Introduction

This study assesses the extent to which documentary films, as indicated by Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (FAST) headings, are represented in the Internet Movie Database (IMDb). Many popular websites allow users to assign descriptive metadata to resources. Previous studies have analyzed user-created metadata and compared it to metadata created by information professionals (examples include Rolla (2009), Peter J. Rolla, “User Tags Versus Subject Headings: Can User-Supplied Data Improve Subject Access to Library Information Resources,” Library Hi Tech, 27(2), 180-199, 2009; Peter J. Rolla, “User tags versus subject headings: can user-supplied data improve subject access to library information resources?”). The current study, “Perceptions on Aboutness of Documentary Films: Comparing FAST Headings to User-Created IMDb ‘Plot Keywords’” (2020), examines which FAST headings were represented in the IMDb for a chosen set of documentary films, which the study seeks to improve the discovery of documentary films and other resources.

Study Background

The study was inspired by previous research on user-created metadata—particularly, studies comparing it to metadata created by research librarians, such as Hea and Ellerton (2009) and Hea and Hall (2017). In addition, Hea and Ellerton (2009) compared descriptive metadata in IMDb to FAST headings in WorldCat records in 33.2% of cases. This study is an extension of research in the area of user-created metadata and comparison to metadata created by information professionals.

The study found that 8% of the IMDb records contained one or more “plot keywords” and 46% contained no match. Using the definition of an exact match, the number of IMDb records meeting this criterion was 69% of the 100 records examined. The study also found that 44% of the IMDb records contained one or more “plot keywords” and 46% contained no match. Using the definition of an exact match, the number of IMDb records meeting this criterion was 69% of the 100 records examined.

Results

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Analysis

After a cursory review of the FAST headings and “plot keywords,” SKOS-inspired relationships were created. After viewing the results, the author made several changes to the set of relationships, which were then reevaluated. The author made changes to the set of relationships, which were then reevaluated. After making several changes to the set of relationships, the author made several changes to the set of relationships, which were then reevaluated. The author made changes to the set of relationships, which were then reevaluated.