Tip # 18 – The Pros and Cons of Publishing Annotations Online

One aim of our project is to find out what readers need in order to benefit from online annotations and to create a best-practice model for such annotations. The departure from print-based explanatory notes has, of course, certain advantages and disadvantages.

Pro	Con
• **No space restrictions**: Our annotations are more informative, we can cite all of our sources and provide more detailed discussions of complex passages and problems.	• **No space restrictions**: Readers might be overwhelmed with information. **Our solution**: All notes have to be relevant and directly connected to the primary text.
• **Accessible to everyone:** We provide all internet users with reliable annotations. Thus, those who cannot afford scholarly editions or benefit from our project, too.	• **Accessible to everyone:** Unlike many publishers of annotated print versions, we do not have an "ideal reader". Thus, we do not know how much information our readers need or already have. **Our solution**: Categories and levels.
• **Reader-friendliness:** Our readers do not have to search for endnotes. Also, they can filter annotations and search our database.	• **Impact on reading experience:** Many people are not used to reading long texts online. They might wish to read the primary text in print and only our notes online. **Our solution:** We're testing ways of accommodating our system to the needs of our readers.
• **Links**: We can create links to other websites (e.g. the *OED*) and between annotations. • **Multimedia**: We can include pictures, videos, audio files, etc.	• **Possible distractions:** Extensive notes and links to other sites can distract readers from the primary text. **Our solution**: Our notes are aimed at readers already familiar with the text.