

PRESS RELEASE

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WECO SHOWCASES TWO FORMS OF TESTING FOR WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

WeCo debuts testing website accessibility with a combination of human testers and automatic checkers. This process assures that your website fulfills the demands that everyone has the potential to be engaged, no matter their ability.

In today's web-based marketplace, companies who value disabled consumers are faced with a choice: either use humans to test their websites for accessibility or use automated testing software. Automated checkers are faster, but humans are more accurate. Many companies are caught in a dilemma over which to choose. But does it have to be an either/or proposition? WeCo sees the potential in both.

Much of today's accessibility testing is done by automated tools that scan through a website's source code in an attempt to ensure that millions of disabled consumers can access these sites easily and completely. However, according to web accessibility specialist Karl Groves, only about 25% of accessibility best practices can be definitely tested with automated means alone. Another 35% can be tested to provide guidance on potential issues which require manual verification. That leaves 40% of accessibility best practices that must be tested by using manual testing of some kind. This means that 75% of a website's accessibility cannot be determined by automatic testing with a machine.

It is precisely for this reason that WeCo (The Wehrman Collaborative) uses teams of highly skilled individuals to test website accessibility. These highly-trained disabled professionals examine websites for specific concerns that affect their disability. WeCo hires all types of disabled individuals to act as Certified Testing Consultants (CTCs). These men and women provide today's leading companies with the information they need to make their websites accessible.

However, this does not mean that there is no place for automated testing in today's web. In many cases, it can be incredibly efficient to use an automatic checker to test for specific errors—such as whether or not all of the images on a web page have some form of alternate text. An automated checker can tell companies which images have this feature, but they have no way of telling whether or not the alt text is

sufficient to communicate the image's meaning to the visually impaired. This requires the company to use a disabled accessibility specialist to double check the findings of the automated system.

In order to make sure that clients have the best experience possible when making their websites accessible, WeCo is pursuing two separate partnerships with companies that are known for the quality of their work in website user experience. This will allow WeCo not only to use their pool of CTCs, but also a suite of sophisticated automated checkers to provide the most complete and efficient web site review available on the market today.

Based in St. Paul, Minnesota, WeCo is a mission-based, for-profit organization. While creating a strong accessibility learning environment for your organization, we also provide professional employment to people who live with disabilities. Considering that up to 80% of people in this group are either unemployed or employed below their education and capability levels, makes the work WeCo does even more uplifting and important. WeCo is recognized by the State of Minnesota as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. In WeCo's first year in business they were featured in the MarketWatch Wall Street Journal, Google Finance and Tech{dot}MN. Find more about the company at theweco.com.

Groves, Karl. "The Problem with Automated Website Accessibility Testing Tools | Karl Groves." Karl Groves. <http://www.karlgroves.com/2011/06/12/the-problem-with-automated-testing-tools/> (accessed June 14, 2013).

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