

Deque Tools Give Harland Clarke Confidence in eCommerce Site Compliance

Quick Facts

Industry: Financial Services

About Harland Clarke: Harland Clarke is a leading provider of customer engagement solutions. Harland Clarke offers payment tools, marketing services and promotional products for businesses.

Tools Utilized: axe DevTools (formerly WorldSpace Attest) and axe Auditor (formerly WorldSpace Assure)

Story Snapshot

- Looking to mature their accessibility practice, Harland Clarke sought out enterprise tooling that would provide more coverage than free tools.
- After evaluating multiple vendors, Harland Clarke invested in Deque's axe DevTools and axe Auditor accessibility testing tools.
- Harland Clarke performs automatic test scans through the axe DevTools API while Axe Auditor adds an additional layer of manual coverage.
- Harland Clarke shifted its accessibility practice from a reactive to a proactive, process-driven one with Deque tools.
- Enterprise tooling with axe DevTools and axe Auditor gives Harland Clarke and their clients confidence in the accessibility of their platforms.



Prioritizing accessibility and becoming proactive

When accessibility started to come up more often in client conversations, leadership at Harland Clarke decided to make accessibility a permanent priority. Executives within the company wanted their e-commerce sites—namely, their check ordering platforms used by major financial institutions—to be WCAG conformant.

In the past, Harland Clarke approached accessibility as an as-needed project. Every couple of years they would perform an audit and remediate issues with free tools. With this new directive, the team at Harland Clarke reevaluated their current methods of accessibility practice. They realized that in order to be truly compliant, they needed to improve their accessibility tools and processes and shift them further “left” in the development lifecycle.

Upgrading to enterprise tools with Deque

With the realization that they needed new tools and a new approach, Harland Clarke searched for a partner to evaluate their current state of accessibility and lead them on the path to sustained success. Bob Andreasen, Executive Director of Software Quality Assurance, realized his team could continue to do the work with free tools but, ultimately, couldn't confidently declare

compliance without upgrading to enterprise tooling. “You’re not going to get there with free scanning tools alone,” says Andreasen. “That told us we needed to graduate from the free tools to something more enterprise-level.” As a result, Harland Clarke licensed axe DevTools and axe Auditor from Deque to grow their accessibility practice.

Why Deque?

“Deque came up as one of the leading vendors in the field. We liked what Deque was pitching in terms of the toolset. I think one of the big things we learned talking to Deque was, ‘you’re not going to get there with scanning tools alone’... that was a big revelation to us.”

—Bob Andreasen, Executive Director of Software Quality Assurance

Integrating axe DevTools and axe Auditor into the CI/CD process

Harland Clarke integrates Deque’s enterprise tools axe DevTools and axe Auditor into their existing CI/CD process. Axe DevTools is a guaranteed step in the release process and runs tangentially with other scans like functional or performance tests. Instead of being laborious and disruptive, axe DevTools sits seamlessly into Harland Clarke’s existing development

lifecycle and provides a “continual temperature check” that can speak directly to a particular site’s state of accessibility.

Axe Auditor provides developers with an overall understanding of the total issues across their sites, supplying developers with a running list of what issues need to be assigned and resolved. Together, axe DevTools and axe Auditor help Harland Clarke’s development and testing teams detect, organize and fix accessibility issues across dozens of sites at once. “Even if you have a site that is compliant, you’re constantly introducing accessibility issues back in the wild,” says Andreasen. “We want to make sure we can stay compliant, and that’s where we really see the value of the axe DevTools API as a continuous monitor that alerts us when we reintroduce accessibility issues back into the site.”

Advanced tooling results in client confidence

Accessibility is both a client-driven and a smart business decision for Harland Clarke. Not only does accessibility aid in client relationships and contracts, but it opens up sites to a larger audience of buyers, sales and revenue. Deque tools also help instill confidence in Harland Clarke’s clients who are interested in the accessibility of their e-commerce sites. “We were able to convey confidence to [a client] about the process we were already in the midst of,” says Andreasen. “There’s instant credibility that comes with having an enterprise tool behind us, not just a free tool you can get off the internet.”

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“Having tools that allow you to automate the scans and integrate them into your build process helps a lot because you don’t have to rely on somebody remembering to do it as part of your release process– it just happens automatically.”

–Bob Andreasen

Maintaining compliance and avoiding regression

New client sites are created often, forcing Harland Clarke’s development teams to be adaptable and agile in order to sustain dozens of sites at once. Now, when accessibility issues are detected, developers at Harland Clarke are alerted and the issues are remediated in a timely manner, instead of waiting years for a complete and costly reevaluation of their sites. “Not only is it easier, but you’re constantly in compliance rather than falling out of compliance and having to battle your way to get back there,” Bob Andreasen says.

From a reactive to proactive accessibility practice

Harland Clarke’s path towards sustainable accessibility practice began with a realization that free tools can only get an organization part of the way to a consistent state of accessibility and compliance. Additionally, shifting from a reactive to proactive process helped position

Harland Clarke to practice sustainable and effective accessibility. Now that new development is being considered with accessibility in mind, Harland Clarke is set up for success as accessibility issues are less likely to be introduced and issues will be easier to remediate.

Reflecting on making the shift from reactive to proactive, Bob Andreasen remarks, “it’s going to be laborious in the beginning, like if you haven’t been to the dentist in eight years. But once you go and you stick to going regularly, it’s going to be a lot less painful.” By establishing a dedicated accessibility practice and adopting enterprise-level tooling, Harland Clarke provides an easy, accessible experience for customers and clients to complete transactions through their dozens of e-commerce platforms.

“[Our accessibility practice] has greatly improved. We have a process and a toolset we have confidence in. We have a vision of where we want to get to. We have a plan on how we’re going to get there and how we’re going to use the toolset.”

–Bob Andreasen

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