From audit to product

Catch digital accessibility issues early to save time and money

Effortless adoption. Build accessible code, faster.

Make accessibility fast, easy, and second-nature for development teams.

The moment you commit to digital accessibility, the transformation begins - and for many that starts with an accessibility audit. Most stakeholders understand the benefits of building inclusive products—greater market share, increased customer loyalty, enhanced brand reputation, and lower compliance risk.

While audits uncover how you can achieve these benefits, teams need to build it into their workflows from the start. Otherwise, they'll keep facing friction, slower delivery, and wasted developer time - but getting development teams on board is a challenge.

Dev leaders don't want huge backlogs or frustrating mandates to roll back code. At the same time, adding manual testers and experts and continuing to run audits when you need them is costly—especially as accessibility programs expand across multiple business units or digital properties across the organization.

Fortunately, there's a better way.

The proactive approach: Focus on efficiency by shifting left

The best way to win over frontend developers and reduce costs is to make accessibility an easy, efficient part of their workflow. After your audit, you need to act on those insights and equip dev teams with the right tools to catch issues early. With automated and AI-assisted testing, dev teams can identify and fix up to 80% of issues without needing deep accessibility expertise.

This proactive testing approach—known as 'shifting left'— dramatically lowers the cost and time of testing. By integrating testing earlier in the software development lifecycle—during design and development—you avoid costly rework later and ensure more accessible code from the start.

See how much you can save.

Deque has created a three-step process to demonstrate how much time and money can be saved by shifting left. First, we estimate the number of issues per year. Next, we determine the cost of fixing issues, and finally, we calculate the yearly cost savings. Let's walk through this process with real numbers from a leading healthcare company.

Customer example

Leading healthcare company | **40,000 employees** | **~30 billion in revenue**

Step 1: Estimate how many accessibility issues are created annually

To gauge your program's scope, start by looking at the number of agile teams, the sprints per year, and the number of issues created in each sprint.

You can pull the average number of issues created per sprint from an issue-tracking tool like Jira. Deque can also help by auditing your site or reviewing sample pages with axe Monitor.

Focus on complex issues—not simple, template-based ones that can be fixed in bulk. In this example, our customer estimated that developers create around eight accessibility issues per sprint.

Typical experience based on our healthcare customer:

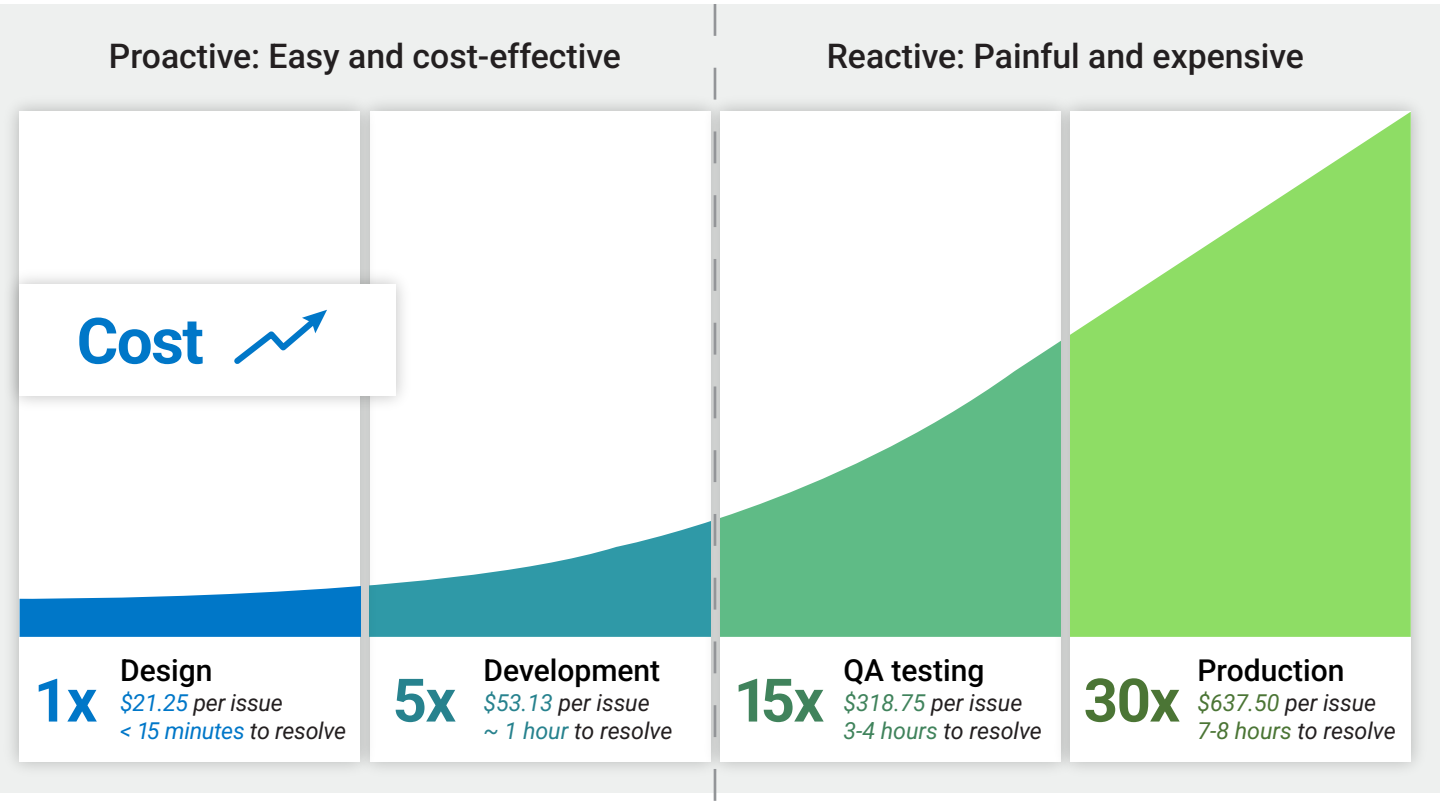
10 agile teams x **25** 2-week sprints per year x **8** accessibility defects per sprint = **2,000** accessibility issues produced in one year!

Step 2: Determine the cost of fixing issues at each stage

Based on peer research and our experience with hundreds of clients, we find that fixing issues earlier in the SDLC can take as little as 15 minutes to an hour, while addressing them in QA and production can take up to 30 times longer.

To calculate remediation costs at each stage, apply an hourly rate. Our example customer used a conservative rate of $85 an hour. The chart below shows how time and costs increase across stages, along with the steps required to fix issues.

The later you find issues, the more they cost to fix.



Identify and fix issues in the design walk-through before development begins.

Use AI and automation to find and fix issues in development, and consult a designer as needed.

Test for issues manually after development, and then log, triage, prioritize, validate, and report issues.

Audit live webpages, document compliance issues and risk, triage, prioritize, and provide backlog for remediation.

Step 3: Calculate your potential cost savings

To estimate your savings from shifting left, multiply the number of accessibility issues by the hourly rate for production and development. The difference between these costs is your savings. Let's look at how the costs compare across stages for our healthcare customer.

The cost of fixing issues in production vs. development

Production	**2,000** accessibility issues	X	**$637.50** (7.5 hours of time)	=	**$1,275,000** or 1,875 days of work
Development	**2,000** accessibility issues	X	**$53.13** (~1 hour of time)	=	**$106,260** or 250 days of work

After just one year with Deque, this healthcare customer saw a 100% return on investment. The cost savings—$1.17M—are impressive, but the time savings are even more valuable: 1,625 days given back to dev teams to focus on revenue-driving projects.

Total savings per year

$1.17 million estimated cost savings

87% time savings for dev teams

Catching issues before production preserves user trust and prevents revenue loss. That's why customers choose Deque, and why developers prefer axe DevTools. Because we help your business become and stay accessible in the fastest and most cost-effective ways possible. Accessibility audits are only the beginning of a sustainable digital accessibility strategy and we're here to take you the rest of the way. When it comes to digital accessibility, the proactive approach is the right approach.