The Case for Continuous Accessibility

Why businesses require an ongoing approach to digital accessibility and compliance

Digital accessibility is a legal imperative and a boon to business. In fact, 85% of the more than 1,000 respondents to our State of Digital Accessibility survey consider it a competitive advantage for their organization. But often, teams make the mistake of treating accessibility as a one-time project to be completed, rather than embracing it as an ongoing practice.

Organizations that approach accessibility as a one-and-done effort short-change their progress, inviting both legal and business risks. Conversely, teams that continuously invest in a sustainable accessibility program not only achieve long-term compliance, but also unlock opportunities for growth.

(1) Confidently demonstrate compliance

To demonstrate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other global civil rights laws, organizations need an ongoing accessibility program. Accessibility lawsuits rest on the claim that organizations lack the **policies, practices, and procedures** to ensure their services are accessible—so implementing a sustainable program is key to proving your organization meets legal requirements.

Maintaining compliance is more critical than ever in the highly active legal landscape surrounding digital accessibility today.

Roughly 14,000

digital accessibility lawsuits citing the ADA were filed from 2017 through 2022, with the number steadily increasing year-over-year.

More than 78,000

demand letters were sent in 2022, which is more than 1,500 per week.

Costs aside, accessibility lawsuits can tarnish a brand's image—so compliance is essential to safeguarding positive brand sentiment.

(2) Stay in control of your development roadmap and budget

If you're sued, you'll likely have to fast-track fixing accessibility issues as part of the terms of your settlement. This reactive approach disrupts your current development roadmap, putting other projects at risk, which can put revenue at risk.

It's also much faster, and more cost-effective, to implement a sustainable approach to accessibility than to reactively fix issues.

$100,000

is the estimated cost of addressing accessibility reactively, rather than proactively embedding it in digital experience creation.
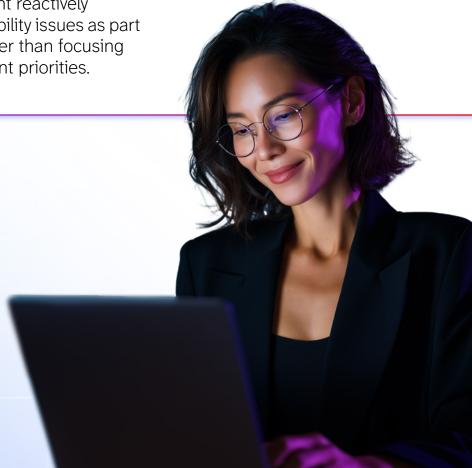
Six months to a year

may need to be spent reactively remediating accessibility issues as part of a settlement, rather than focusing on other development priorities.

By making accessibility a consistent priority, you'll minimize the need for costly, last-minute remediation. And when you maintain an ongoing relationship with a digital accessibility solution provider—who can help you ensure you're taking the most effective approach to compliance—you'll remain in control of the budget you devote to accessibility, rather than incurring hefty unplanned expenses in response to legal action.

③ Unlock sales opportunities

Proof of accessibility in the form of a completed Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT®), also called an accessibility conformance report (ACR), is a mainstream requirement for selling digital products to public-sector organizations. And private-sector businesses are increasingly requesting ACRs from their vendors, too.

73%
of senior leaders say their organization <u>requires proof of accessibility</u> most or all of the time when purchasing digital products.

64%
of business-to-business (B2B) organizations we surveyed say digital accessibility contributed to improved revenue.

To be credible to buyers, an ACR must contain current and accurate information, so you should update this documentation annually. And any new errors must be addressed before you can obtain a favorable updated report. Continuously ensuring your product meets accessibility standards, as part of an ongoing accessibility program, is the most efficient way to maintain an ACR that positively impacts sales.

Invest in users—and your business's future—with Level Access

No matter the size of your organization or scope of your digital portfolio, Level Access will equip you with the technology, training, and support needed to ensure ongoing accessibility and legal compliance. Our holistic solution combines a unified software platform with the market's deepest bench of expertise, empowering you to swiftly meet your accessibility goals and sustain momentum over time.

<u>Engage with a member of our team today</u> to get started.