

Mandis Quotes (aka retiring "" and ''')

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Python/comp.lang.python/2004-10/0452.html>

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Jef Raskin (namedropping) has pointed me at a neat scheme for quoting arbitrary textual matter called "Mandis quotes". Since google is ignorant of the phrase, I presume that Jef made it up. It is disgustingly simple, and very Pythonesque. Here's how it works: If you have a string that doesn't have any single quotes in it, you surround the string by a pair of doubled single quotes. "Like this". No backslash interpolation. If you want a character in there, you put it in there (yes, I know, stand down your armies). Clearly, then, any character except a single quote can go into one of these strings. If you need to put a single quote in, then you put an arbitrary string in-between the single quotes which does NOT appear in the string. For example, "Bill's house" becomes 'x'Bill's house'x'.

More formally, a mandis quote is a pair of tokens surrounding a completely arbitrary sequence of bytes. These tokens are comprised of a possibly null sequence of characters preceded by and followed by a single quote.

To save time, here's why this pre-PEP proposal sucks in decreasing order of severity:

- o Python source is typically represented, not as an arbitrary string of ASCII or Unicode characters, but instead as a sequence of lines separated by the native line terminator (e.g. CRLF, LF, or CR).
- o Editors are not all up to the task of inserting arbitrary characters into strings (although they SHOULD).
- o Email cannot withstand arbitrary strings of characters (although quoted-printable suffices).
- o Some distinct Unicode characters are represented using the same glyph, so that information is lost when text gets printed (but that's more of a Unicode stupidism.)

Obviously, the justification for it is that it eliminates ", ', r", r', """, and "" from the syntax, replacing them by a single 'x' that

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suffices for everything. Makes the code easier to read (only one visual element), easier to parse, and easier to write, because you don't need to decide which literal method to use.