

# 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.

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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 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.

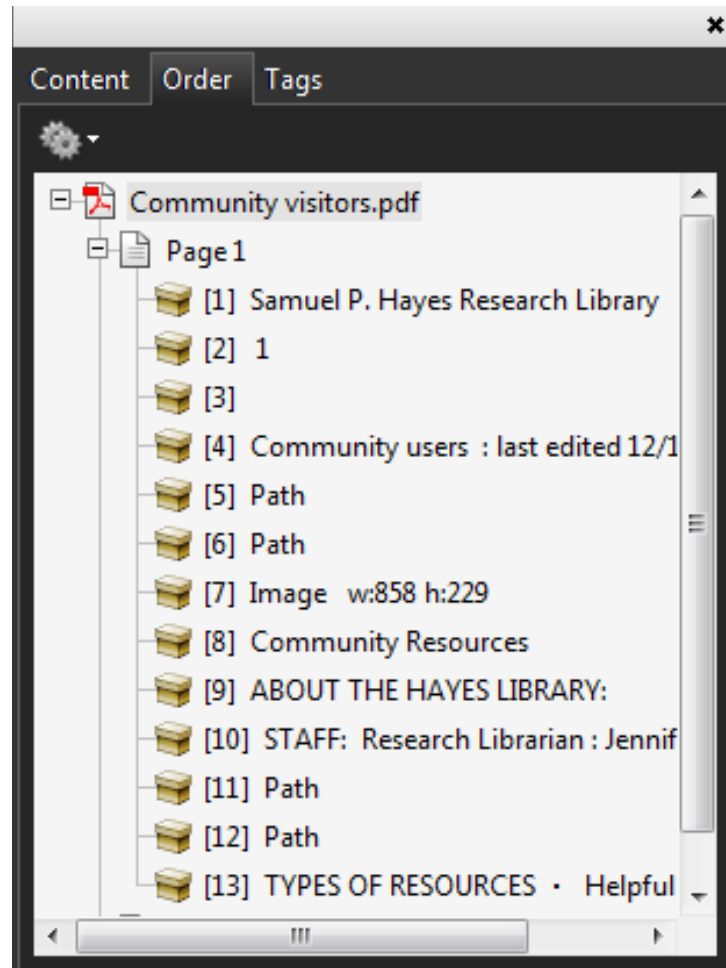


# PDF structure : unedited

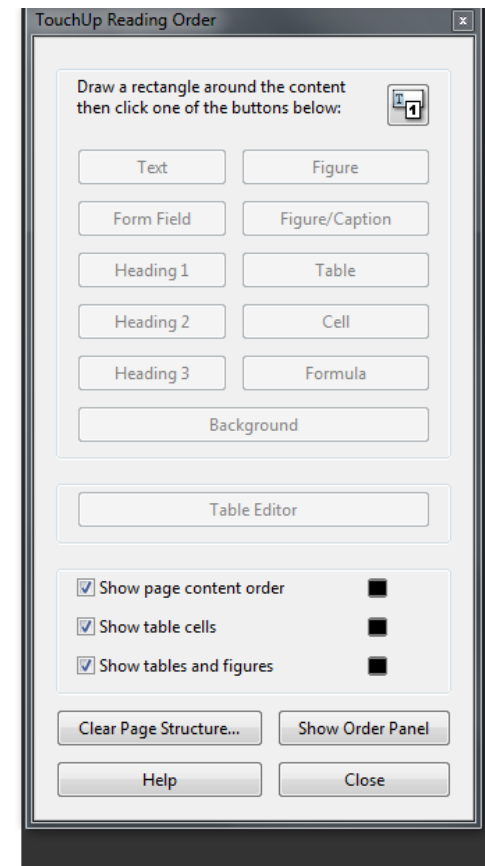
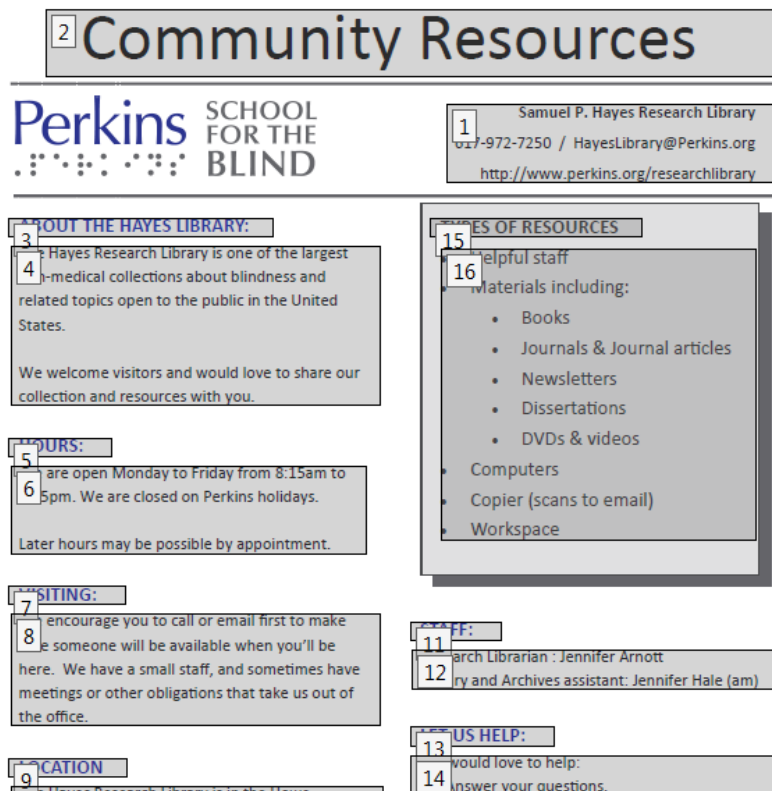
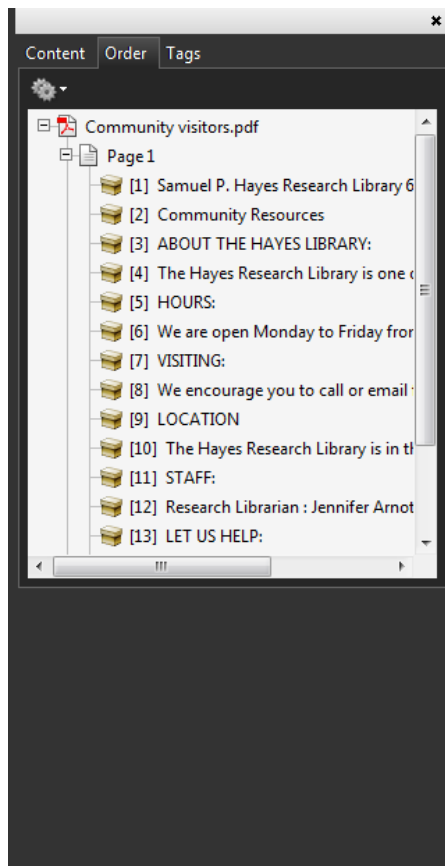
The screenshot displays a PDF editor interface with three main components:

- Left Panel (Content/Order/Tags):** A tree view showing the document's structure. The root is "Community visitors.pdf", followed by "Page 1". The page content is listed as follows:
  - [1] Samuel P. Hayes Research Library
  - [2] 1
  - [3]
  - [4] Community users : last edited 12/1
  - [5] Path
  - [6] Path
  - [7] Image w:858 h:229
  - [8] Community Resources
  - [9] ABOUT THE HAYES LIBRARY:
  - [10] STAFF: Research Librarian : Jennif
  - [11] Path
  - [12] Path
  - [13] TYPES OF RESOURCES · Helpful
- Center Panel (PDF Content):** A preview of the PDF page. The main heading is "Community Resources" (tagged [8]). Below it is a logo for "PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND" (tagged [7]). To the right is contact information for "Samuel P. Hayes Research Library" (tagged [1]), including phone number, email, and website. The main body text (tagged [9]) is titled "ABOUT THE HAYES LIBRARY:" and describes the library's collection and hours. A "STAFF:" section (tagged [10]) lists "Research Librarian : Jennifer Arnott" and "Library and Archives assistant: Jennifer Hale (am)". Several elements are marked as "Figure -" and are crossed out with a large 'X', indicating they are not properly identified in the structure.
- Right Panel (TouchUp Reading Order):** A control panel for adjusting the document's reading order. It includes a "Draw a rectangle around the content then click one of the buttons below:" instruction. Buttons for identifying content types include: Text, Figure, Form Field, Figure/Caption, Heading 1-3, Table, Cell, Formula, and Background. A "Table Editor" button is also present. Checkboxes for "Show page content order", "Show table cells", and "Show tables and figures" are all checked. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Clear Page Structure...", "Show Order Panel", "Help", and "Close".

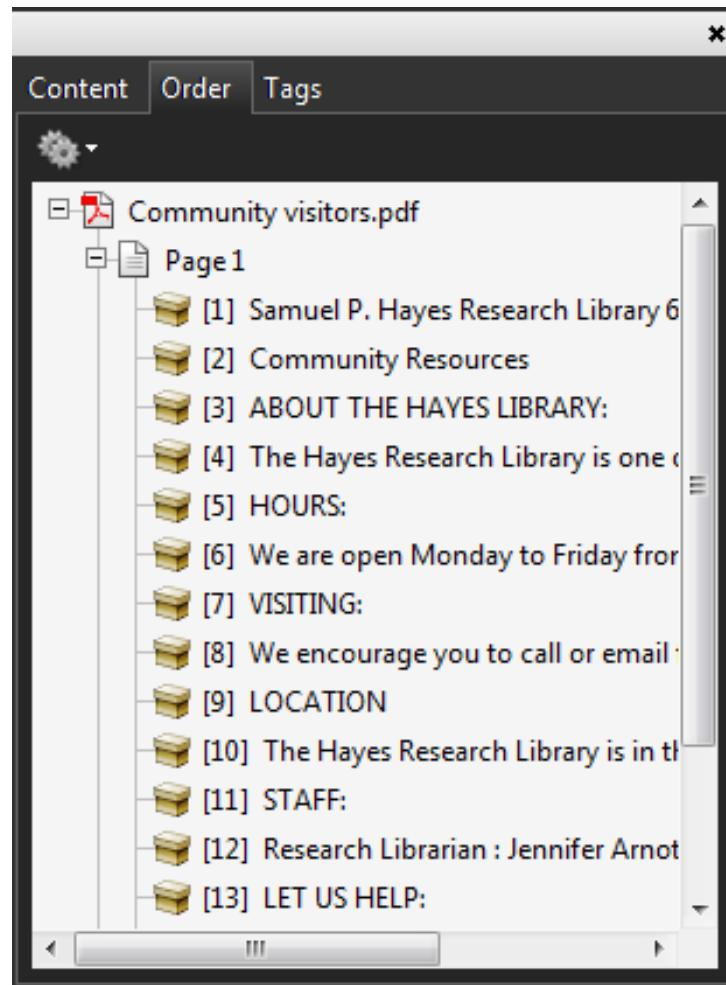
# Unedited order



# 5 minutes later...



# Close up of the order



# Resources

Denise Paolucci :

Web accessibility for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

[presentation](#) (100 slides) : [resources](#)

(<http://denise.dreamwidth.org/tag/a11y>  
those are # 1s in a11y, not the letter l.)

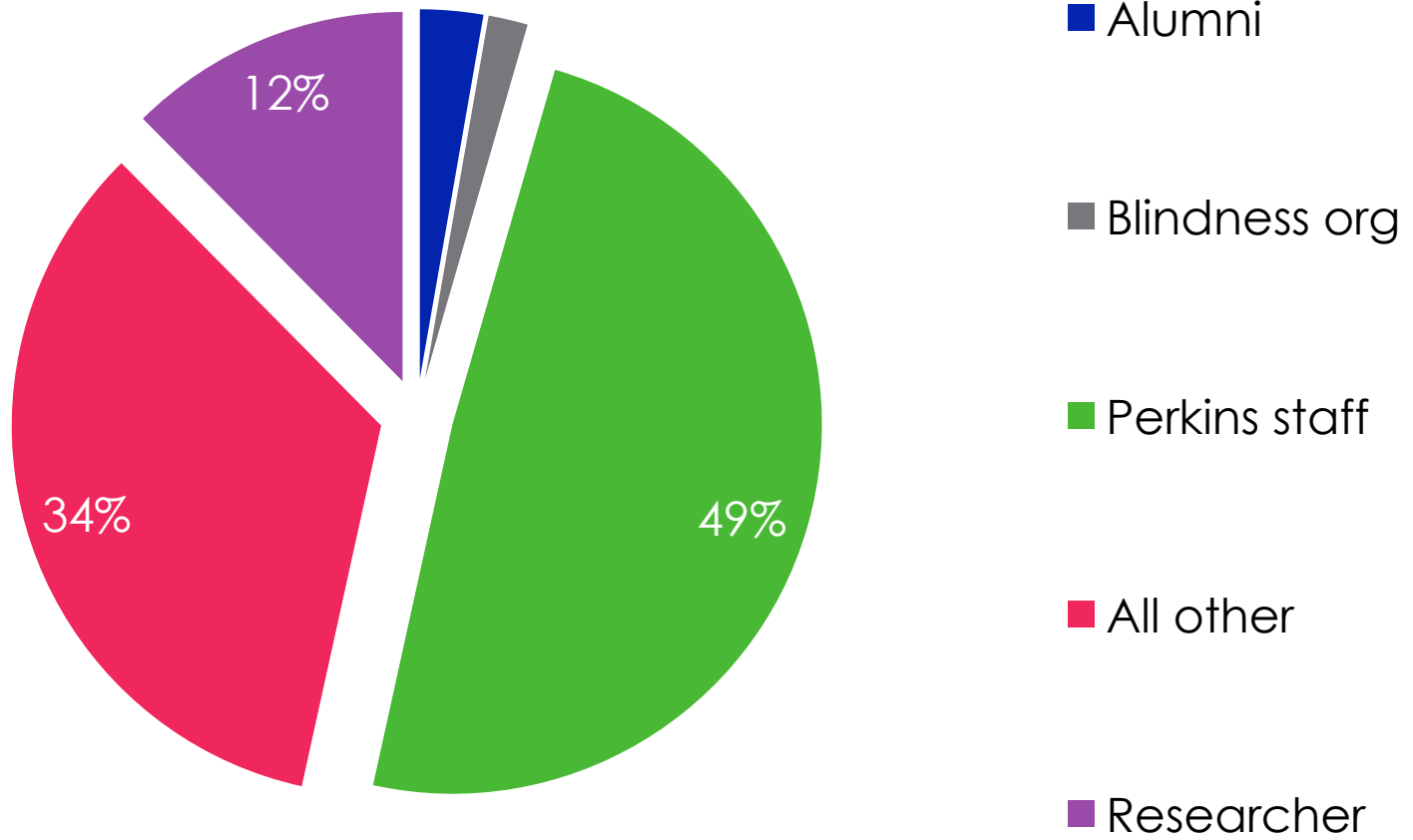
Please email for handout with many more!

[jennifer.arnott@perkins.org](mailto:jennifer.arnott@perkins.org)





# Who?



# Where?

Inside the United States

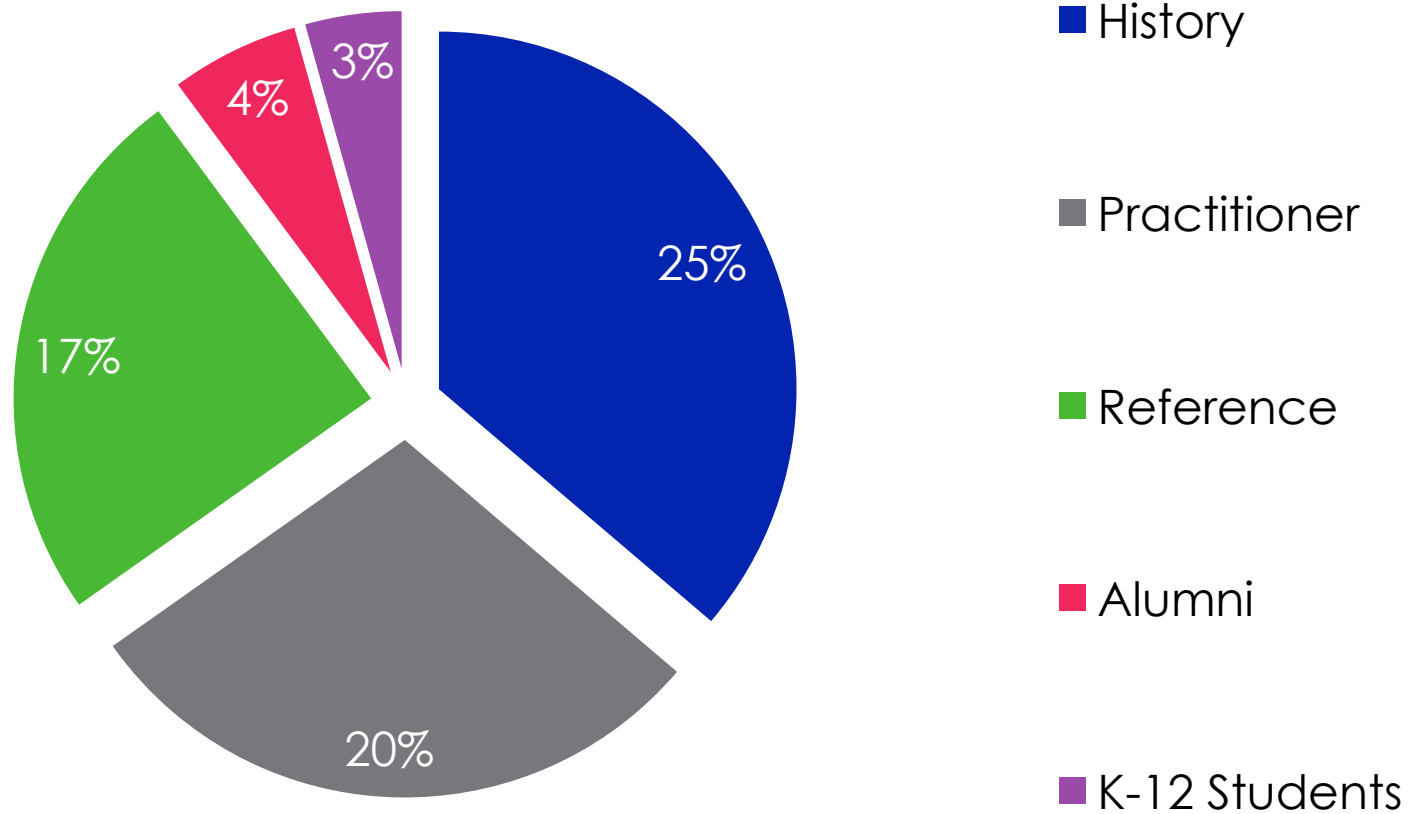
Canada

Worldwide

(Perkins works in 67 countries)



# What? (Topic)



# How? (Method)

