

Attention: AODA Toolbox Editors,

We are a group of Canadian web accessibility professionals writing to express a deep concern about the *Website Accessibility Plug-ins* section of the [June 2021 AODA Toolbox newsletter](#).

We believe that this section of the newsletter dangerously mischaracterizes the outcomes of using accessibility plugins, otherwise known as overlays. We acknowledge there is language stating that these tools will not make websites 100% AODA compliant. However, we believe many businesses will interpret this section of the newsletter as an endorsement for tools that the disabled community has been speaking out against strongly, as a result of the negative impact these plugins have on web accessibility and therefore their right to equal access online.

The [Overlay Fact Sheet](#) has extensive information about these plugins and over 500 signatures from disabled people and accessibility professionals warning of their negative impact.

Recently the [National Federation for the Blind issued a statement](#) withdrawing sponsorship from accessiBe, the market leader for accessibility overlays. The NFB called attention to the harm accessiBe has caused with their tools as well as their poor conduct with the disabled community.

“It seems that accessiBe fails to acknowledge that blind experts and regular screen reader users know what is accessible and what is not. **The nation’s blind will not be placated, bullied, or bought off.** Therefore, the Board revoked accessiBe’s sponsorship of the convention on June 22, 2021.”

We feel it is also important to draw to your attention the claims that accessiBe has been making in recent advertising campaigns:

“Become AODA compliant in less than 48 hours and avoid \$100,000 fines.  
The #1 AODA Automated web accessibility solution”.

Not only is this a false claim, as the June newsletter mentioned, even a perfect automated tool cannot achieve AODA compliance alone. It also gives the impression that their tool is endorsed by the AODA.

This company has been covered by [NBC](#) and [Vice](#) because of their inappropriate conduct with the disabled community and the harm caused by their tools. Civil rights lawyer Haben Girma issued [this statement about the danger of accessibility overlays and plugins](#) as well.

We are asking that the editors of the AODA Toolbox newsletter issue a statement retracting support for plugins/overlays and acknowledging the impact that the June newsletter had, much in the way the NFB issued a statement acknowledging the harm that initially allowing accessiBe to be a sponsor caused.

As professionals working to protect the rights of Canadians with disabilities, we feel this is urgent and would be happy to provide further information or support upon request.

Additional resources:

- [Honor the ADA - Avoid Web Accessibility Quick Fix Overlays](#)
- [accessiBe will Get You Sued](#)
- [Should I Use an Accessibility Overlay?](#)

Signatures:

1. Alex Tait, Georgian Bay, Ontario
2. Rocío Alvarado, Montreal, Quebec
3. Kivi Shapiro, Ottawa, Ontario

4. Toufic Sbeiti, Ottawa, Ontario
5. Angie Rajani, Toronto, Ontario
6. Denis Boudreau, Montreal, Quebec
7. Matsuko Friedland, Victoria, BC
8. Laurie O'Connor, Kitchener, Ontario
9. Adam Chaboryk, Toronto, Ontario
10. Miyuki Fukuma, Toronto, Ontario
11. Mike Gifford, Ottawa, Ontario
12. David Fourney, Toronto, Ontario
13. Brian Moore, Toronto
14. Dwayne Holmberg, Edmonton, Alberta
15. Nicolas Steenhout, Chilliwack, BC
16. Myriam Jessier, Montreal, Quebec
17. Augustin Delporte, Montreal, Quebec
18. Catherine Tunney Braeken, Oakville Ontario
19. Alicia Jarvis, Toronto, Ontario
20. Brian Elton, Toronto, Ontario
21. Rodrigo Sanchez, Montreal, Quebec
22. Julianna Rowsell, Pontiac, Quebec
23. Donna Vitan, Toronto, Ontario
24. Hector Osborne Rodriguez, Toronto, Ontario
25. Kaitlin Newson, Toronto, Ontario
26. D.M. Marchand-Lafortune, Tkaronto, Ontario, Turtle Island
27. Ka Li, Markham, Ontario
28. Arthur RIGAUD, Montreal, Quebec
29. Lara Devitt, Edmonton, Alberta
30. David Dias, Toronto, Ontario
31. Ellen Forget, Toronto, Ontario
32. Clara Pougeard, Montreal, Quebec
33. Carolina Crespo, Montreal, Quebec
34. Jennifer Chadwick, Toronto, Ontario
35. National Network for Equitable Library Service