

Top Posting Makes The Theoanthropos Cry

The Urth list — 18 messages, 9 voices, 27 Aug 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4699>

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Jeff Wilson — 27 Aug 2006, 20:22

People (I won't embarrass Bob, Iorwerth, Dan'I, or Matthew by mentioning their names),

Please lay off the top-posting; it makes your posts very hard to follow. Even if your mail program puts your cursor at the top of the quoted material to which you are replying, there is nothing to stop you from moving to the bottom before beginning to type in your received wisdom, and following the conventional flow of reading down columns of English eases the reader's eye.

You can read more about it here:

<http://www.greenend.org.uk/rjk/2000/06/14/quoting.html>

Thanks,
Jeff

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 28 Aug 2006, 05:03 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff,

I top-post, as a general rule, only when I don't think there's a need for interleaving (an ugly word; I coined the word "coinscription" to describe the way we write inside each others' texts in email/ mailing lists, and will take this oppty to plug it). As a general rule, I try to write such notes so that no context is required and cut the original out completely -- as here; but sometimes I forget to cut it.

And sometimes, considering that, due to the vagaries of mailing programs and such, some may see the reply before the original, I'll deliberately leave the original below to provide that context. But it's usually just a mistake (forgetting or laziness), since I believe that the coinscriptive style is causing many people to forget how to write a coherent reply without coinscribing.

I'll try to be better about it.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

"Shovels are essential to the fantasy genre.

However, they are primarily used by the authors rather than the characters." -- Stephen R. Donaldson

Jeff Wilson — 28 Aug 2006, 05:21 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Jeff,

I top-post, as a general rule, only when I don't think there's a need for interleaving (an ugly word; I coined the word "coinscription" to describe the way we write inside each others' texts in email/mailling lists, and will take this oppty to plug it). As a general rule, I try to write such notes so that no context is required and cut the original out completely -- as here; but sometimes I forget to cut it.

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When would people **need** to write a coherent reply without coinscribing or interleaving, or just plain bottom posting like I'm doing now?

b sharp — 28 Aug 2006, 10:38 · follows Jeff Wilson

I, for one, find top posting to be preferable in many cases. Especially when a response is more general in nature as opposed to point by point. I find it annoying to have to re-read (or skip over) paragraphs of stuff I've already read in previous posts just to get to the content of the current post.

-bsharp

Chris — 28 Aug 2006, 11:47 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I generally don't find top-posting hard to follow (yes, I'm doing this on purpose), especially on a relatively low-volume list where the post that's being responded to is fairly recognizable. I save interleaving for posts that have individual points that need to be addressed separately. To interleave on a post like this, for example, I would have to sit there and selectively prune out the text that wasn't directly relevant to my response; this can sometimes lead to a pretty confusing, mangled post. On the other hand if you don't prune you end up with two pages of quoted text with a single-sentence response at the bottom that can be easily mistaken for a sig - posts like that usually go in the trash bin without being read.

People (I won't embarrass Bob, Iorwerth, Dan'l, or Matthew by mentioning their names),

Please lay off the top-posting; it makes your posts very hard to follow. Even if your mail program puts your cursor at the top of the quoted material to which you are replying, there is nothing to stop you from moving to the bottom before beginning to type in your received wisdom, and following the conventional flow of reading down columns of English eases the reader's eye.

You can read more about it here:
<http://www.greenend.org.uk/rjk/2000/06/14/quoting.html>

Thanks,
Jeff

Chris — 28 Aug 2006, 11:49 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

You're using an interesting new sig, Dan'l.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Jeff,

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When would people *need* to write a coherent reply without coinscribing or interleaving, or just plain bottom posting like I'm doing now?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 28 Aug 2006, 17:52 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On 8/27/06, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

When would people *need* to write a coherent reply without coinscribing or interleaving, or just plain bottom posting like I'm doing now?

When writing real letters on paper. It's something of an art that I don't want to vanish from our culture.

(And, see, I _do_ bottom-post when it makes sense to do so!)

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

"Shovels are essential to the fantasy genre.

However, they are primarily used by the authors rather than the characters." -- Stephen R. Donaldson

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 28 Aug 2006, 17:52 · in reply to Chris

On 8/28/06, Chris <rasputin_ at hotmail.com> wrote:

You're using an interesting new sig, Dan'l.

Thank you.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

"Shovels are essential to the fantasy genre.

However, they are primarily used by the authors rather than the characters." -- Stephen R. Donaldson

Iorwerth Thomas — 28 Aug 2006, 19:19 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com>

People (I won't embarrass Bob, Iorwerth, Dan'I, or Matthew by mentioning their names),

Please lay off the top-posting....

Ah. Oops. Normally I'm more careful. Will do better.

Iorwerth

Jeff Wilson — 29 Aug 2006, 05:11 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On 8/27/06, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

When would people *need* to write a coherent reply without coinscribing or interleaving, or just plain bottom posting like I'm doing now?

When writing real letters on paper. It's something of an art that I don't want to vanish from our culture.

(And, see, I _do_ bottom-post when it makes sense to do so!)

As a counterexample, top-posting has apparently addled one poster here to the point where he replies to my post as if you wrote it, complimenting you on a sig that it does not contain!

maru dubshinki — 01 Sep 2006, 00:07 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 8/28/06, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
Jeff,

I top-post, as a general rule, only when I don't think there's a need for interleaving (an ugly word; I coined the word "coinscription" to describe the way we write inside each others' texts in email/mailling lists, and will take this oppty to plug it). As a general rule, I try to write such notes so that no context is required and cut the original out completely -- as here; but sometimes I forget to cut it.

....

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

Personally, I rather like the term "interleaving". To me, it makes it sound as if our conversations are collaboratively authoring a book, each page of which is a section.

~maru

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 01 Sep 2006, 00:37 · in reply to maru dubshinki

On 8/31/06, maru dubshinki <marudubshinki at gmail.com> wrote:
Personally, I rather like the term "interleaving". To me, it makes it sound as if our conversations are collaboratively authoring a book, each page of which is a section.

Whereas I get twitchy when I hear or read the word "author" used as a verb...

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>
"Shovels are essential to the fantasy genre."

However, they are primarily used by the authors rather than the characters." -- Stephen R. Donaldson

JWillard — 01 Sep 2006, 05:19 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On 8/31/06, maru dubshinki <marudubshinki at gmail.com> wrote:

Personally, I rather like the term "interleaving". To me, it makes it sound as if our conversations are collaboratively authoring a book, each page of which is a section.

Whereas I get twitchy when I hear or read the word "author" used as a verb...

Why? It's in the OED. Have we stumbled upon a concern lexicological, Barthesian, or other? Your ellipsis is practically tapping its toes out of impatience to explain itself...

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 01 Sep 2006, 14:57 · in reply to JWillard

On 8/31/06, JWillard <aldenweer at charter.net> wrote:

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Whereas I get twitchy when I hear or read the word "author" used as a verb...

Why? It's in the OED.

So are "D'oh!" and "Bling-bling." I'm a bit of a lexicological conservative, and don't like the use of a noun as a verb, at least where there's a perfectly good and commonly known verb ("write") that can do the job quite well.

Have we stumbled upon a concern lexicological, Barthesian, or other? Your ellipsis is practically tapping its toes out of impatience to explain itself...

Eh? It was intended as a mark of self-deprecation, that's all. The voice trailing off, somewhat embarrassed.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I've got a piece of braaaaaain lodge in me heeead!!!

brunians at brunians.org — 01 Sep 2006, 16:58 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 8/31/06, maru dubshinki <marudubshinki at gmail.com> wrote:

Personally, I rather like the term "interleaving". To me, it makes it sound as if our conversations are collaboratively authoring a book, each page of which is a section.

Whereas I get twitchy when I hear or read the word "author" used as a verb...

So nu?

.

brunians at brunians.org — 01 Sep 2006, 17:00 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 8/31/06, JWillard <aldenweer at charter.net> wrote:

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Eh? It was intended as a mark of self-deprecation, that's all. The voice trailing off, somewhat embarrassed.

At least you are embarrassed.

That's a good first step.

With practice, you may reach the point where you have no need to be embarrassed.

.

Transient — 01 Sep 2006, 19:20 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Sep 1, 2006, at 10:57 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On 8/31/06, JWillard <aldenweer at charter.net> wrote:

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Whereas I get twitchy when I hear or read the word "author" used as a verb...

Why? It's in the OED.

So are "D'oh!" and "Bling-bling." I'm a bit of a lexicological conservative, and don't like the use of a noun as a verb, at least where there's a perfectly good and commonly known verb ("write") that can do the job quite well.

Move to France. :) France has a language academy that officially decides what is and is not French. If a foreign word becomes overly popular, they come up with a Frencher word to replace it.

English is as it is used, unfortunately, by any people who use it, no matter their level of education or sophistication.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 01 Sep 2006, 19:31 · in reply to Transient

On 9/1/06, Transient <transient at gmail.com> wrote:

Move to France. :) France has a language academy that officially decides what is and is not French. If a foreign word becomes overly popular, they come up with a Frencher word to replace it.

Yes, but they don't speak English very well there. My problem is not a generic love of grammar for its own sake but a deep love of the English language.

English is as it is used, unfortunately, by any people who use it, no matter their level of education or sophistication.

This is undeniably true. Nor am I a complete grammar crank who shudders at a split infinitive or a well-used dangling modifier. But I think changes that weaken the language ought to be resisted, and "author" as a verb weakens the language. I'm not going to give a detailed explanation of why I think so -- this is still a list for discussing the works of Gene Wolfe, last I looked, and not a grammarian's alcove -- but I'll say that I can't imagine a case in which the shorter, more direct "write" isn't better. "Never use two syllables when one will do,"

Also: the Anglo-saxon word is almost always more powerful in

English than the Latinate. (Which is why I try not to refer to Wolfe, or any other writer, as an "author.")

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

I've got a piece of braaaaaain lodge in me heeead!!!