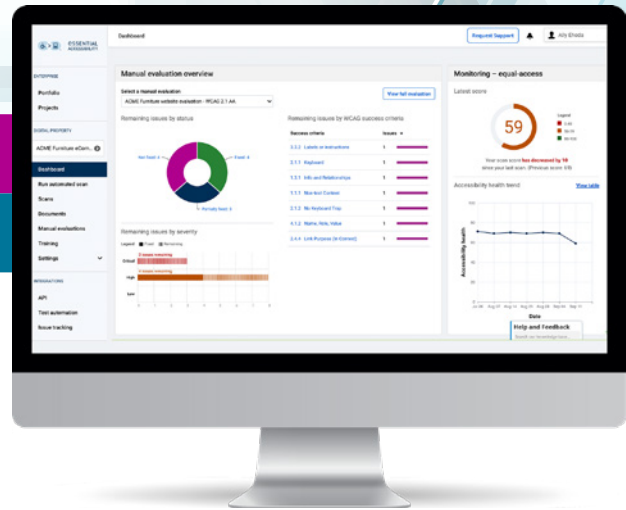




Digital Accessibility: Why now?



Now more than ever, there's an urgent and unmistakable need for organizations to prioritize digital accessibility, with three driving factors:

1. A shift to digital-first engagement

The pandemic has forced the shift from physical to online, yet many organizations have neglected accessibility while expanding their digital footprint.

2. Heightened consumer awareness

Consumers are more aware of corporate values, evaluating companies based on those that are inclusive. Digital accessibility is a key component of DEI initiatives.

3. Mounting regulatory pressure

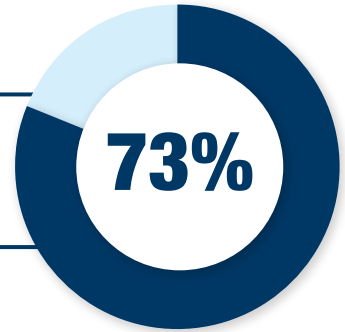
The AODA requires public-facing websites to meet WCAG 2.0 AA criteria. Non-compliance can lead to auditing and significant financial penalties.

1. Digital-first engagement:

COVID-19 has forced organizations to think differently about meeting consumer needs. Physical interactions have been replaced with online engagement, deepening our dependence on accessible digital experiences. Yet most websites and digital products contain barriers for people with disabilities, further widening this digital divide.

By the numbers, more than 1.8 billion people globally identify as having a disability. These consumers represent the world's largest minority group. When you include their friends and family members, you add another 3.3 billion potential customers.

Disability touches 73 percent of all consumers,
regardless of ethnicity or culture.



To properly serve today's diverse market, forward-thinking organizations must adapt and make their digital assets accessible to accommodate the unique needs of every visitor.

2. Consumer awareness:

Progressive organizations include digital accessibility as a key component of their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. And consumers are evaluating companies based on DEI commitments, naturally gravitating toward those that are authentically pursuing inclusion. Organizations committed to creating accessible digital experiences earn, and retain, consumer trust as well as their repeat business.

\$13
trillion

The disability market alone, with their friends and family, controls more than \$13 trillion in disposable income.

Enterprises seeking new ways to create value must consider heightened consumer awareness, align with consumer values, and capture spending capacity of the disability market.



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3. Regulatory pressure:

Ontario-based companies are now required to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Web accessibility is among the key AODA standards. To comply, organizations must submit an Accessibility Compliance Report every three years confirming that all internet and intranet websites and web content conforms with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA (with two exceptions).

Non-compliance can lead to significant financial penalties: a corporation can be fined up to \$100,000 per day until violations are resolved. An individual or unincorporated organization may face a penalty of up to \$50,000 per day.

An accessible online experience is no longer a nice-to-have; it's a legal requirement.

Organizations must avoid the costly impact of non-compliance by prioritizing digital accessibility.



An innovative digital accessibility solution:

eSSENTIAL Accessibility works with companies to make digital experiences accessible. Our software platform serves as centralized access to advanced tools, governance, and reporting, while our team helps navigate technical and regulatory complexities with legal expertise, code-level guidance, and on-demand accessibility training.

But our work goes beyond accessible assets. We help create and implement organization-wide accessibility policies that will meet legal requirements, foster a culture of inclusion, and earn consumer trust.

[Request a demo of our Accessibility-as-a-Service today.](#)

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