Welcome!

Accessible Reference for a Diverse Community

Jennifer Arnott : October 2016

Today

1. About me.
2. Most common accessibility tool.
3. Diverse access needs.
4. Good habits.

Me.

• • •

Research Librarian at the Perkins School for the Blind. Answer reference questions from Perkins staff and around the world.

Who, where, how?

49% Perkins staff, 51% outside Perkins
(K-12 students to researchers)

US and worldwide.

Questions: 55% by email. 25% in person. 17% by phone. 3% other.

The most common tool

Enlarging the text.

Enlarging the text.

Enlarging the text.

Enlarging the text.

Enlarging the text.

Diverse Access Needs

Can people get to our information?

Devices

Home access?

Screen size

File management and size

Some formats

(from http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/)

Vocabulary

Unusual terminology

Multiple spellings
(i.e. deafblind or deaf-blind?)

Preferred terms change over time.

Language

English may be 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. language for the person asking.

Need to keep answers useful.

Visual Impairment

Sites not designed for accessibility.

Screen reader complications.

Color / design choices.

Image-based PDFs are inaccessible.

Text-based need attention.

Other accessibility

Migraines.
Mobility and dexterity.
Autoplay sound/video (don't!)
Cognitive overload.
Colorblindness.
Many others.

As a reference librarian

Quick evaluation, long-term attention.

Quick Read

First glance

Indication, not final action

Trust my experience, but inform it

Envelope

Method of contact

Signature

Who did they contact?

Direct Evidence

Trust what they tell me.

Phrasing they use.

(terms in the field vs. common use)

Visual indicators.

(large font, spelling, structure)

Parts of an Answer

Greeting,

I am Jennifer Arnott, the Research Librarian here at Perkins.

Here is a brief answer.

More details are down here. Please let me know if you need an alternate format.

Signature

Greeting

Mirror their format.

Names can be complicated.

(Edit subject line if needed.)

Introduce myself

Did they contact me directly?

If not, let them know me / my role.

Some academic cultures, more formal than we normally are.

Brief Information

2-3 sentence summary.

Screen reader users do not want to hear all the details to get to ‘which message was this’?

More Details

Additional details can be longer.

Explain attachments.

Use meaningful links.

Mention alternate formats if available.

Accessibility Habits

Help people use your awesome content.

Meaningful Links

Link text that describes the link.

"Click here" = meaningless

URL = hard to decipher/browse

See the Perkins Archive site for..

Fewest Clicks

More clicks to get
to an answer

=

more frustrating.

Multiple routes

Avoid single sense labels
('below', 'items in red are required', etc.)

Instead: multiple senses
("See the 'Get more help' section in the right sidebar" or "Required items are indicated in red with a *")

Alt-Text

Images should have it.
(unless they are purely decorative)

Describe the content in context of the image: why that image?

PDF Accessibility

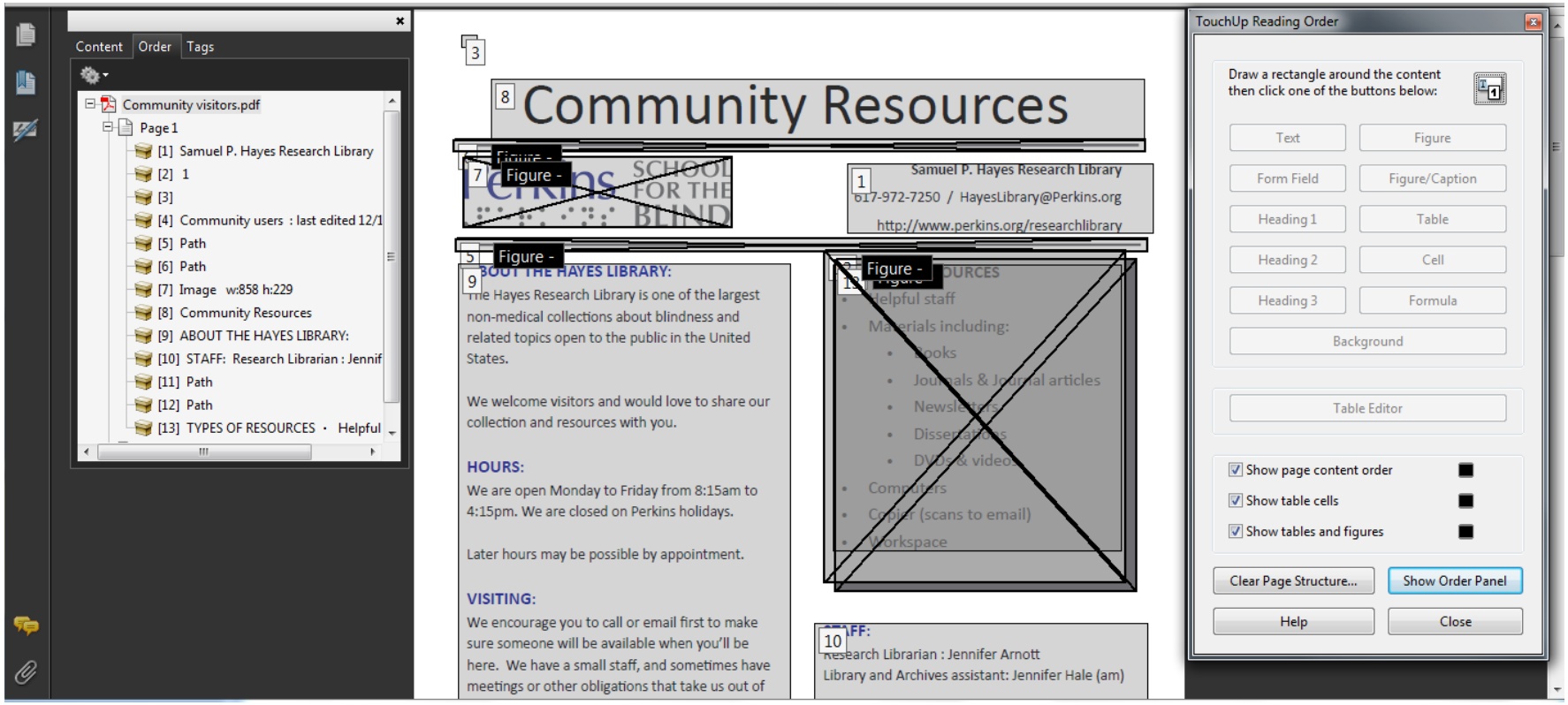
… is very complicated.

Is text accessible?
(save from Word/etc. not print)

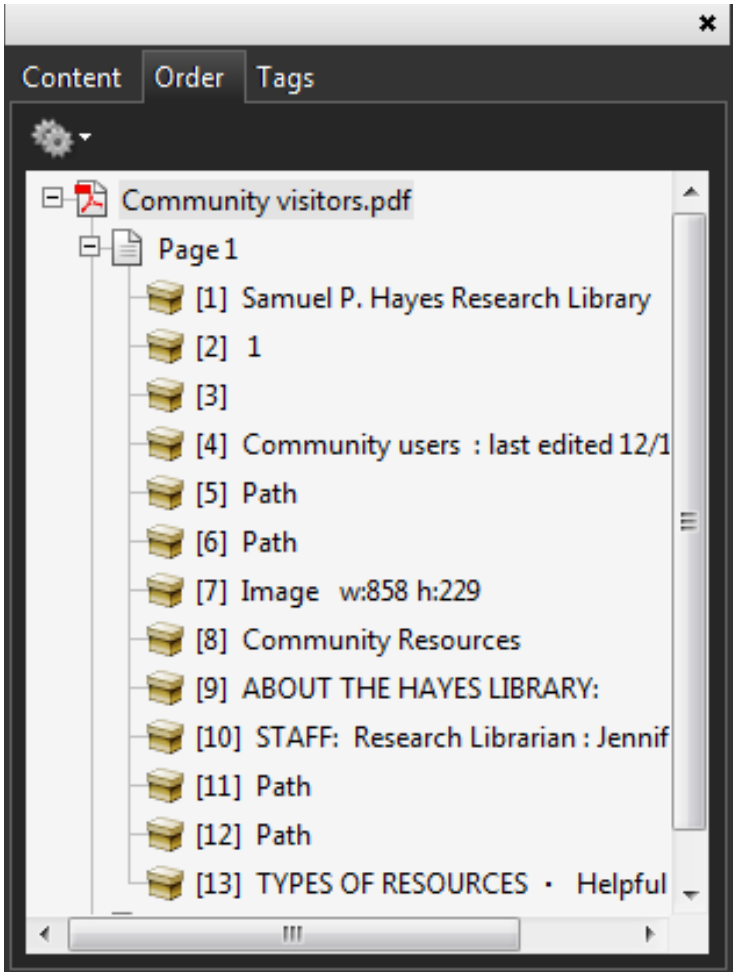
Reading Order

Image scans are not accessible.

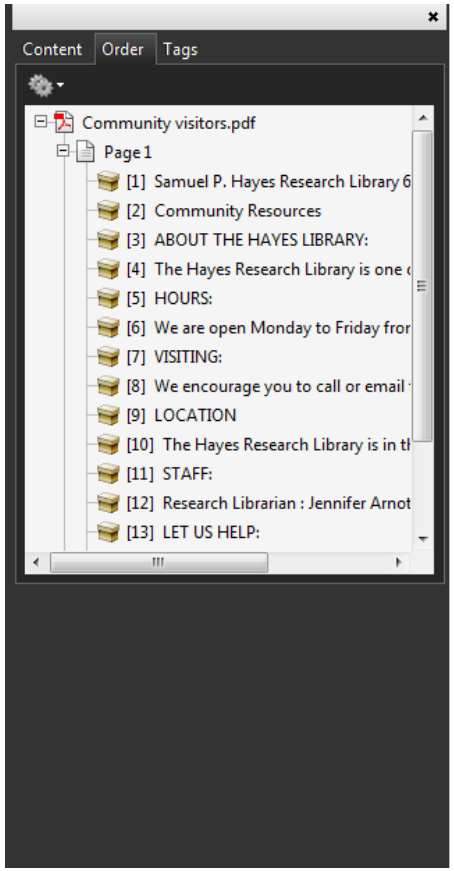
PDF structure : unedited

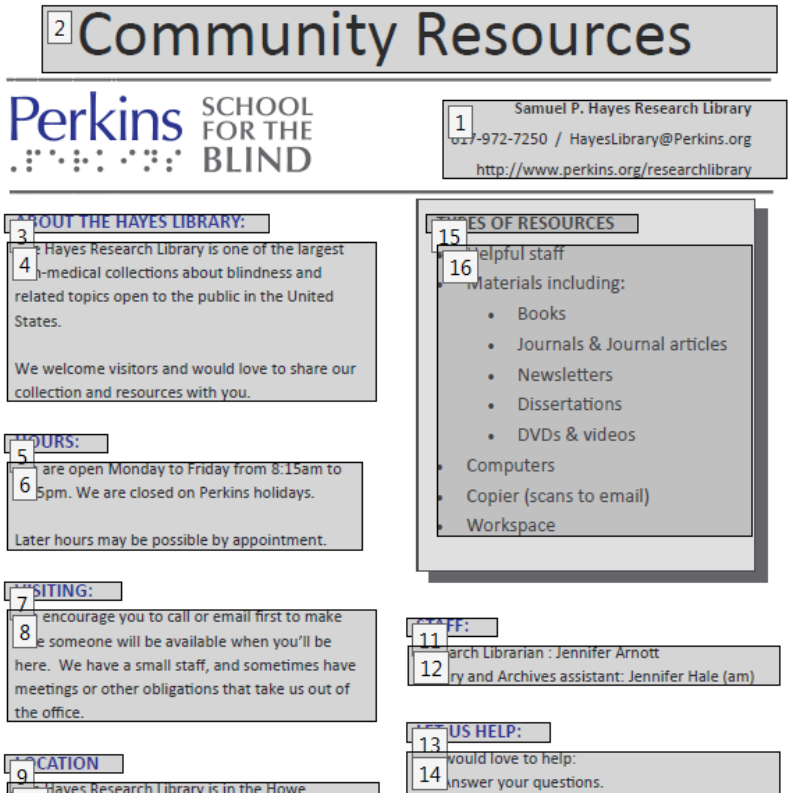


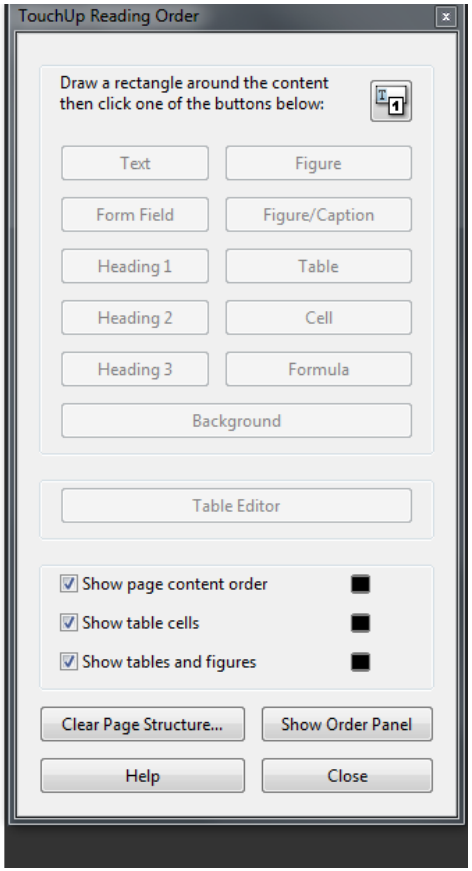
Unedited order



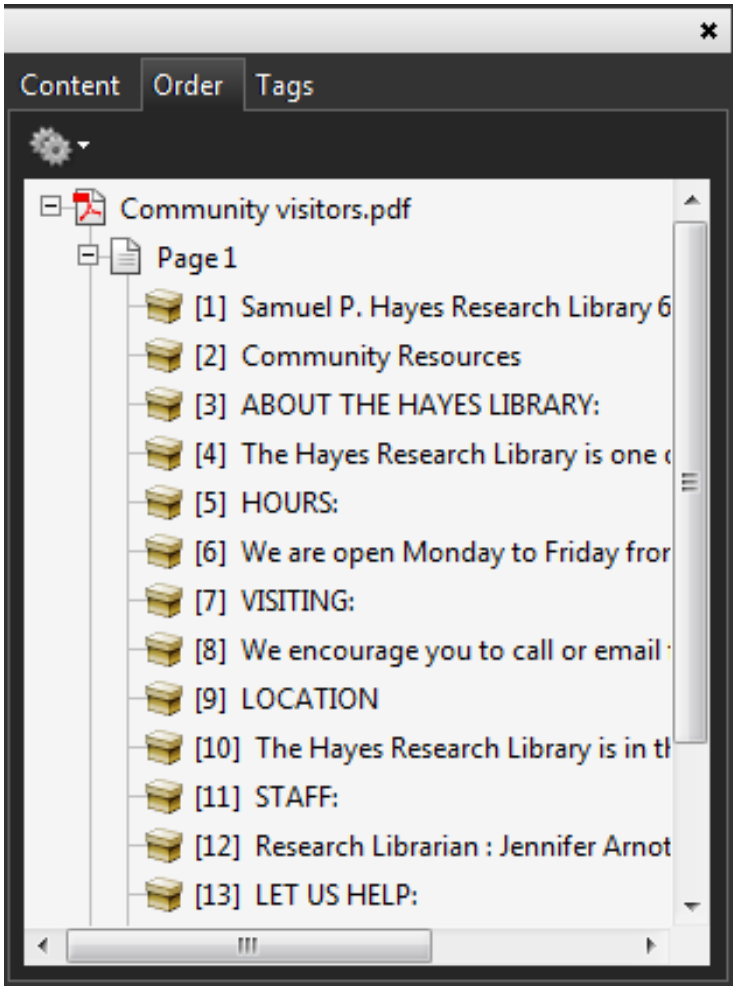
5 minutes later…







Close up of the order



Resources

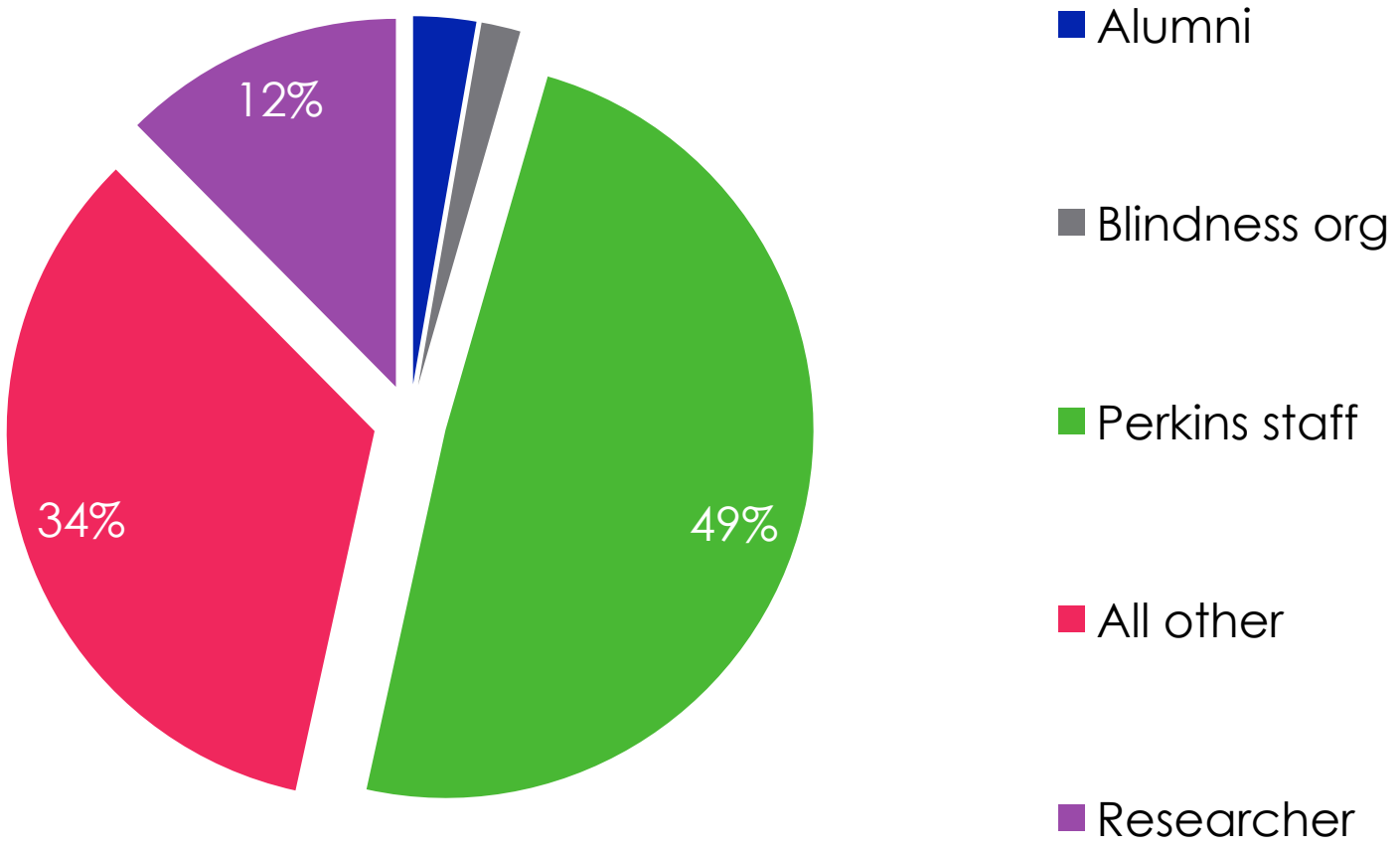
Denise Paolucci :
Web accessibility for the 21st Century.

presentation (100 slides) : resources
(http://denise.dreamwidth.org/tag/a11y
those are # 1s in a11y, not the letter l.)

Please email for handout with many more!

jennifer.arnott@perkins.org

Who?


12%
34%
49%
Alumni
Blindness org
Perkins staff
All other
Researcher

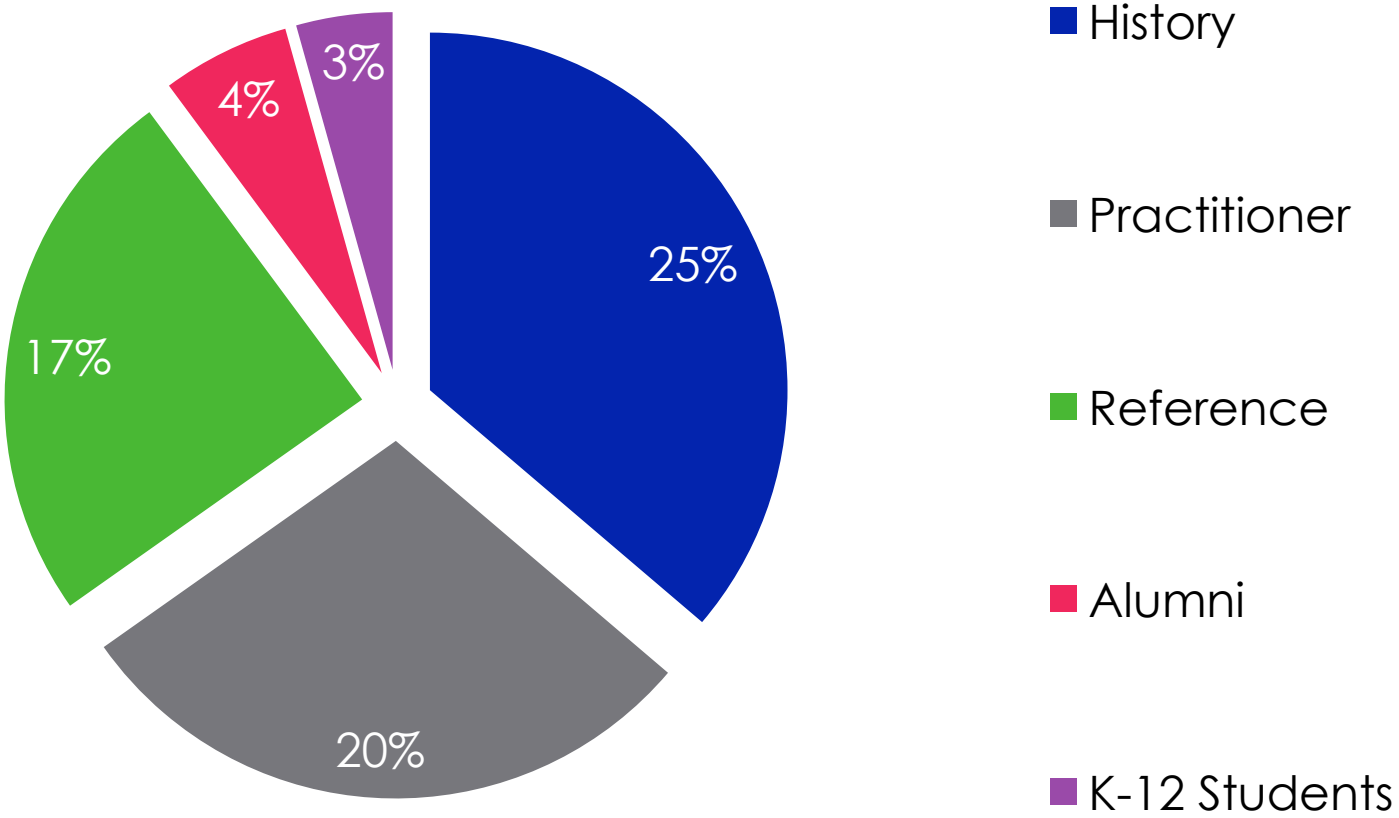
Where?

Inside the United States

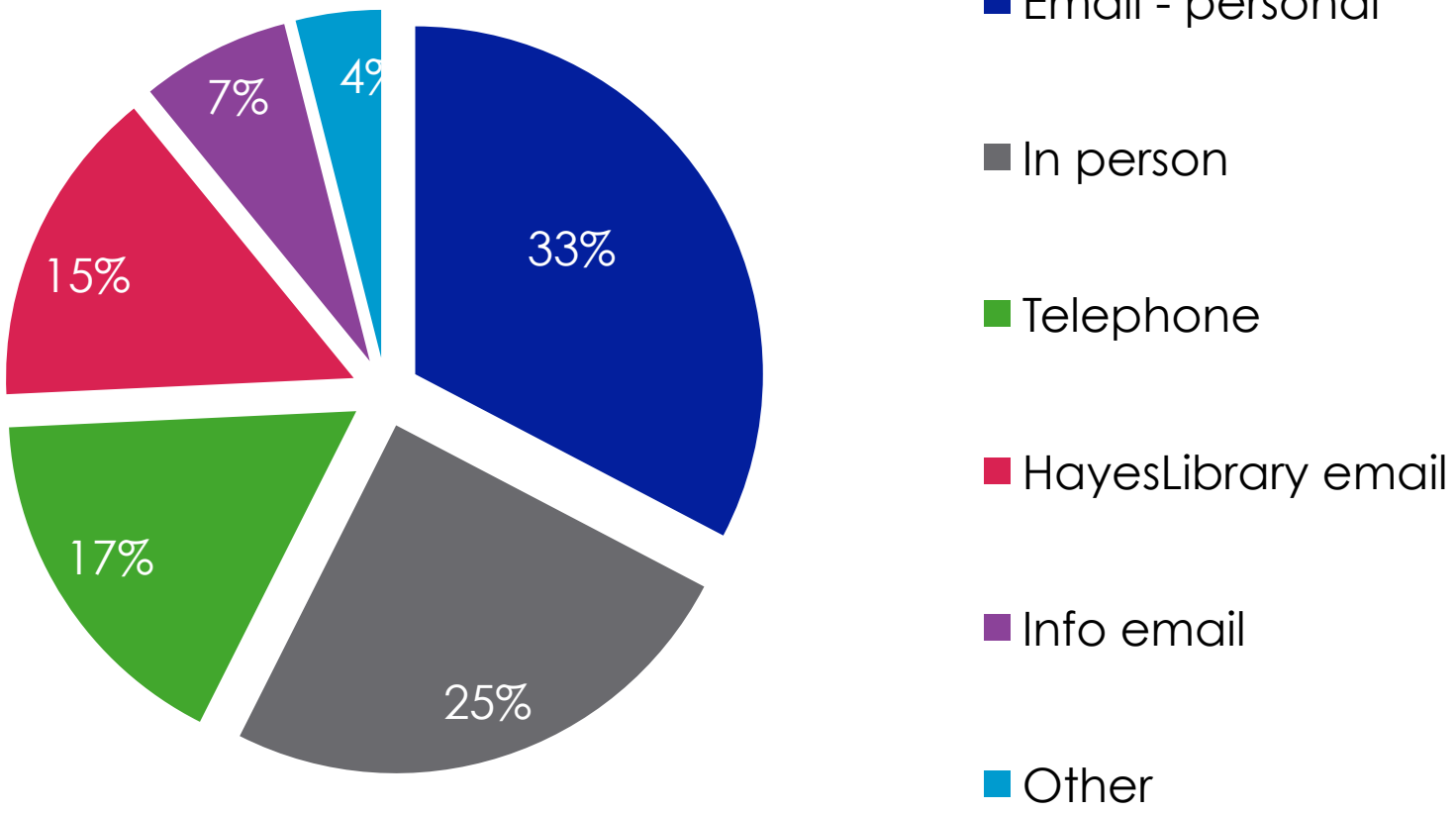
Canada

Worldwide
(Perkins works in 67 countries)

What? (Topic)


25%
20%
17%
4%
3%
History
Practitioner
Reference
Alumni
K-12 Students

How? (Method)


33%
25%
17%
15%
7%
4%
Email - personal
In person
Telephone
HayesLibrary email
Info email
Other