

Fandango's Conflict of Interest

Background

If you are planning on going out to see a movie, how well can you trust online reviews and ratings? Especially if the same company showing the rating also makes money by selling movie tickets. Do they have a bias towards rating movies higher than they should be rated?

This project is inspired by an article on FiveThirtyEight entitled “Be Suspicious Of Online Movie Ratings, Especially Fandango’s”

(<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/fandango-movies-ratings/>) and the goal is to determine whether Fandango’s ratings in 2015 had a bias towards rating movies better to sell more tickets.

Data

The data is available on their GitHub page

(<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/fandango-movies-ratings/>). There are two csv files, one with Fandango Stars and Displayed Ratings, and the other with aggregate data for movie ratings from other sites, like Metacritic,IMDB, and Rotten Tomatoes.

Conclusion

In the end, we arrived at the conclusion that Fandango inflates their ratings compared to ratings by other sources such as users and movie websites. Fandango is showing around 3-4 star ratings for films that are clearly bad! For the biggest offender, 'Do You Believe?' Fandango is displaying 5.0 stars on their site for a film with an average rating of 2.26 across the other platforms! Charlie Munger once said “show me the incentive and I will show you the outcome.” In this case, Fandango clearly had the incentive to inflate the movie ratings in order to sell more tickets and the data backs it up.

Key Lessons

This project honed my skills in exploratory data analysis, data wrangling and data visualization (scatterplots, bar graphs, histograms, KDE plots).