User Research

Objective:
To collect insights from three potential users within key demographics to understand how they would interact with a **digital archive designed to preserve and honor the memory of America's military veterans**. This research aims to identify user expectations for verified data, usability, and features such as advanced search filters and data export options.

Primary Research Methods

1. Semi-Structured Interviews

- **Description:** Conduct one-on-one interviews (20–30 minutes each) with three participants representing the target audiences: a family member of a veteran, a military historian, and a veterans' organization representative.
- **Purpose:** Understand their goals, frustrations, and priorities when accessing or preserving veteran information.
- **Example Questions:**
  - "How do you currently find information about veterans or their service records?"
  - "What features would make a digital veteran archive most useful to you?"
- **Benefit:** Captures in-depth, personal insights from each audience group, revealing what users truly value in historical accuracy and usability.

2. Online Surveys

- **Description:** Follow up with a short online questionnaire to gather measurable data about user preferences and needs.
- **Purpose:** Quantify which features (e.g., verified service records, advanced filters, export options) are most important across different user groups.
- **Example Questions:**
  - "Rate how important it is for the archive to have verified military records (1–5)."
  - "How often would you use an app to research or preserve veteran information?"
- **Benefit:** Provides comparative data that highlights which features should be prioritized during development.

3. Usability Testing

- **Description:** Present a clickable prototype or early version of the app to each participant and observe their interactions as they search for a veteran, apply filters, and view data.
- **Purpose:** Identify usability challenges, navigation preferences, and design improvements.
- **Method:** Screen recording or observation followed by brief feedback discussion.
- **Benefit:** Reveals how different age groups (from 25 to 80) interact with the interface and which aspects of the app design enhance or hinder their experience.

Summary

By combining **interviews (qualitative understanding)**, **surveys (quantitative validation)**, and **usability testing (behavioral observation)**, this research approach ensures the app is accessible, accurate, and valuable to **families, historians, genealogists, and veterans' organizations** alike—preserving veterans' legacies with both credibility and ease of use.