

Re: top posting (off-topic)

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- *From:* Bart Silverstrim <bsilver@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 23 Nov 2007 16:42:28 -0500
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David Benfell wrote:

On Fri, 23 Nov 2007 11:31:51 -0500, Bart Silverstrim wrote:

We have adults who can't be bothered to tell the difference between lose and loose in writing. Wonderful things encouraged by people justifying their lazy writing styles.

This might be slightly unfair.

A large proportion of the population has **never** been able to spell correctly or to use proper grammar.

"has never been able to" is not a valid excuse in my book when it comes to writing without a significant number of qualifications. The vast number of people I see misusing common words are fully educated and are very able to use most of the other words in the same message just fine, yet never stop to fix proper usage of "loose" vs. "lose."

I'm not saying writing must be perfect, and I'm well aware of my own grammar shortcomings and I fully understand typos and mistakes. But there are also trends that I run into ALL THE TIME that are simply a case of people not taking a bit of care.

A difference between now, and a few years ago, is that we are more often encountering their expressions in a written form, as they, too, gain access to the Internet.

AND they don't care enough to take a few moments to edit or put thought into their writing. That was my point.

We have small businesses in the small town I live in. Many of them have typos in their signs. Constantly. Now, if I go to a fast food joint in my town and they screw up my drink, bleh, it happens. I can accept that mistakes happen. But when a place screws up my order three or four times in a row, as our local Burger King did, I stop going there. Period. When there are businesses with a mistake on their sign, well, maybe it's a plain

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whoops. When I see mistakes consistently in their signs, I wonder if they really care about their business image, and if they're lazy or not willing to take care in their image, would I trust that they are careful in doing business as well? I avoid them.

As a graduate student in communication, I write a lot. As a teacher of public speaking, I see grammatical and spelling errors in the outlines my students turn in. These errors irritate me, but having also worked in the technology sector, and having seen memos from my fellow technology workers, prior to outsourcing and the importing of people who have an excuse, I know my students are not alone.

There is making mistakes and there is plain "I don't care." The ones that make mistakes try not to repeat them. They care about trying not to look like ignoramuses. If I were to point out that "loose" and "lose" mean to entirely different things they would make a note not to do that again in the future.

The ones I SPECIFICALLY refer to are the latter. They DON'T CARE. These are the ones that treat email as a substitute for instant messenger. They care nothing for crafting messages to deliver a message rather than a mental fart. They are the ones that think communication reached a zenith by reading, word for word, a set of PowerPoint slides to the assembled napping crowd.

Dyslexia and other learning disabilities that impede mastery of spelling and grammar may be much more common than is often reported. Underfunded public schools don't help.

Yeah, I work in a US public school. My wife is an English teacher. She has more students than she cares to have claiming, upon having mistakes pointed out, "I'm just not a good speller." It's an excuse. She knows what these kids are capable of and quite frankly they are simply not being careful, and I'm tired of coddling them and enabling their laziness further by dismissing their mistakes as being okay when they simply don't put effort into fixing the problem.

It's also an insult to those that do work hard to overcome their problems. I know a couple of dyslexics who spell words rather well because they worked to overcome the problem. How is it fair to ignore the ones that just don't want to put effort into doing better? They didn't just passively accept a limitation, they worked at making their situation better. Others do them no favors in just nodding a smiling and telling them it's okay to just be sub par when they are capable of at least trying to do better.

And an insistence on grammatical and spelling correctness is its own form of elitism.

No, I'm insisting on not being lazy and passing it off as just the norm. I've clearly acknowledged that I don't expect perfection, and mistakes are more than acceptable. What I DON'T accept is when they are no longer mistakes, just a simple I-don't-give-a-damn attitude. The writing is untrimmed, the grammar is sloppy, and the excuse is that it saves THEM time and effort. Quoting isn't trimmed. No effort is put into crafting a message. Email is turned less into a communication medium and more into a very very poor form of instant messaging. Messages in the archive consist of non-linear messages piled on top of each other with redundant

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headers re-quoted just so someone could burp out a short "me too" or other one-liner mental pop. It's a waste of space and time, and it reflects on the author and their lack of care in how their communication reflects back on themselves.

What you point out is that there are cases where it is legitimate to accept communication problems. True! Never said there weren't exceptions. However, this is NOT the majority of the cases, and the reasons you're citing are more used as excuses rather than explanations in the vast majority of cases.

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