel pay information? Everything else is easily found with the search button.
4. What would you like to *change or add*?
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 first thing is I do not know what the PIT count is, what is that? I would not put that on there if it is not clear what it is. Veteran homelessness is a real problem to put that there is good to have. Is VA news related to homelessness? What do you think? I would assume it would be related. If it was separate, then put it somewhere else.
   2. Would you click on it? It is not about homelessness. I would put it maybe on the top there is plenty of room there. I would offset it with different font or different color.
   3. Would you follow the link? I may. I would probably like the email with the news being sent to me.
   4. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? I know when you sign in it can be geared to what you what. Maybe upcoming appointments. There is a list right there instead of having to go to different pages to see.
   5. How often should the information be changed?
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? Some of the things repeat like Find VA location and find a VA here as well. Forms are great because a lot of people look for that. Yellow Ribbon should go under education benefits. When you go to MyVA why would you have to sign in again. If you are already signed in maybe, it would not ask if you were signed in. Here is everything you asked me about.
7. Is this a page you have seen before? It seems to be.
8. Is there anything else that we could call this page other than other search tools? That is a good question I am not sure what I would call it.
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 have an Android phone and I typically say, “Hey Google show me this and this,” then I go from there. I usually do that all on my phone because it is with me all the time. I would either refine the question or go on my phone and dink around with it on there. I would read it and look at the website. We do a lot with restaurants and things like that. I probably would go straight to a search engine.*
10. 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!