

# From Dawn to Desk

## Finding the Sparkle in Everyday Reference Practice



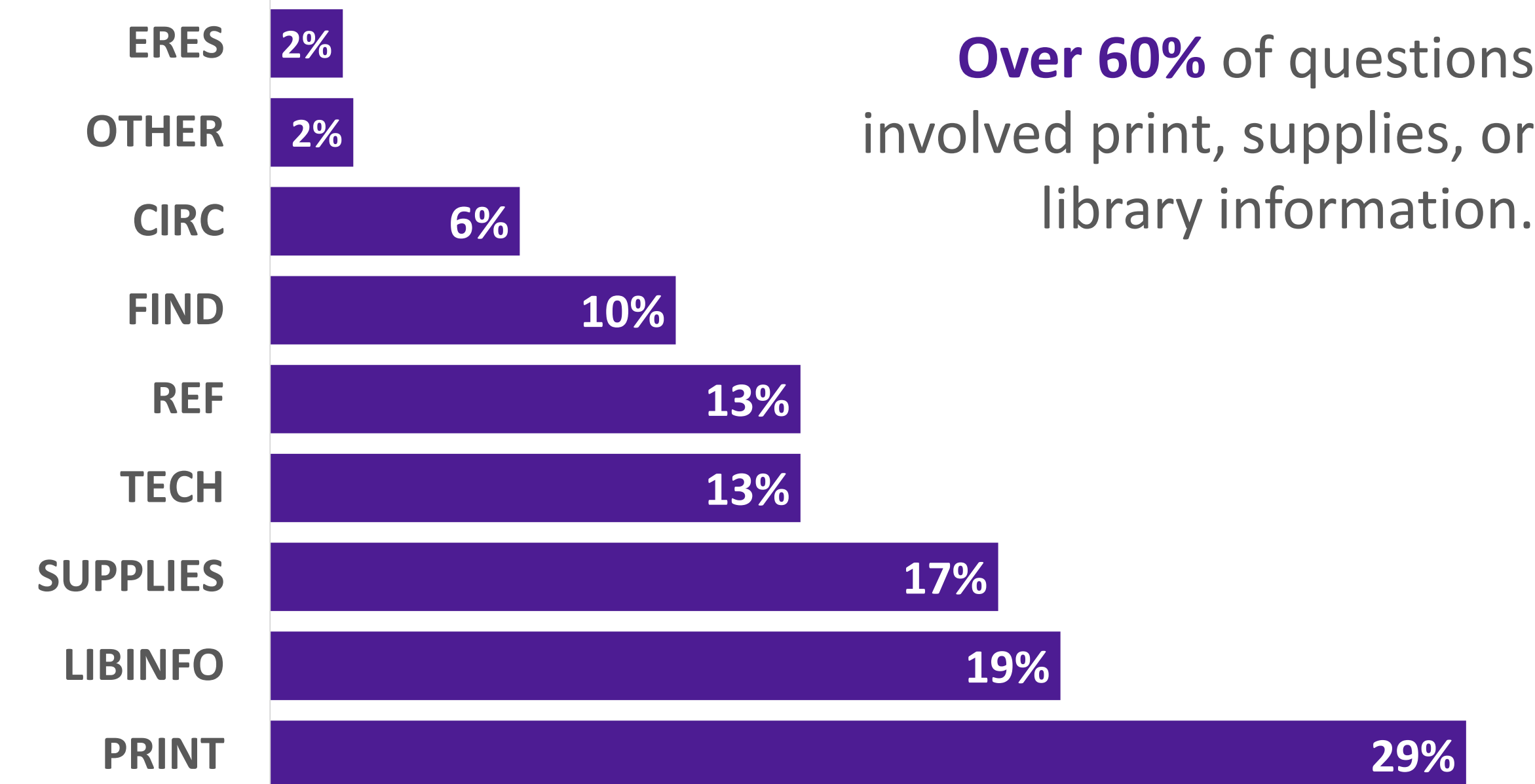
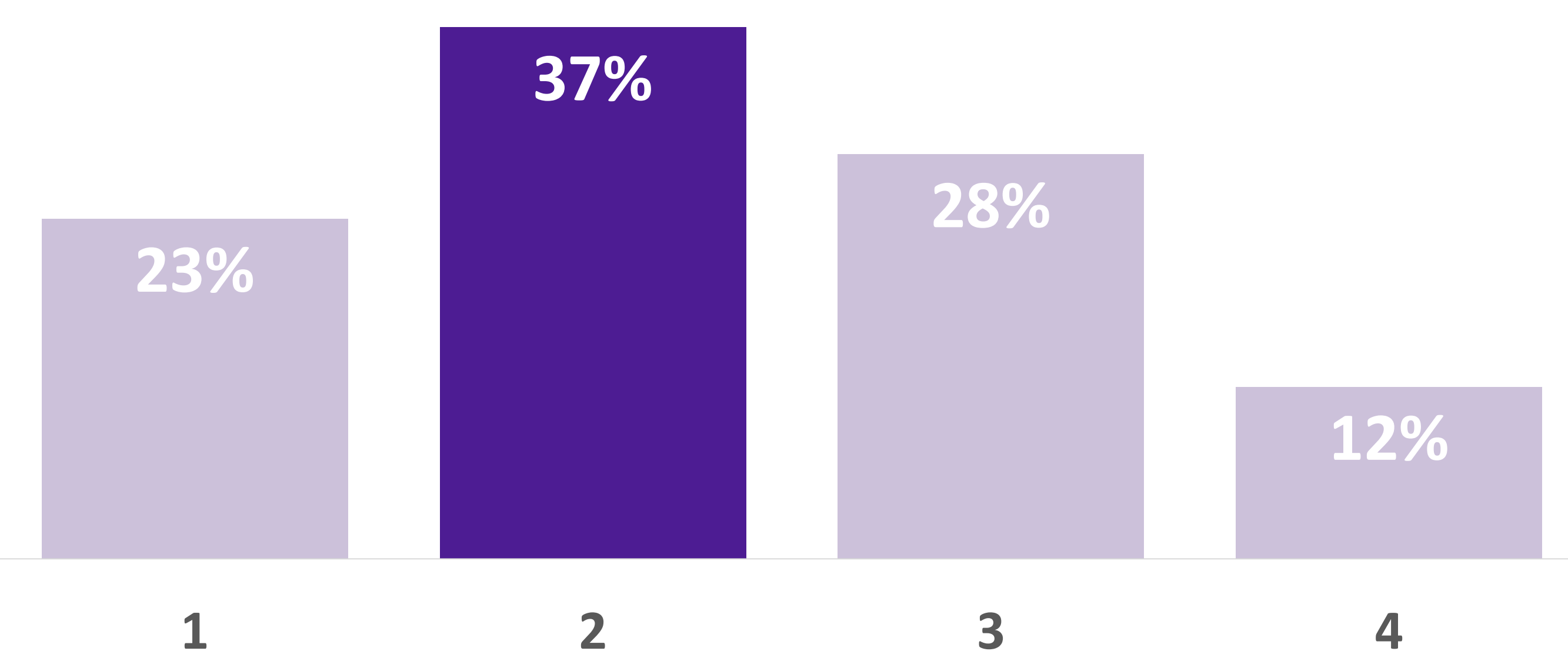
### BACKGROUND

- Who?** All RIS staff/faculty who worked at the research desk
- What?** Study to analyze research desk traffic
- When?** “Typical” week in fall 2018 and spring 2019
- How?** Qualtrics survey
- Why?** Do our current staffing levels align with the difficulties of questions asked? Do our current statistics gathering techniques capture the information we’re most interested in?

### TOP LEVEL RESULTS

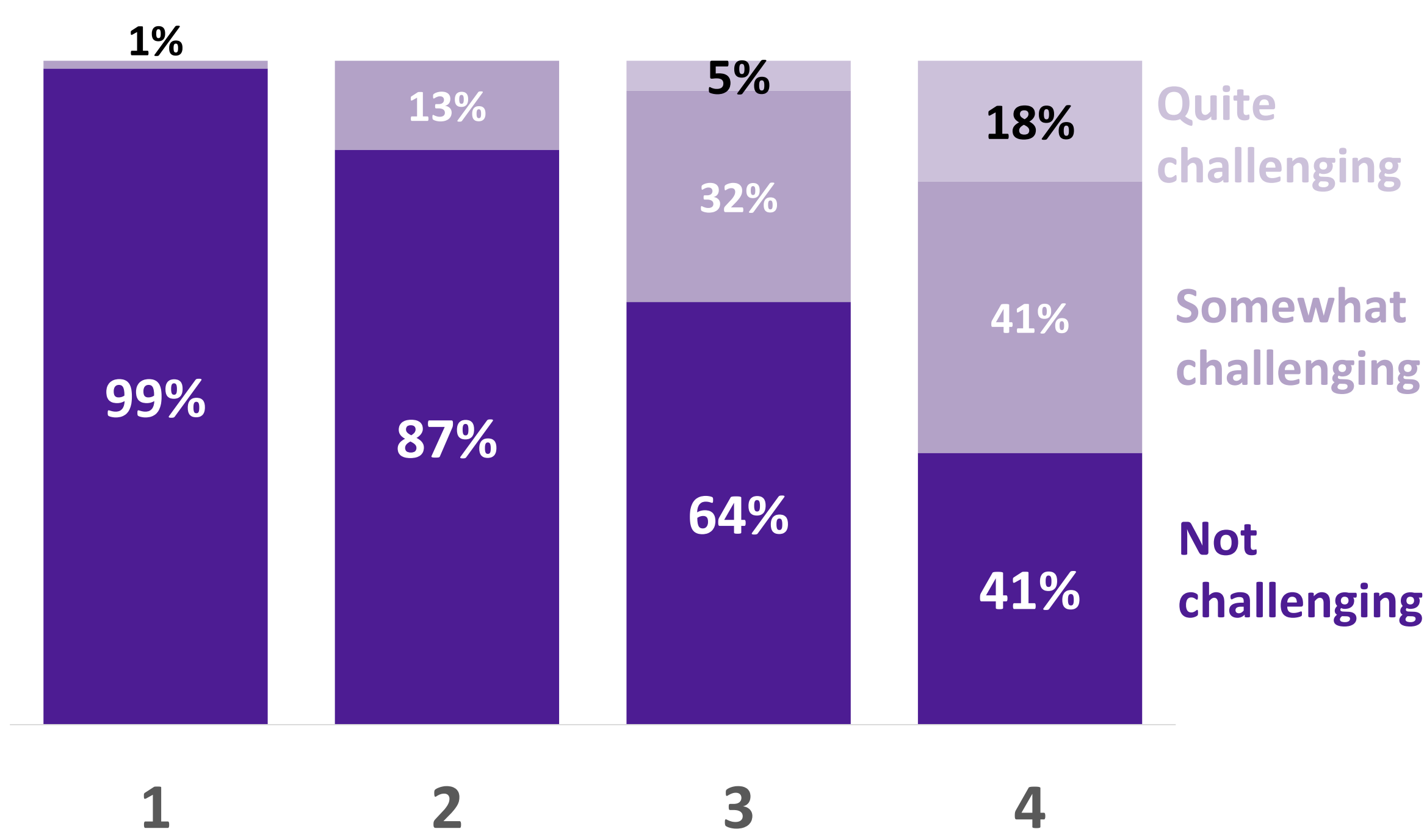
- **401** total questions recorded
- **Nearly 90%** questions took **less than 5 minutes**
- **Over 60%** were either **print, supplies, or library information** questions
- About **2/3** of questions involved **no teaching** at all
- Nearly **90%** of questions were rated **not challenging** at all
- **Overall** READ scale average was **1.8**
- **Reference** READ scale average was **2.7**

The overall average READ scale rating was **1.8** on a 1 to 6 scale.

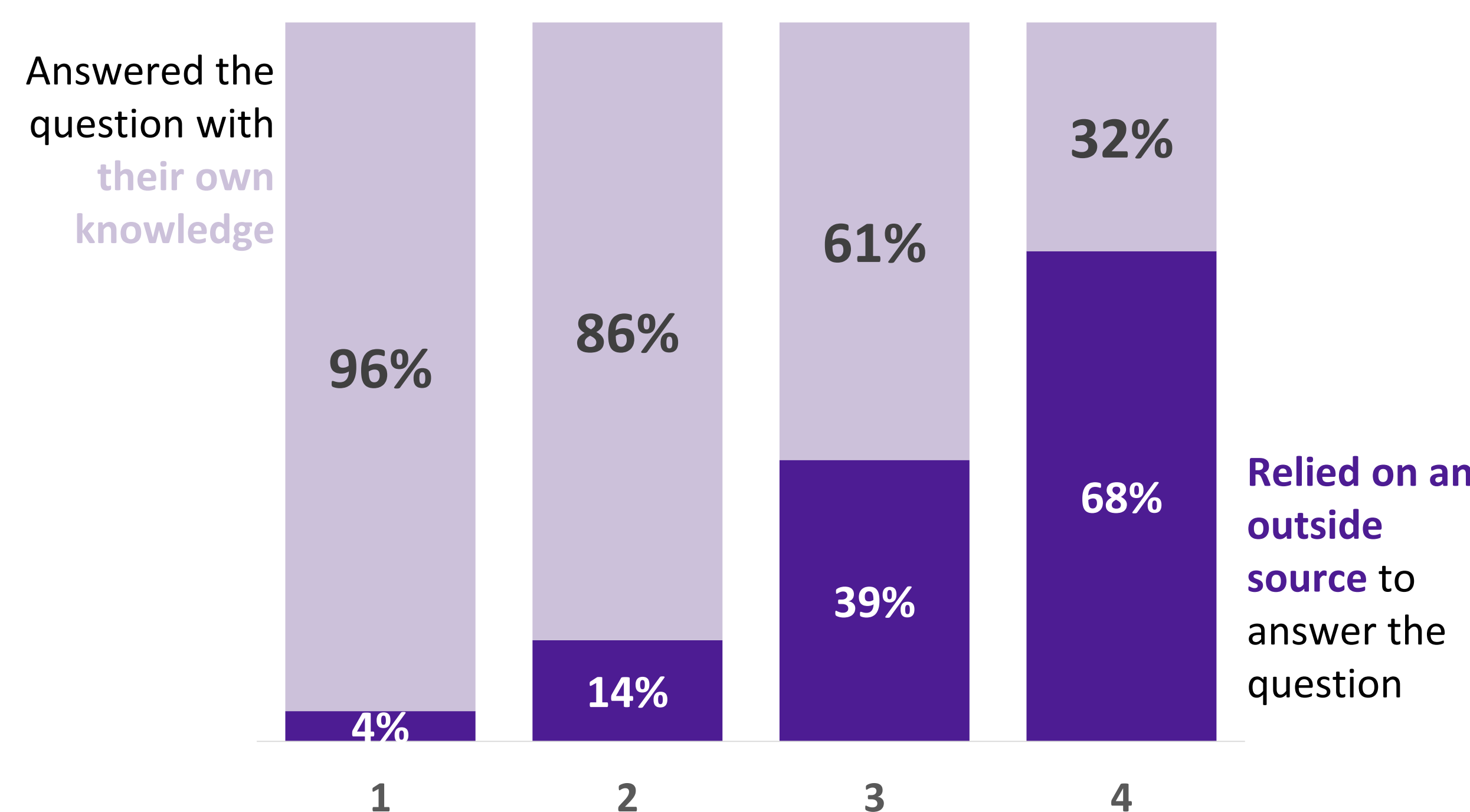


Over 60% of questions involved print, supplies, or library information.

The READ scale ratings aligned with how challenging we found questions: **Higher rated** questions were deemed **more challenging**.



**Higher rated** questions also required more reliance on **outside sources**.



### ANALYSIS

We used the **READ Scale** to analyze the “difficulty” of each question. Scale categorizes questions on a 1-6 “difficulty” ranking (<http://readscale.org/>).

We coded **separately** first, then met to **calibrate** how we coded. Finally, we averaged our final ratings and **reconciled** those questions that we coded differently.

To follow up on scaling, we used specific **content tags** for each question type, which helped us understand the content and substance of the questions beyond the broad categories of reference, directional and technical.

### ACTIONS TAKEN

Previous desk model	New desk model
Nearly equal staff and faculty hours	Faculty hours <b>reduced</b> , staff hours <b>increased</b>
Graduate assistants in evening hours	<b>Increased</b> GA hours
Desk closed at 12 midnight	Desk closes at <b>10 pm</b>
IM chat shift from 10 am – 4 pm	<b>On-call shifts</b> substituted for back-up

### NEXT STEPS

- Emphasizing **teaching moments** in more interactions
- Additional **trainings** for RIS staff and faculty
- Focus on research desk as extension of **library instruction**
- Continue **desk study** in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020
- Develop **survey** for students to complete judging satisfaction with transaction