

BY THE NUMBERS

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTION PROFILES

HALLIE PRITCHETT, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA LIBRARIES

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was established by Congress to ensure that the American public has access to its Government's information. Free public access to government information is made available through a network of 1143 Federal Depository Libraries (FDLs) throughout the U.S. and its territories: of these libraries, 1097 are selective FDLs and 46 are regional FDLs. Regionals select and permanently retain all items made available through the FDLP; selectives may select as many or as few items as necessary to meet the needs of their users and are required to retain selected items for a minimum of five years. While government information is available in both tangible and electronic formats, the vast majority of items currently distributed through the FDLP are available in electronic format only. (<https://www.fdlp.gov/>)

As 96% of all FDLs are selectives, it is logical to assume some FDLs may not select all government information distributed through the FDLP. Based on an analysis of item selection profiles, as of September, 2017, 75% of all FDLs select 40% or fewer of all items available. Of the 282 FDLs that select more than 40% of all items available, only 55 select over 90%; of these, 42 are regionals. Item selection percentages vary by type of library, but in all cases the majority of FDLs select no more than 50% of all items available; of the more narrowly focused library types, the vast majority of FDLs select no more than 30% of all items available. Further analysis is needed to determine why so many FDLs are selecting so few items in general. But given these results, perhaps the question to ask is: does the American public truly have ready access to its Government's information through local FDLs?

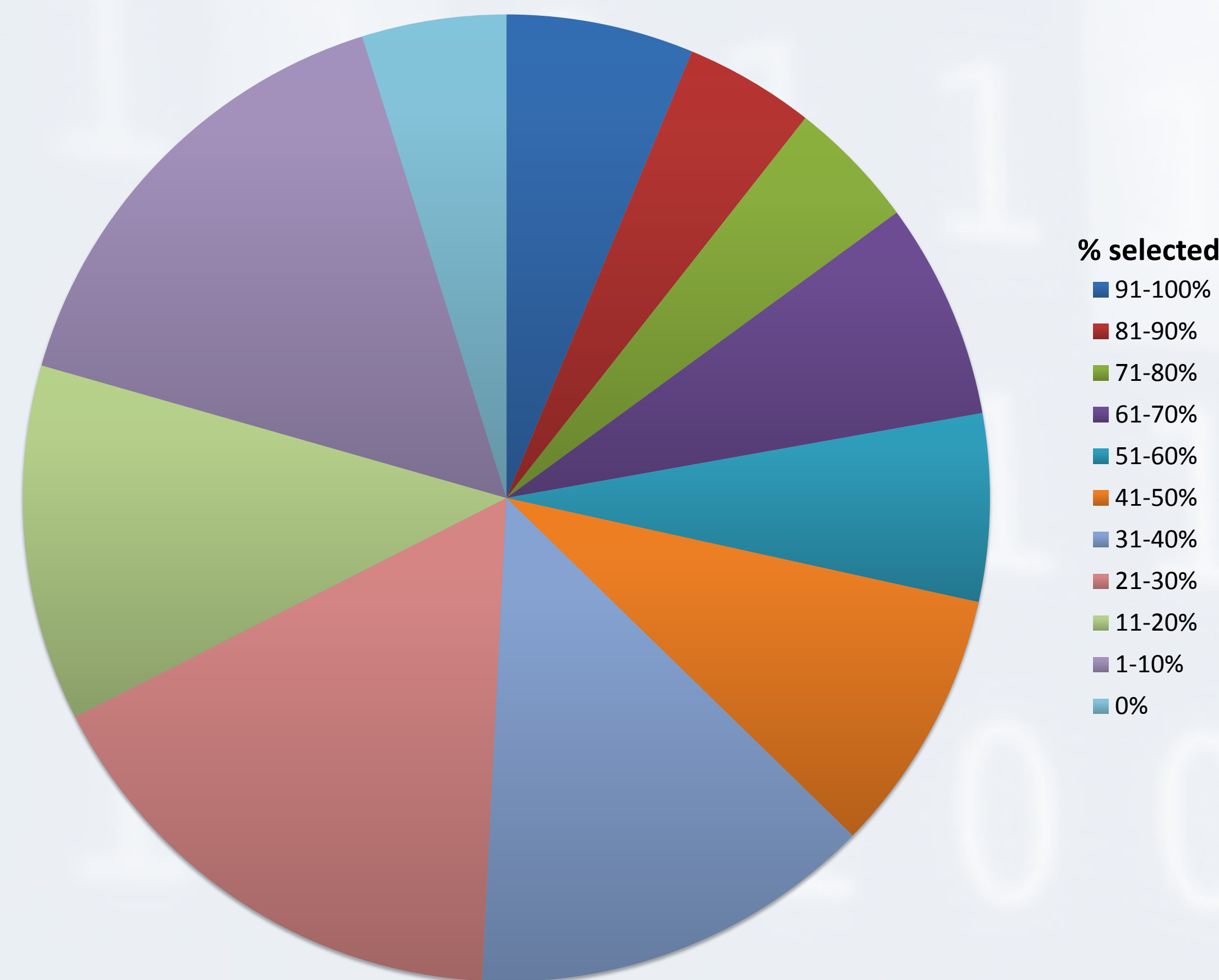
Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Item selection percentages are based on 10,116 item numbers; institution percentages are based on 1143 Federal Depository Libraries:

- Academic libraries - 622
- Academic law libraries - 147
- Community college libraries - 55
- Federal agency libraries - 37
- Federal court libraries - 10
- Public libraries - 178
- Service academy libraries - 4
- State supreme court libraries - 37
- State libraries - 39
- Special libraries - 14

Federal Depository Library Program data from Documents Data Miner 2, © 2000 Wichita State University, Version 6.0 June-2010, accessed September 30, 2017, <http://govdoc.wichita.edu/ddm2>

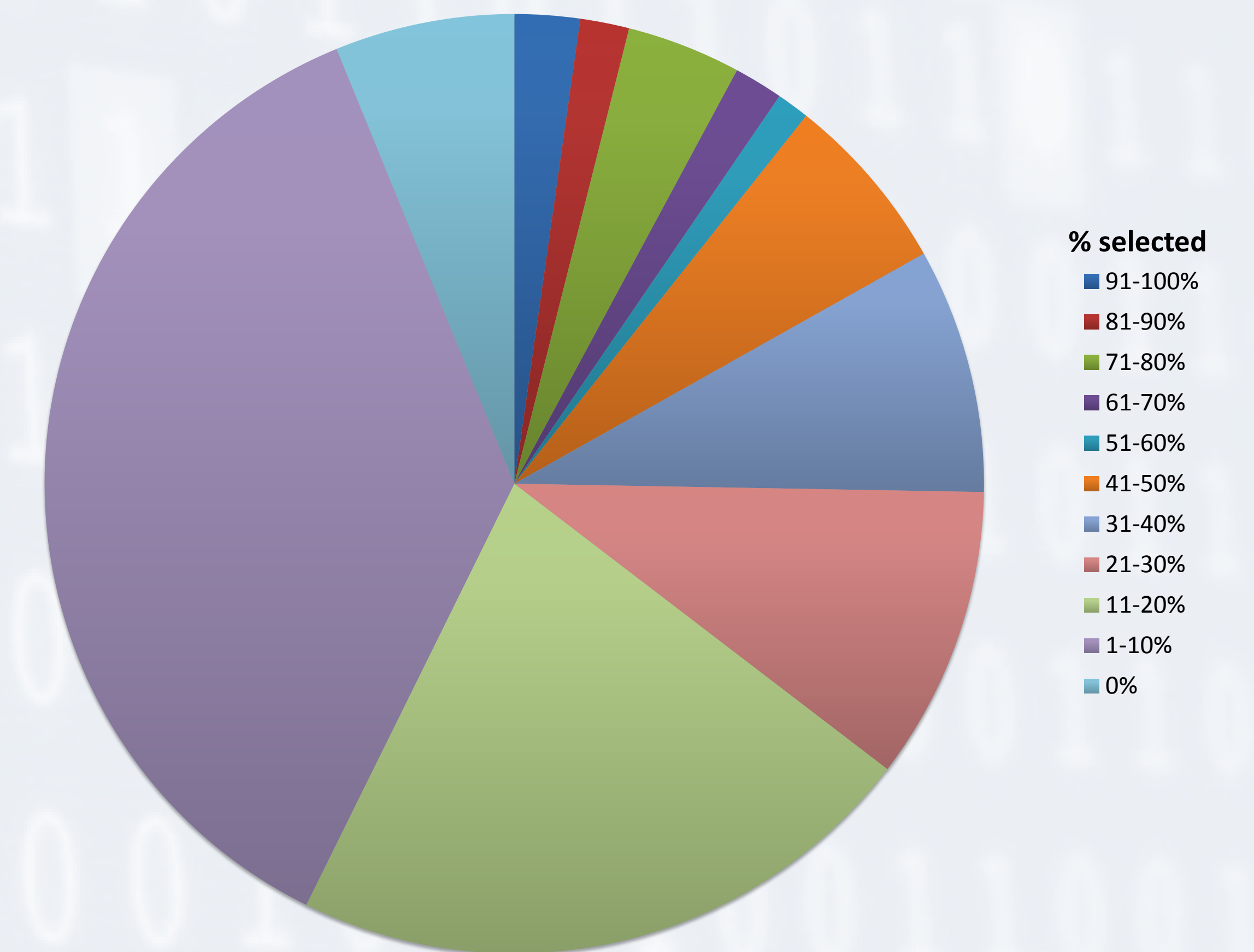


Academic Libraries



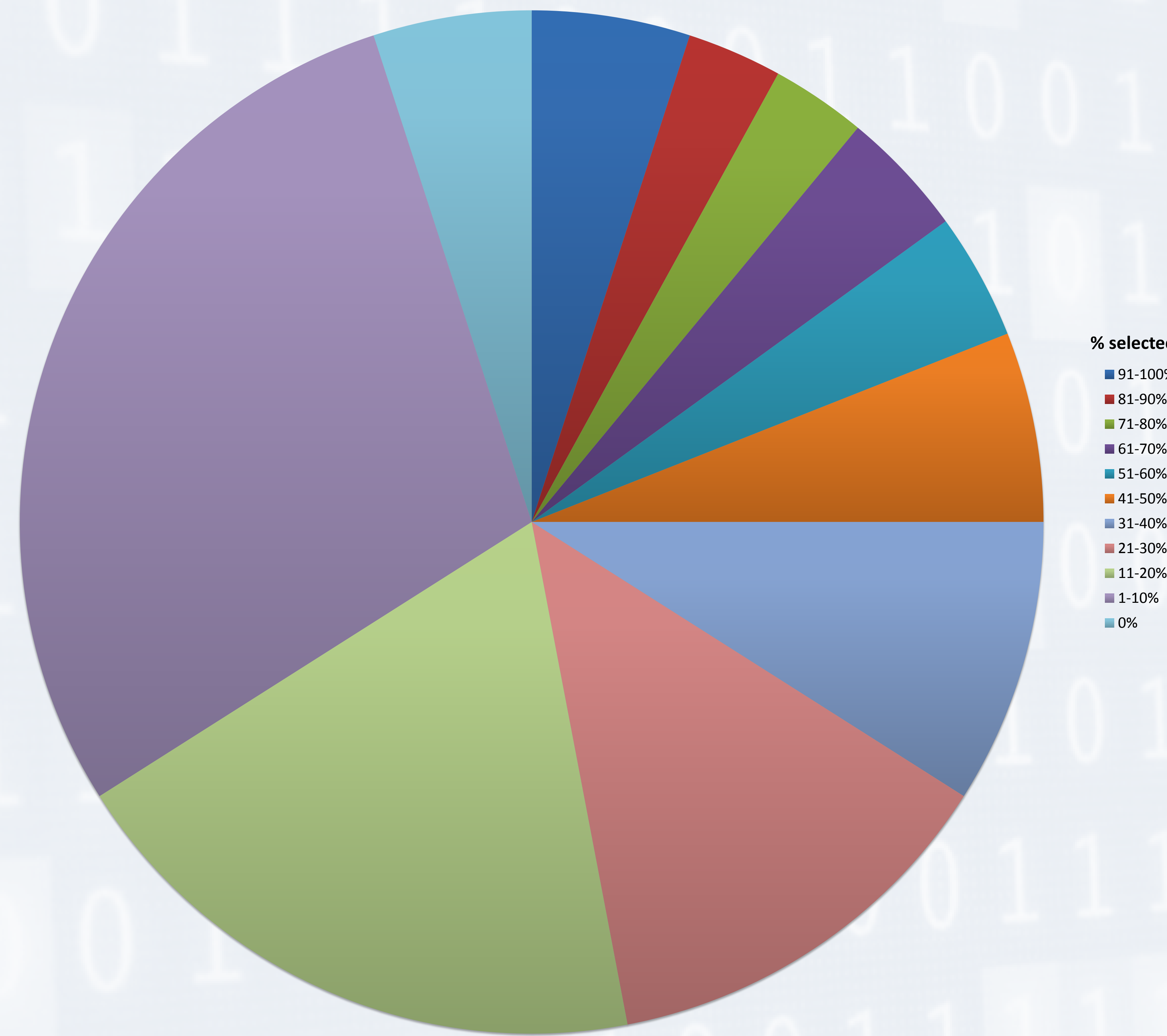
73% of academic FDLs select 50% or fewer item numbers

Public Libraries



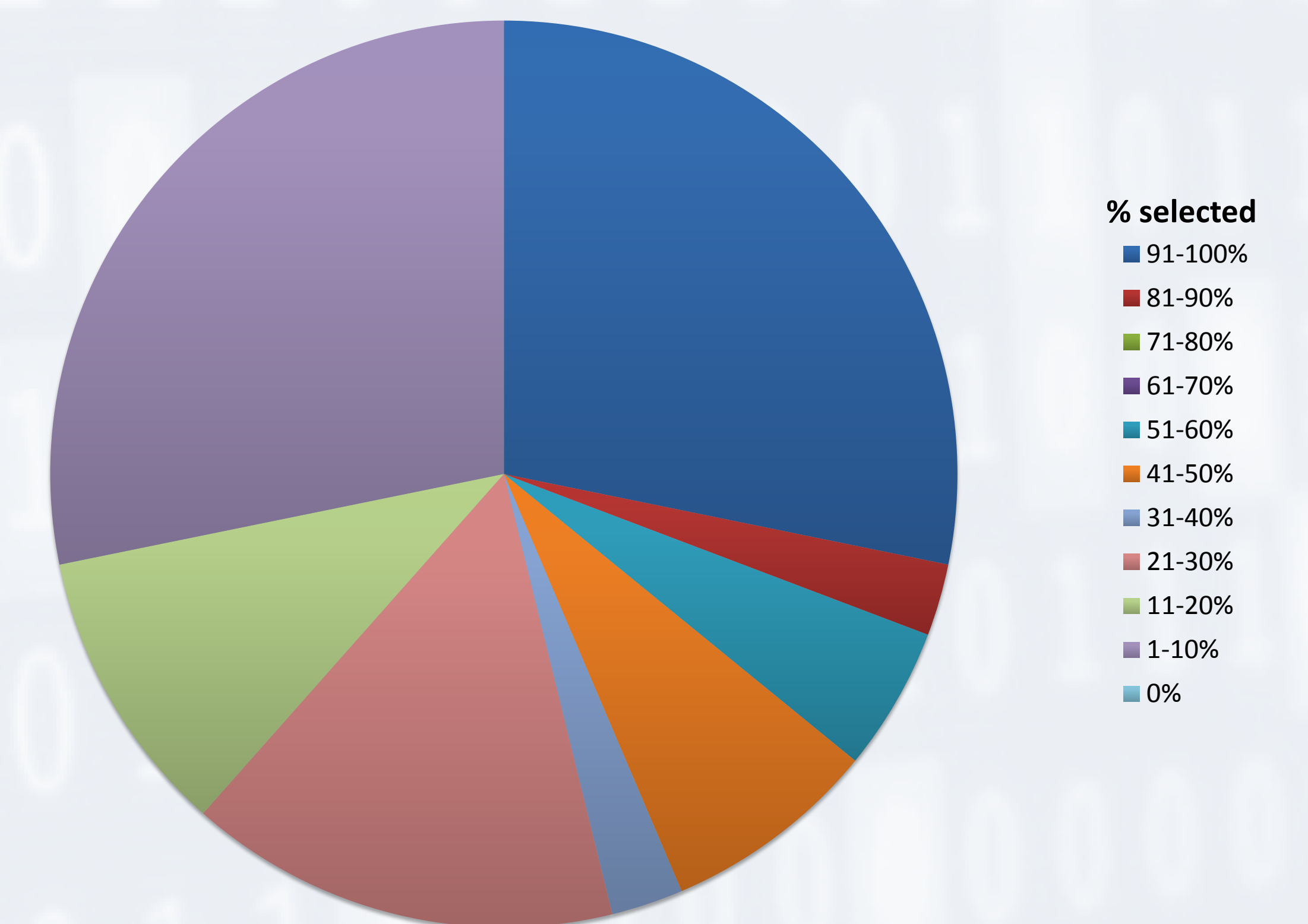
73% of public FDLs select 30% or fewer item numbers

All Federal Depository Libraries



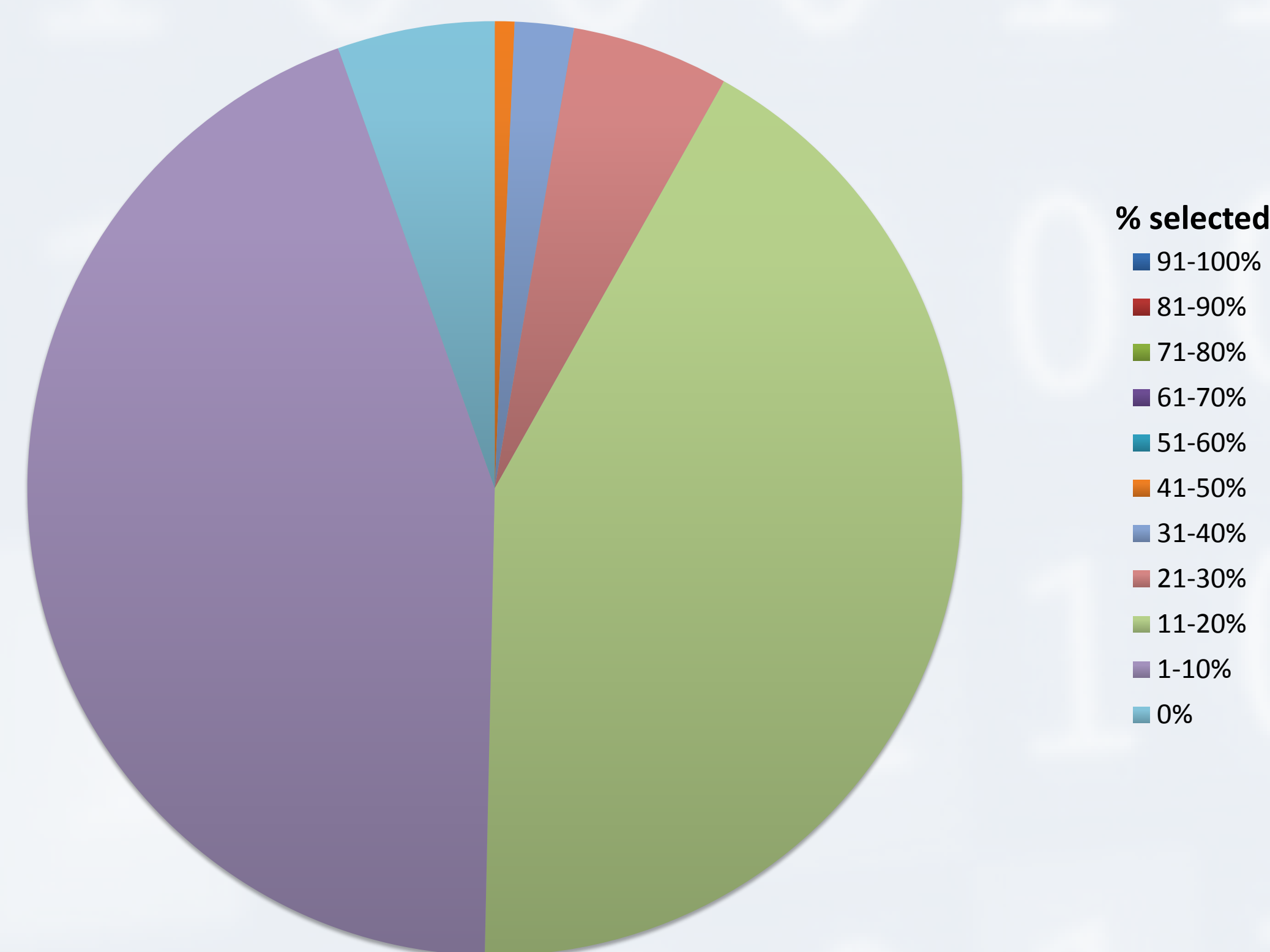
75% of all FDLs select 40% or fewer item numbers
Only 282 of 1143 FDLs select more than 40% of all available item numbers

State Libraries

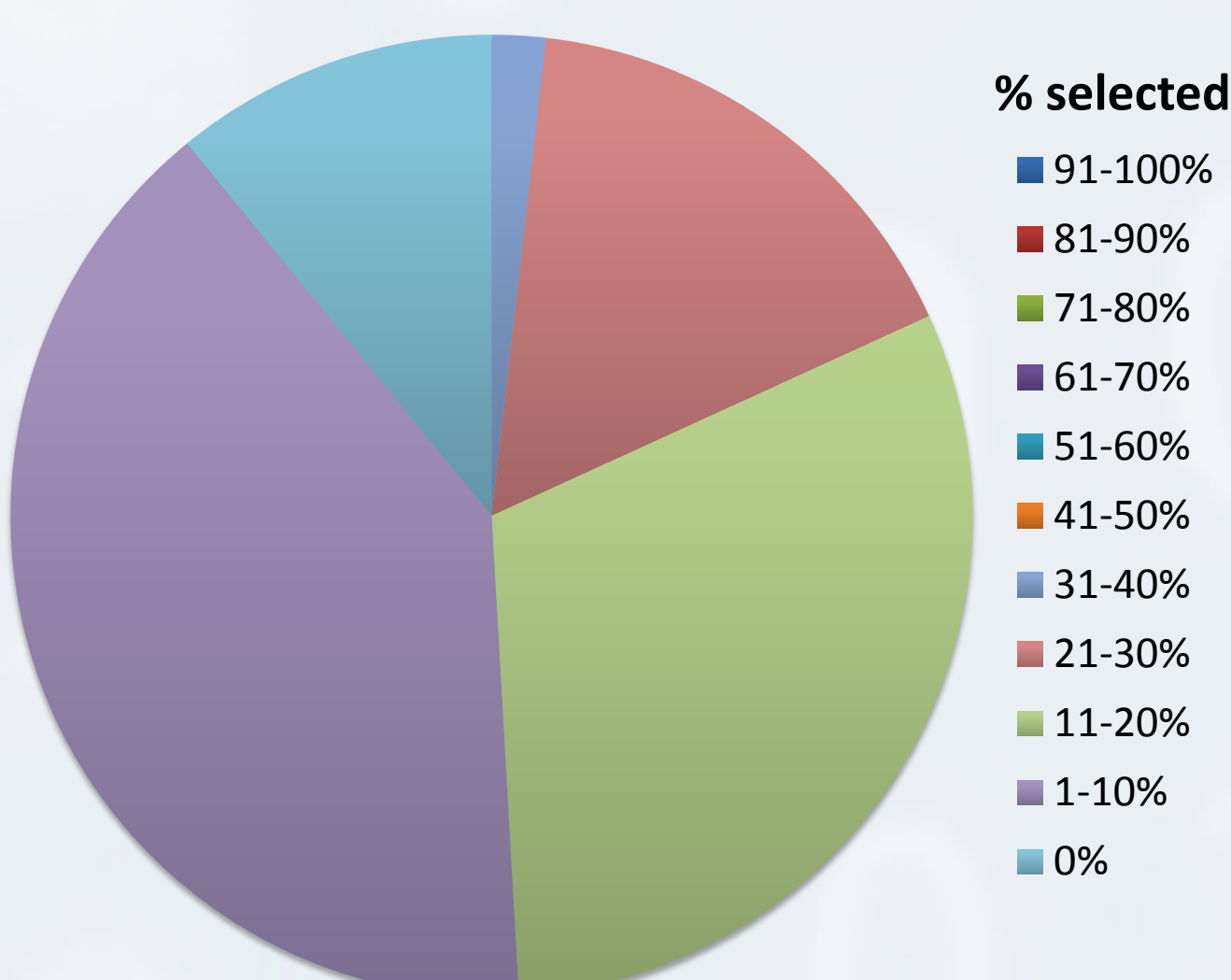


64% of state FDLs select 50% or fewer item numbers

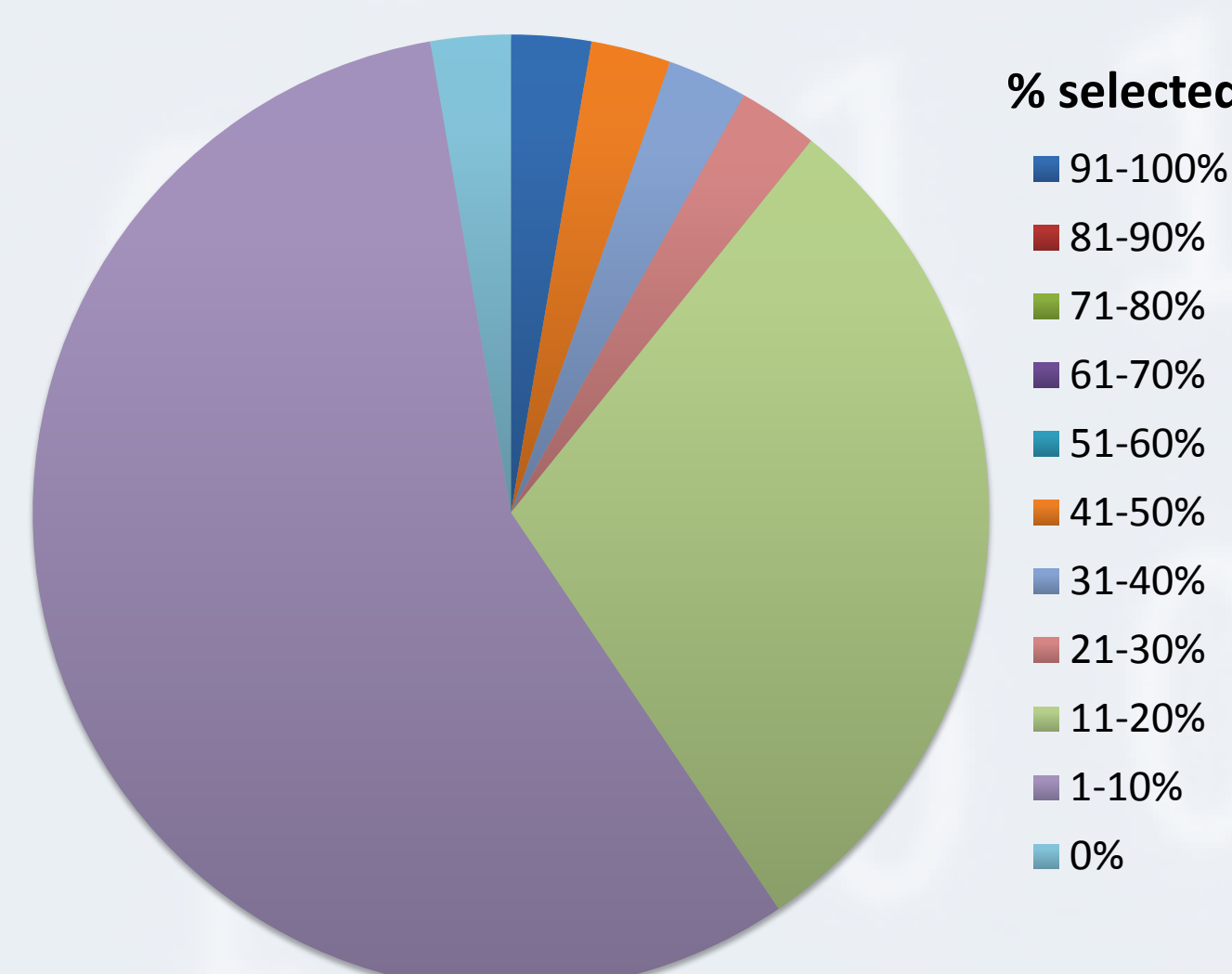
Academic Law Libraries



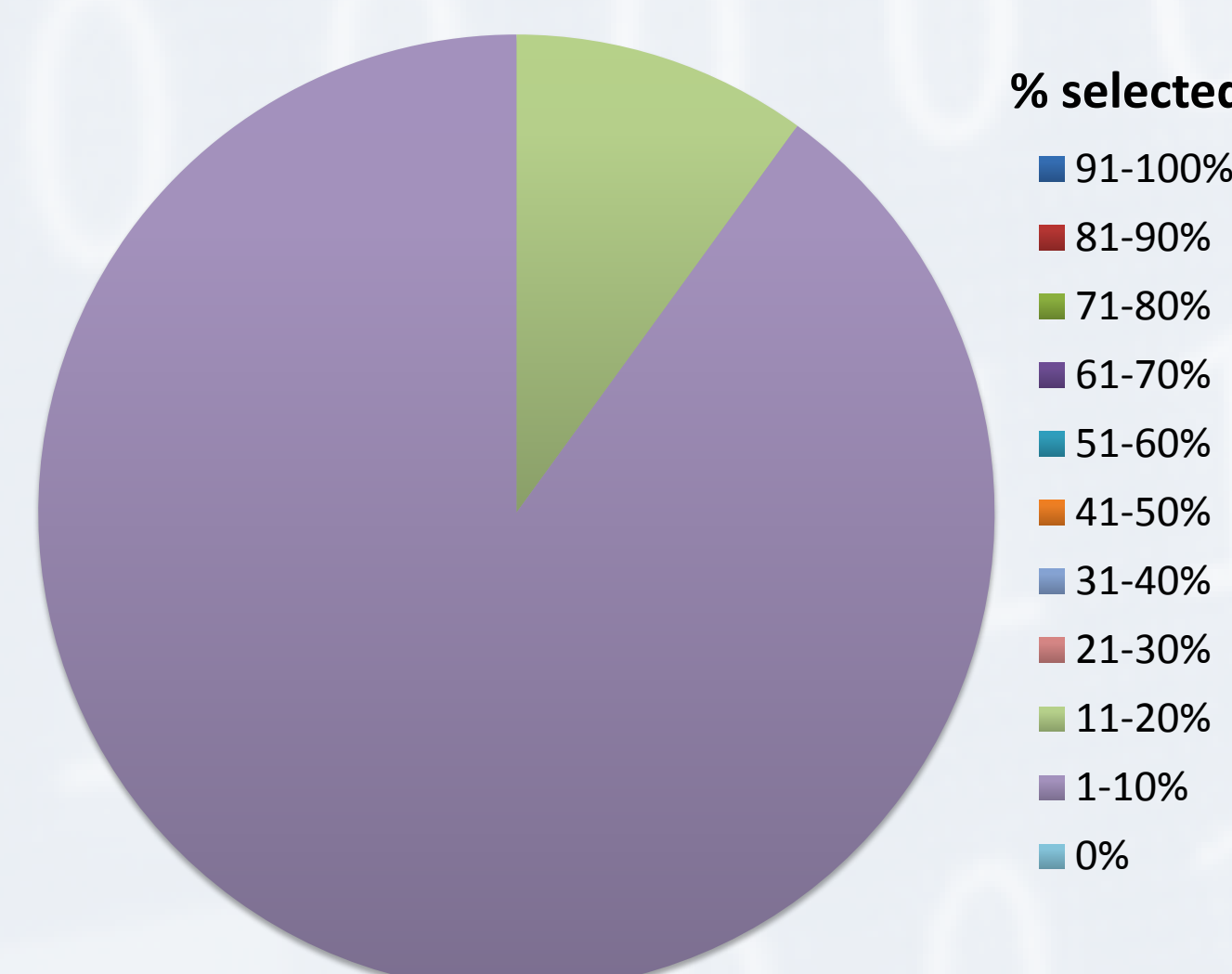
91% of academic law FDLs select 20% or fewer item numbers



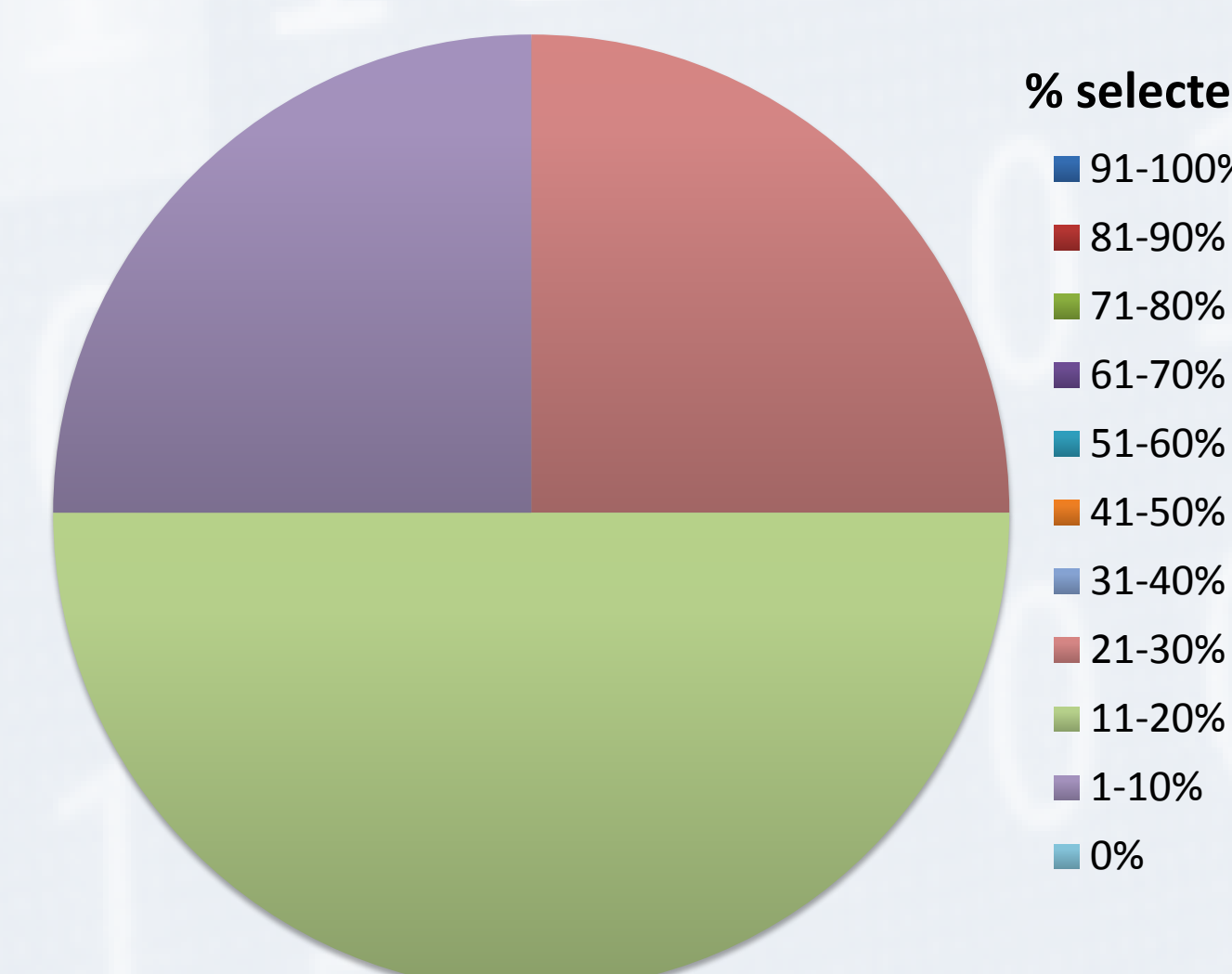
Community College Libraries
98% of community college FDLs select 30% or fewer item numbers



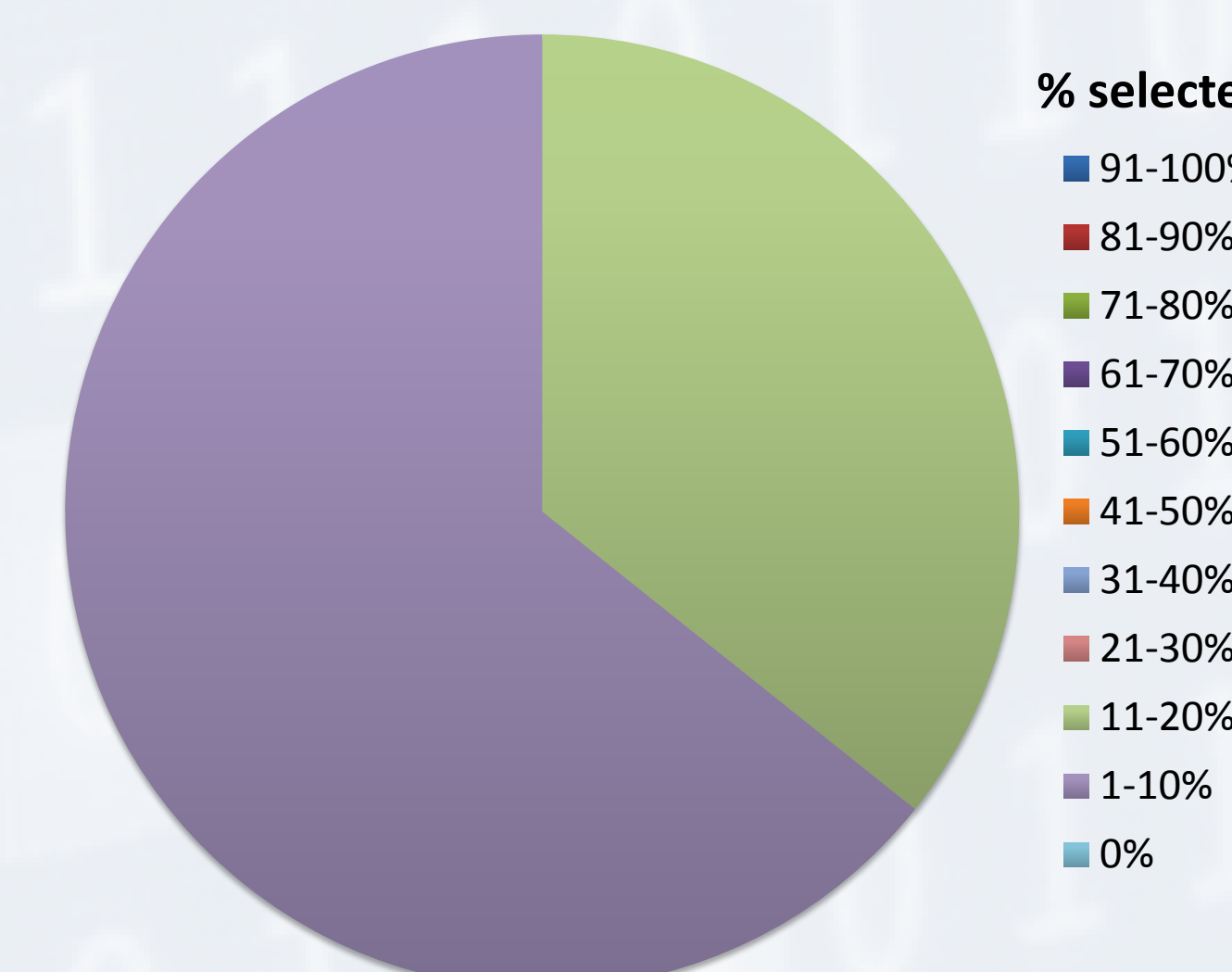
Federal Agency Libraries
90% of federal agency FDLs select 20% or fewer item numbers



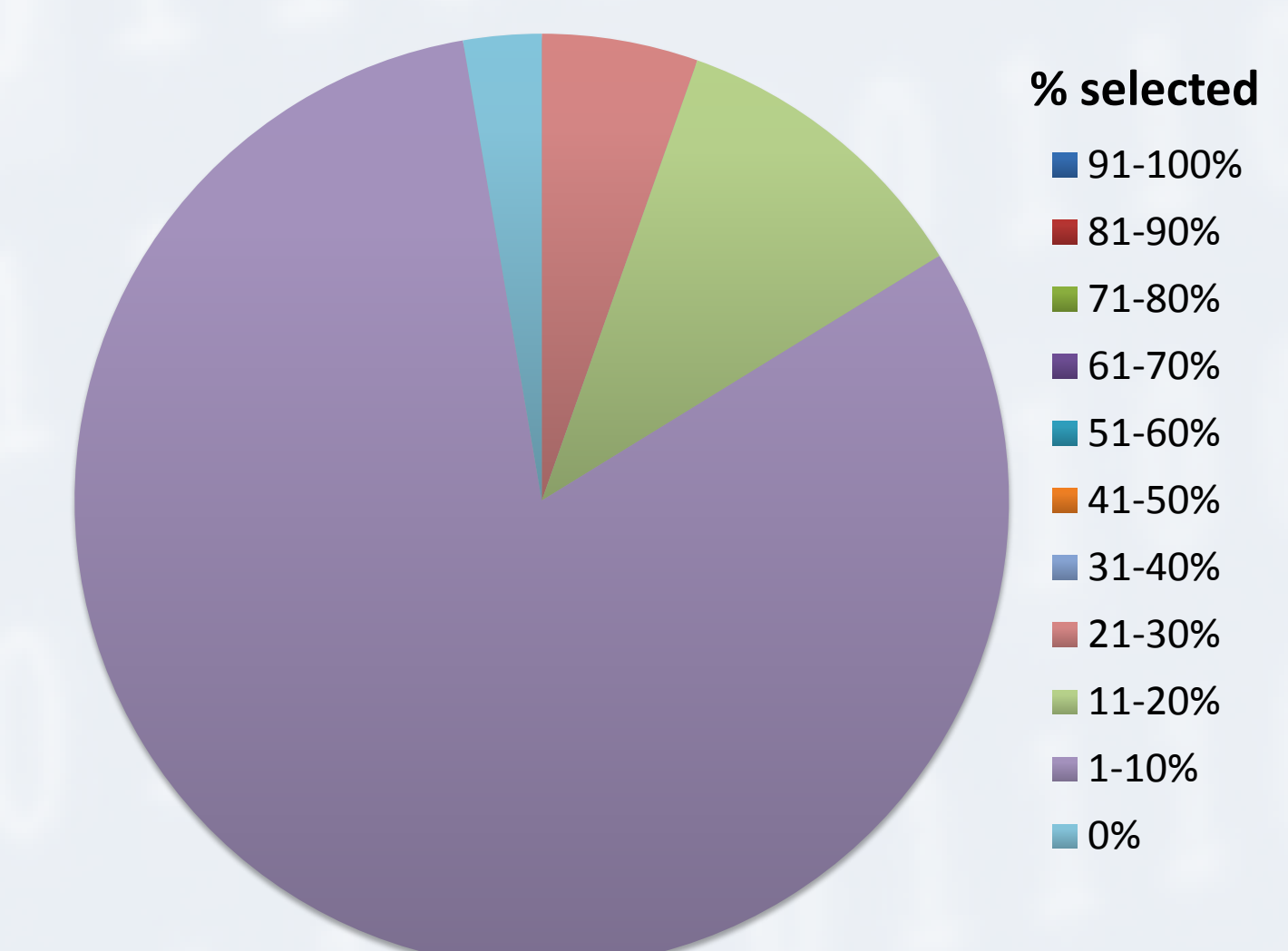
Federal Court Libraries
90% federal court FDLs select 10% or fewer item numbers



Service Academy Libraries
100% of service academy FDLs select 30% or fewer item numbers



State Supreme Court Libraries
84% of state supreme court FDLs select 10% or fewer item numbers



Special Libraries
100% of special FDLs select 20% or fewer item numbers