Still a Lot to Lose: The Role of Controlled Vocabulary in Keyword Searching

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*In their 2005 study, Gross and Taylor found that more than a
third of records retrieved by keyword searches would be lost with-
out subject headings. A review of the literature since then shows
that numerous studies, in various disciplines, have found that a
quarter to a third of records returned in a keyword search would
be lost without controlled vocabulary. Other writers, though, have
continued to suggest that controlled vocabulary be discontinued.
Addressing criticisms of the Gross/Taylor study, this study replicates
the search process in the same online catalog, but after the ad-
dition of automated enriched metadata such as tables of contents
and summaries. The proportion of results that would be lost remains
high.*