

[OT] Top-Posting (was Re: wich is faster)

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.programming/2004-05/1700.html>

From: Ben Measures (saint_abroadremove_at_removehotmail.com)

Date: 05/26/04

Date: Wed, 26 May 2004 13:23:32 GMT

Dave wrote:

> *buda wrote:*

>> *There :) I suppose it depends on personal preference. I read posts*

>> *sequentially, so the only thing that I want to read in a particular*

>> *post is*

>> *the "new" stuff, so I prefer it to be on the top. Sorry if it bothers*

>> *you :)*

>>

>>

>

> *I agree completely. I think new stuff should be the first thing you*

> *see, which requires top-posting.*

The reason for not top posting is that your reply should refer to something that they wrote, preferably with something specific.

To keep threads easy to read, anything that is not related to your reply should be deleted and if you can find something specific in the OP you should enter your reply directly below it to ensure a direct link.

This way it can easily be seen where people are coming from and the reasonings behind their replies. It also helps the person replying to clarify their thoughts and stay on-topic.

IMO a posting should be a snapshot of somebody's thoughts. It should contain where they are coming from, why they are posting, and what they want to convey. If you look at this closely, this is simply good writing practice.

In this reply, everything I wrote above was with regard to your reason for top-posting. In turn I give a reason for **not** top-posting. This relationship is clear.

> *when something starts with "Re:" you already know there's going to be a*
> *thread running through it, so establishing the direction of reading*
> *would automatically be the first job.*

With the purpose of what? That's right, finding out why the poster has replied, and where they're coming from. This job can be minimised by "not-top-posting".

- > *One of the things I hate is having to repeat stuff. I suspect that is*
- > *true of many programmers because, at least theoretically, nothing should*
- > *ever need writing twice. Yet with the bottom posting rule it's new*
- > *message – scroll to the bottom – next new message – scroll to the bottom*
- > *– next – scroll – next – scroll and so on.*

That's probably because the ones replying forgot (or were too lazy) to delete anything irrelevant to their reply.

If something in the original post is relevant it should be highlighted in some way, usually by including a quotation. If nothing is relevant there should be no quotation and the reply should not exist.

- > *Top posting eliminates all*
- > *that tedious scrolling, and if most people are already following the*
- > *thread, that's a lot of scrolling (and wasted time) just for the benefit*
- > *of the few who like to jump in in the middle of a conversation then*
- > *complain about stuff being in reverse order.*

In that case, why include any quotations at all? What purpose do they serve? IMO this is the equivalent of having no quotations at all.

Now suppose we do remove the quotations altogether, leaving just the reply. It's now clear that including the sentence that prompted your words would clarify its reason for existence and point of view. Where better to put where you're coming from than before your reply?

- > *Perhaps in the next version of Usenet,*
- > *manually quoting previous posts wouldn't be necessary,*

It's not necessary, it's good writing practice.

- > *and people could*
- > *view threads in whatever order they like – newest first, oldest first,*
- > *random with order determined by indentation, etc.*

How do you read a thread in reverse if you consider branches? Even if you could, this would further the case for all postings being a 'snapshot' of thought – where they come from, why they are, and what needs to be conveyed.

--

Ben M.