

Communication in Computer Science

Quotes

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Example

“Professors attribute
the success of their students to environment
and the success of their children to genes.”

– Michael Crichton
Next (2006), CH087

A support for your message

- Quotes can **lighten** your presentation (e.g., with a humorous touch).

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- Quotes can **lighten** your presentation (e.g., with a humorous touch).
- Quotes can **deepen** your presentation (e.g., with an authority argument).
- Quotes can **enrich** your presentation (e.g., by inducing lateral thinking).

Are quotes necessary?

No.

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No.

“No sir, they are not.”

– Master Sergeant Farell

Are quotes necessary?

No.

But they convey culture.

Culture

- An indirect way to refer to the messenger.
(At the risk of distracting from the message.)
- A more effective way to communicate
by establishing a common ground.

One quote per chapter?

Say a dissertation has a quote in every chapter.

- Do you check out each chapter?
- Would you do that without the quotes?
- Do you end up reading more chapters?

One quote per chapter?

Say a dissertation has a quote in every chapter.

- Do you check out each chapter?

Yes you do, out of curiosity.

- Would you do that without the quotes?
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One quote per chapter?

Say a dissertation has a quote in every chapter.

- Do you check out each chapter?

Yes you do, out of curiosity.

- Would you do that without the quotes?

Actually, probably not: time is so short.

- Do you end up reading more chapters?

One quote per chapter?

Say a dissertation has a quote in every chapter.

- Do you check out each chapter?

Yes you do, out of curiosity.

- Would you do that without the quotes?

Actually, probably not: time is so short.

- Do you end up reading more chapters?

Well, actually yes you do.

Morten Heine Sørensen's dissertation

This dissertation had one quote per chapter,
except for Chapter 14.

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And now that is the quote of Chapter 14.

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His external evaluator asked Morten by e-mail:

“Where is the quote for Chapter 14?”

And now that is the quote of Chapter 14.

(How self-referential can you get?)

One quote per chapter: be original

In a student report about a compiler,
each chapter quoted an Elvis Presley song,
and each quote fitted the topic of the chapter.

That was outstanding and genuinely brilliant.

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That was outstanding and genuinely brilliant.

In Connie Willis's novel *Passage* (60 chapters),
each quote is someone's last words.

That is a tour de force.

Where **not** to find quotes

- on the Internet
- in an encyclopedia
- second hand

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(You don't understand their context for sure.)

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And they are not original.

Are they even authentic?

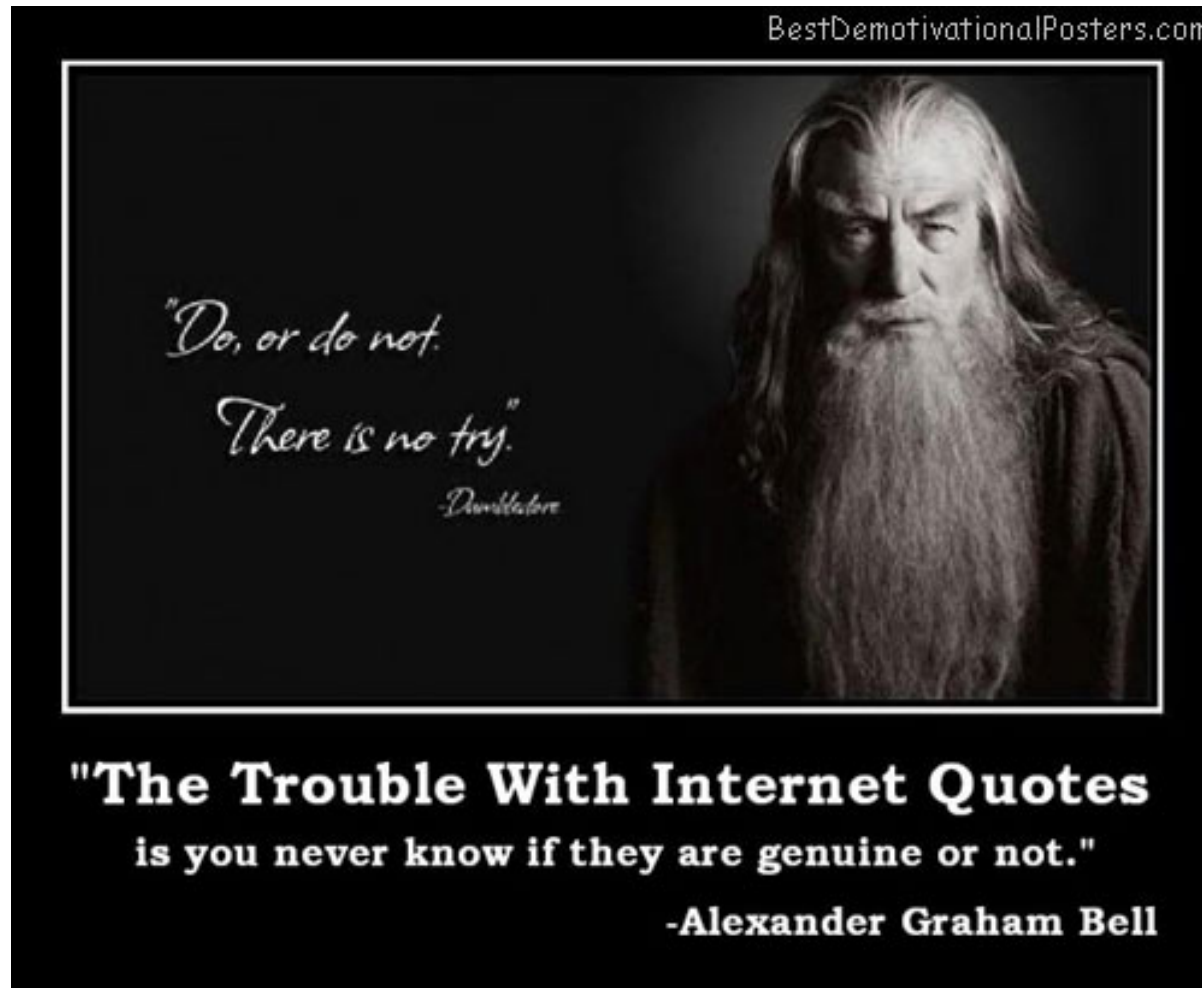
The trouble with second-hand quotes

"The trouble with quotes on the Internet is that you can never know if they are genuine."

Abraham Lincoln



The trouble with second-hand quotes



When **not** to find quotes

- at the last minute

They won't fit.

When to find quotes

- all the time

CONSTANT VIGILANCE!

– Alastor “Mad Eye” Moody

When to find quotes

- all the time

CONSTANT VIGILANCE!

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Just jot them down.

Where to find quotes

Everywhere:

- in what you read
- in what you listen to
- in what you watch
- in daily life
- in the other talks earlier in the conference 😊

Which quotes fit and which don't

The priority is your message, so:

- anything that helps the audience is good
and
- anything that distracts the audience is bad.

Summary and conclusion

- Quotes are **not mandatory** and **not necessary** on slides and in your writing.
- But if you feel they help your message, do not hesitate to use one.
- Pitfalls: distracting, inappropriate, incorrect.

Reference

How to use this book, Item 1

(Gnomic Utterances)

in: The Tough Guide To Fantasyland

Diana Wynne Jones

(revised edition, 2006)