
Subject: Re: Humble request

Posted by [Bhautik Joshi](#) on Fri, 30 Nov 2001 03:41:15 GMT

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> Would it be too much to ask that some of us go to our NewsReader
> preferences and change an option to "Insert your reply ABOVE the quoted
> message"? For some threads, a one-line reply can be tucked into the very
> end of a 200-line quote that we read before. Kind of inconvenient.

In some newsgroups, this little issue has sparked what has come close to
apocalyptic flame wars. There's an interesting little FAQ about quoting
in newsgroups here:

<http://www.uwasa.fi/~ts/http/quote.html>

I'm not taking sides on the issue, but here is what the FAQ has to say
about it:

Where is the best place to put quoted text? Above or below my comments?

Above! Some more recent standard email and newsreader programs have
assumed a very problematic feature. They include the message which
you are responding to below your message. Don't allow that to happen.
The proper order is

>Quote 1 (properly pruned)

Your response 1

>Quote 2 (properly pruned)

Your response 2

In other words

- * Put each, appropriately trimmed item that you choose to quote
before each of your own comments, respectively.
- * Remove any remaining "postquoting". Let me emphasize. Do not
leave the entire earlier posting, which you have been responding
to, at the end of your own posting.

Some (often obscure) Usenet newsgroups and Microsoft's own newsgroups
(hardly surprising!) may show and have developed different
preferences and practices as to the order and extent of quoting. This
definitely is not what to go by in general on the Usenet news. Also,
one of the arguments that has been posed in favor of the excessive
quoting is that threads may be broken and full quoting is therefore
imperative to be able to follow what is going on. No, that is what
the news repositories are for. Besides, in well-planned quoting it is

amply sufficient to give the essence. Concise and at the same time informative quoting indeed is a skill to be practiced.

Of course it is fair to ask why

>Quote 1 (properly pruned)
Your response 1
>Quote 2 (properly pruned)
Your response 2

is better than

Your entire response

>All old quoted

Email and Usenet news are typically used for modern, often almost real-time exchanges which can closely resemble a verbal discussion rather than a correspondence by snailmail where the time between the letters is days or weeks. In a good discussion one interacts, rather than keeps up separate monologues. Thus it is very natural to quote a point, respond, quote the second point, respond and so forth.

Adapted from an advisory posting by Bob Gootee: Answering above the the original message is called top posting. Sometimes also called the Jeopardy style. Usenet is Q & A not A & Q. (The name obviously comes from the game of Jeopardy, where the competitor is given the answer before the question.)

As for the Microsoft's public newsgroups even there the official policy warns against quoting below your answer and against excessive quoting!

So, for all the purists out there, there you go :)

Cheers,
B.

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