Al Company Required to Pay \$1 Million for Falsely Touting Capabilities of Web Accessibility Solution

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The FTC has penalized accessiBe Inc. \$1 million for claiming its "AI-powered web accessibility solution" can make websites fully compliant with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). According to the FTC's <u>complaint</u>, accessiBe claimed its "one line of code" made a website compliant with 30% of WCAG's requirements immediately and initiated an AI process that makes the website fully compliant with the remaining 70% of WCAG requirements within 48 hours. AccessiBe claimed to be the "#1 Web Accessibility Solution for WCAG" and that it offered "the leading AI-powered web accessibility solution." Despite these promises and performance claims, the FTC alleged that accessiBe failed to make basic and essential website components like menus, headings, tables, images, recordings, and more, compliant with WCAG and accessible to persons with disabilities.

The case also involves accessiBe's use of reviews, articles, and blogs on third-party websites that were formatted to appear as though they are the opinions of impartial authors and publications when in fact they were paid for by the company. The FTC also alleges that in some instances accessiBe expressly asked reviewers to omit or remove any designation that such reviews were "sponsored" or paid for by accessiBe.

The FTC's <u>consent order</u> requires accessiBe to pay \$1 million and to cease making unsubstantiated claims that its automated products can make any website WCAG-compliant or can ensure continued compliance with WCAG over time. AccessiBe also is prohibited from misrepresenting that product reviews come from impartial sources; the company also must disclose material connections between it and its endorsers.

The case was issued in a unanimous 5-0 vote, with Chair-elect Ferguson and Commissioner Holyoak writing <u>separately</u>.

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National Law Review, Volume XV, Number 7

Source URL: https://natlawreview.com/article/ai-company-required-pay-1-million-falsely-touting-