

ADA Website Wars Coming to a Retailer Near You

The Winn-Dixie grocery chain is the latest and perhaps highest-profile business to face penalties for websites that are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but it's not likely to be the last, according to a post on the website of **Androvett Legal Media & Marketing**.

A federal judge in Florida found that the grocery chain's website was inaccessible to visually impaired individuals and thus violated the ADA because features such as the website's online coupons and pharmacy could not be accessed using a screen reader. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff on all issues and awarded injunctive relief and attorneys' fees.

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in public places, like stores and movie theaters. Increasingly, a battle has been brewing over whether or not websites for such "places of accommodation" must also be accessible.

"In Winn-Dixie's case, the court agreed that because its website was closely integrated with its stores, the web content must be accessible to the hearing and visually impaired," said employment attorney **Audrey Mross** of Dallas-based **Munck Wilson Mandala**. "If consumer-facing businesses were not aware of ADA website compliance, this case should be an eye-opener."

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