**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.

**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 don’t think so. Right now, I have not used any of the career resources because I am currently unable to.*
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? Probably last week. It was only to see my payment history and appointments I have coming up. Payment history I was looking at the dates and about how much I would get paid, and I was able to figure that out through VA.gov. As soon as you sign in it is right there in front of you.
9. Is that where you were looking for upcoming appointments? Yes. I found everything I was looking for.

**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...

#### Sign in, one of the blocks on the page it will show you exactly where you can go to increase your disability.

#### You would use that if you want to increase your disability rating? Yes.

#### Your first thought was to log in right away, what did you click on to do that? I clicked on sign in button on the top right side of the screen.

#### If you had logged in at that point, what would you expect to see after that? After logging in where it says common tasks there would be the links to all the resources I may need. Send a message, appeals, payment history, refills, I think I am forgetting some.

#### Is that how you normally interact with his page? Yes.

#### Pretend you are on a public computer so you will not sign in. Does that make sense? Yes.

#### Go back to increase your disability rating, where would you go to on here to do that? File a claim for compensation right here on the right side. It tells me to sign in to start your application it would pull up your personal information and your current disabilities and will ask you if you want to file for an increase on any of them.

#### Have you done this before? Yes.

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

#### 4 because mainly because my sight is not that great, so I have to focus on what I am seeing. It is mostly user error.

#### Are there some things that are easier to, see? They are all fairly easy to see. The blue background items are easy, the clickable links are easy, but some of them I have to zoom my screen to see things better.

#### Do you use the zoom feature to see your screen? Yes, but I have not done that today. I do also have blue light glasses but not using them.

#### 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...

#### From here I can see my payment history or download my benefit letter.

#### Have you done these before? Yes.

#### Can you show me? Okay. I would click view your payment history, it would ask me to sign in, and then it would auto populate the last three months of payments.

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

#### 5 because it basically walks your through everything there isn’t much you have to find on your own.

#### 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 can pull up the calculations or the table for that year. I could just search for the current disability ratings. I don’t think I have done that before. I am clicking on disability. Looking through list. I’m going to try search. Types in disability compensation rates. I would click on compensation benefit rates and rate table. It is the first link. It shows your percentage, if you have dependents or not. I don’t have dependents so I would look at VETERAN ALONE.

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

#### 5 because once you start typing in the search engine it will populate what you want to see. It works out.

#### Did you see something like that when you were typing? 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...

#### Clicks on drop down menu, education, and training, and check your post 911 GI Bill statement. I would log in. usually I would go to Ebenefits, but here it gives you the same information. On here it would show you how many months you have used, how much you have left, how much you would get paid, and even look up schools.

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

#### 5 because I have used it so many times it is second nature looking for it. The layout on Ebenefits you would hover over the header and then you can click on eligibility. Basically the same throughout the all the VA websites.

#### 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...

#### After signing in I could go here (drop-down menu) or I could go to my profile and update all my mailing address or my phone number.

#### How would you look up information without signing in? Drop-down menu, scrolls list, clicks records, and clicks on change your address. Then they want you to sign in. They would show you your current address and then you would click edit and make changes, save it, and then you would receive an email stating you made those changes.

#### 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...

#### There are a couple ways. You can call the Veteran crisis line; you can try to make an appointment to talk to a mental health provider.

#### Benefits and healthcare, schedule and manage appointments, send a secure message, and at the bottom of this page you can click on mental health, and it will send you to resources to get you connected to mental health department. Scrolls page.

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

#### 5, I have been on this page so often that it is more of a trial and error for 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...

#### VA benefits and healthcare, burial and memorials, and click on eligibility.

#### 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...

#### You could download benefits letter or your DD-214. The letter will show your active service time. The DD-214 you would go to records and click on request your DD-214.

#### Which would you most likely do? I would probably do DD-214 because you do not have to show them how much you make on disability.

#### 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...

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

#### 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)

*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)

*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:

**Post-Task Interview - 10 minutes**

1. What worked *well* for you? Once you are familiar with the page, it is fairly easy. I have used it to do a lot of different things. I have been able to make appointments easily, sending messages to my provider, prescriptions, and getting my records. I like downloading my records because you never know what you will find with what the doctors put in your notes.
2. What was *unclear or didn't work well* for you? Nothing actually. Pretty easy to use.
3. What would you like to *change or add*? No, nothing I like the security of it. You have to get verification to log in, and you can also get to MHV easily once you are on here.
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? Getting housing assistance now, I like that. I thought I was going to be in this situation not long ago. I was able to get a lot of information and resources on this site.
   2. What kind of information would be helpful to show here? I don’t know. It is all there. Even careers and employment. I am not too familiar with pension; I am thinking that is for when I am older, so I have never looked at it.
   3. Did you see this part of the page because you seemed to stay at the top? No I never saw this part of the page.
   4. 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? Finding a VA facility, education benefits that ties into the Yellow Ribbon program, and find forms I have used it but when you usually need the form you get it in the mail. The one thing that I do like is that they are fillable or a PDF version that you can convert them to a fillable PDF and submit them that way as well.
6. Did you notice this part of the page earlier? I did.
7. What do you think about the header “Other search tools?” I think it is fine.
8. 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) / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* If I just Google what I am looking for I usually just go over the page to ensure I know what I am looking at. I am reading over the page to see what is on it. Usually, I find what I am looking for. If not, most pages have the search bar so you can type in what you are looking for and it will take you to a link to take you where you are trying to get. I will not search until after I read the page.
9. Earlier you stated you have issues seeing words when viewing the page, overall is there anything in particular that is hard to see? No there is nothing that is hard to read. I don’t zoom often, but if I have been staring at the computer all day, I may need help reading the screen. I only zoom when my eyes are tired.
10. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? No, I actually like the ease of it.
11. You mentioned you have used VA.gov often, you still seem to know your way around it. It really is not hard unless make it hard.

**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!