How to write for this blog

Ben Baumer

2023-02-08

This is an example of how to write an article for this blog.

This example is based on work by [Brooke Williams](https://www.bu.edu/com/profile/brooke-williams/), an investigative reporter and associate professor at Boston University. Brooke maintains [a public GitHub repository](https://github.com/reporterbrooke/think_tanks) that contains the data she uncovered about money donated by foreign governments to U.S. think tanks. These data motivate the [interactive graphic](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/07/us/politics/foreign-government-contributions-to-nine-think-tanks.html) and [article](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/us/politics/foreign-powers-buy-influence-at-think-tanks.html) published in *The New York Times* on this issue.

The [source code for this article](https://github.com/sds236-s25/quarto-blog/blob/main/posts/think_tanks/index.qmd) is available on our private GitHub repository. Please review it. You will note that each sentence is written on a new line, and that Markdown formatting is employed to style the text where necessary. Note also how I am using the code-fold and execute [YAML](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YAML) options at the top of this Quarto document to control how the rendered output appears. Note that I have specified that code not be echoed when this Quarto document is rendered into a Word document (docx).

Since Brooke’s data is available as a text file in a public GitHub repository, we can load it directly using read\_delim(). Note that in this case the file is tab-delimited (\t).

Rows: 599  
Columns: 24  
$ ID <chr> "232", "241", "20337", "245", "243", "244", "…  
$ donor\_original <chr> "\"Ministry of Interior Affairs, Albania\"", …  
$ donor\_clean <chr> "Ministry of Interior Affairs Albania", "Aust…  
$ country\_short <chr> "Albania", "Australia", "Australia", "Austral…  
$ country\_official <chr> "Republic of Albania", "Commonwealth of Austr…  
$ entity\_type <chr> "Foreign Government", "Foreign Government", "…  
$ entity\_subtype <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, N…  
$ donor\_level <chr> NA, "CDI Consortium", NA, "Clients and Granto…  
$ tt\_EIN <chr> "52-0880375", "52-2351337", "52-1640938", "95…  
$ tt\_UID <chr> "52-0880375", "52-2351337", "52-1640938", "95…  
$ think\_tank <chr> "Urban Institute", "Center for Global Develop…  
$ source <chr> "tt website (4/9/14)", "tt website (4/8/14)",…  
$ ` min\_amount ` <chr> "\" 10,000.00 \"", "\" 30,000.00 \"", NA, "\"…  
$ ` max\_amount ` <chr> "\" 24,999.00 \"", NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA…  
$ ` exact\_amount ` <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, "…  
$ ` foreign\_amt ` <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, N…  
$ currency\_code <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, N…  
$ `exg\_rate(unit-per-USD)` <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, N…  
$ exg\_date <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, N…  
$ donation\_date\_notes <chr> "2012", "As of 4/8/2014. No date provided on …  
$ purpose <chr> NA, "\"\"\"providing a private forum for offi…  
$ notes <chr> NA, "Government", NA, "\"Non-U.S. Governments…  
$ gift\_type <chr> NA, "Annual Membership Fee", NA, NA, NA, NA, …  
$ donor\_agency <chr> NA, NA, NA, "Transport Data Centre", NA, NA, …

[Figure 1](#fig-donations-by-country) is a data graphic created by Brooke’s data. Consider this as an inferior alternative to [this one](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/07/us/politics/foreign-government-contributions-to-nine-think-tanks.html).

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 1: Donations to think tanks by country. |

## Publishing

To publish this article, I made a pull request to [this repository](https://github.com/sds236-s25/quarto-blog/). Here are the steps you need to follow:

* Open a new branch. The easiest (but not the only) way to do this is by running usethis::pr\_init("name-of-new-branch"). Please read [the documentation](https://usethis.r-lib.org/articles/pr-functions.html) for these functions if necessary.
* Copy this Quarto file (or another one) to a **new folder** in the posts/ directory. Use dashes instead of spaces in the name of the new directory!
* Write your article.
* If necessary (it generally shouldn’t be), add any other files you need to this directory.
* Commit repeatedly until you are done.
* Push to your fork, and then open your pull request. The easiest way to do this is using usethis::pr\_push().
* Follow the progress of your pull request on GitHub.

Please note that you first need to set up a GitHub token. Read [the instructions](https://usethis.r-lib.org/articles/git-credentials.html) and use the usethis::git\_sitrep() function.

Do not hesitate to ask for help! Post to the #help-me channel on Slack!