Twitter Thread by Sophie Hill



Sophie Hill
@sophie_e_hill

This is a more wonky thread about how I made this visualization in #Rstats using the awesome visNetwork

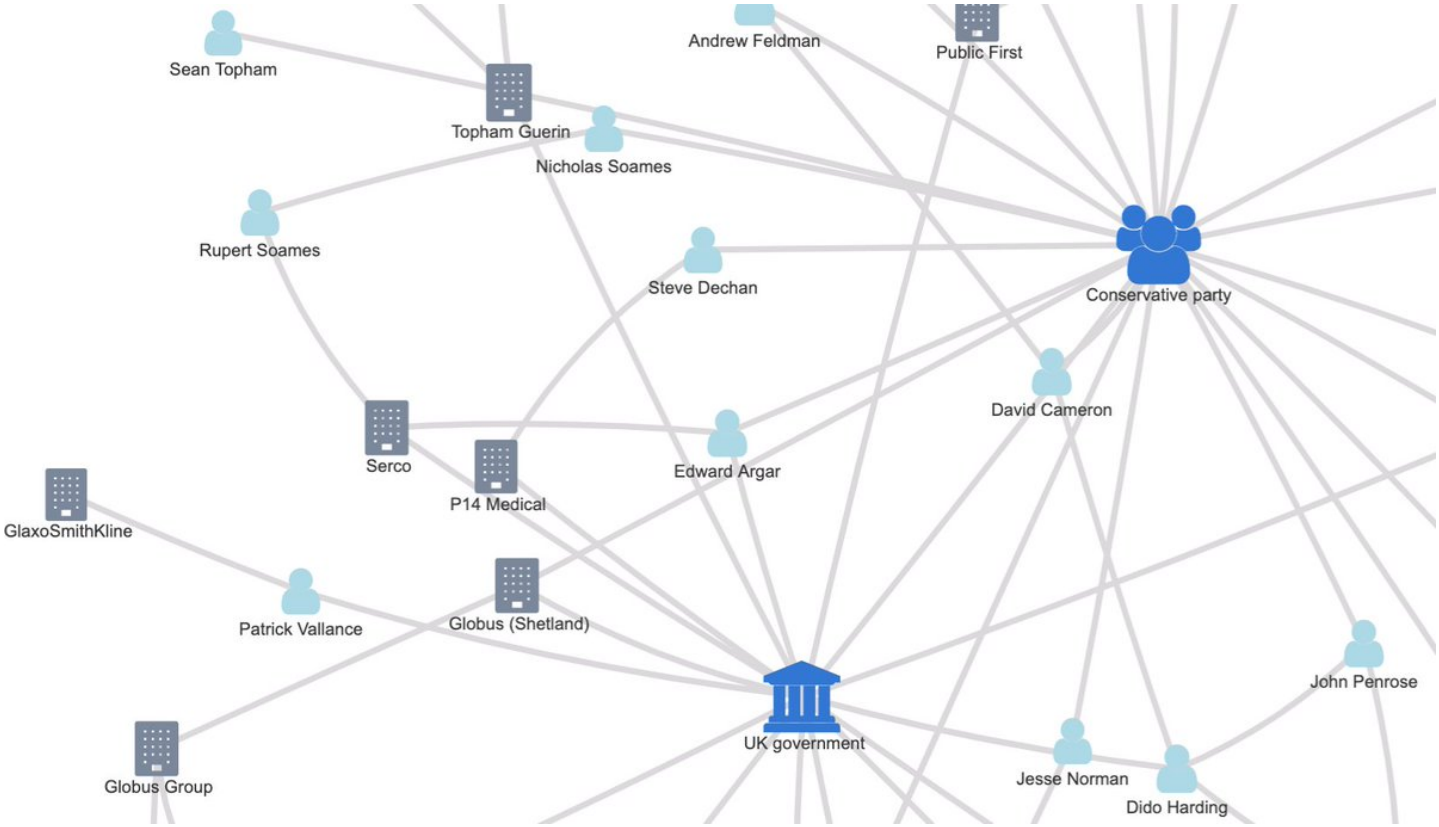
First step is to create the underlying network data. We need one file of "nodes" - i.e. the people and organizations. And one file of "edges" - i.e. the connections between them.

I created these by hand, based on excellent investigate journalism:

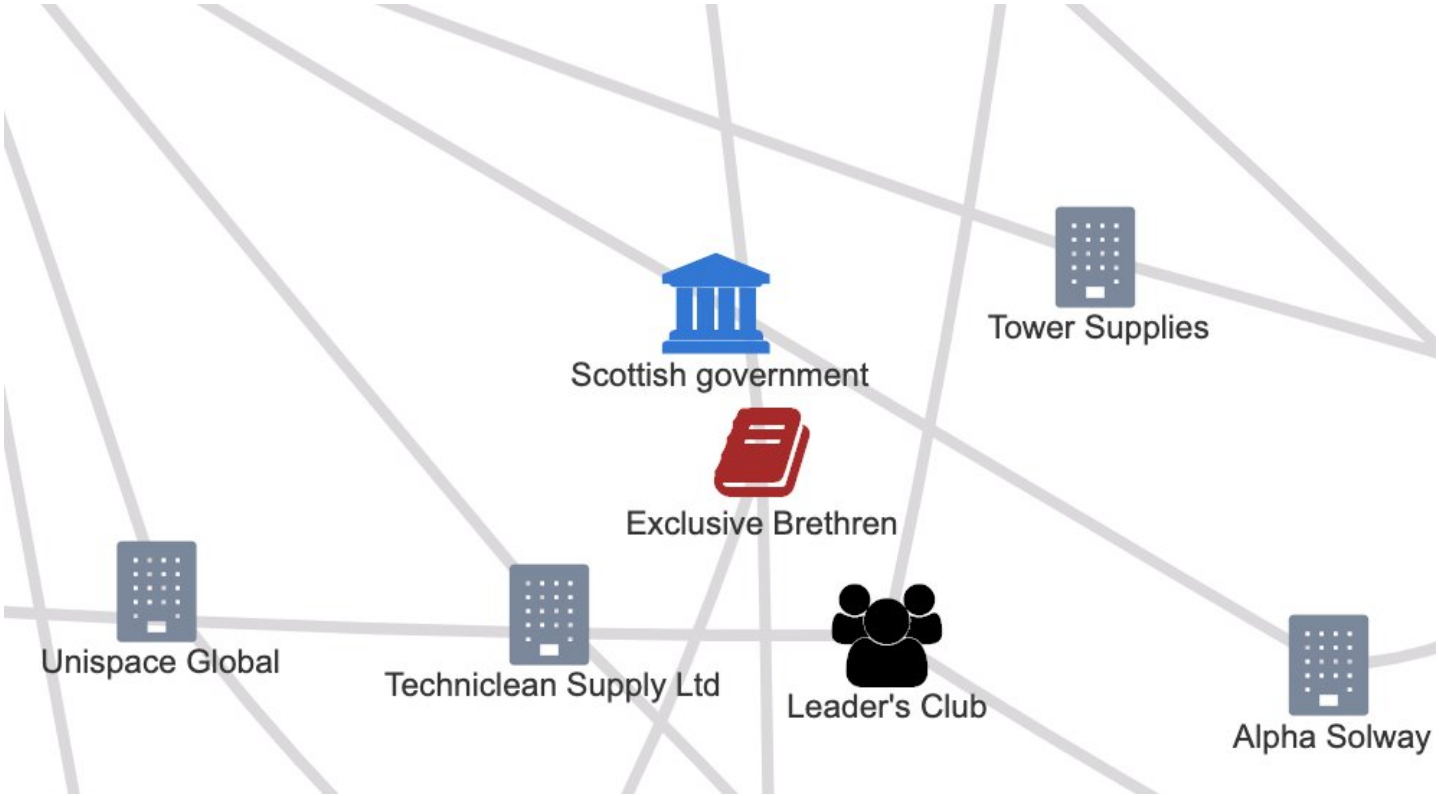
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	id	type	desc			
2	Topham Guerin	firm	Topham Guerin is a New Zealand-based political consul			
3	Sean Topham	person	Sean Topham is a PR professional and founding partner			
4	Ben Guerin	person	Ben Guerin is a PR professional and founding partner of			
5	Conservative party	political part	The UK Conservative party has been in government sinc			
6	Michael Gove	person	Michael Gove is a Conservative MP and Minister for the			
7	Dominic Cummings	person	Dominic Cummings is chief adviser to the Prime Minist			
8	Public First	firm	Public First is a London-based research and communica			
9	New Schools Network	charity	New Schools Network is a charity that supports groups			
10	Babylon Health	firm	Babylon Health is a for-profit health service provider			
11	Matt Hancock	person	Matt Hancock is a Conservative MP and Health Secretar			
12	New Frontiers Foundation	think tank	New Frontiers Foundation was a rightwing think tank			
13	Business for Sterling	political cam	Business for Sterling was a campaign against Britain jo			
14	Rachel Wolf	person	Rachel Wolf is a founding partner of Public First and co			

Now we can pull these together to create a network visualization!

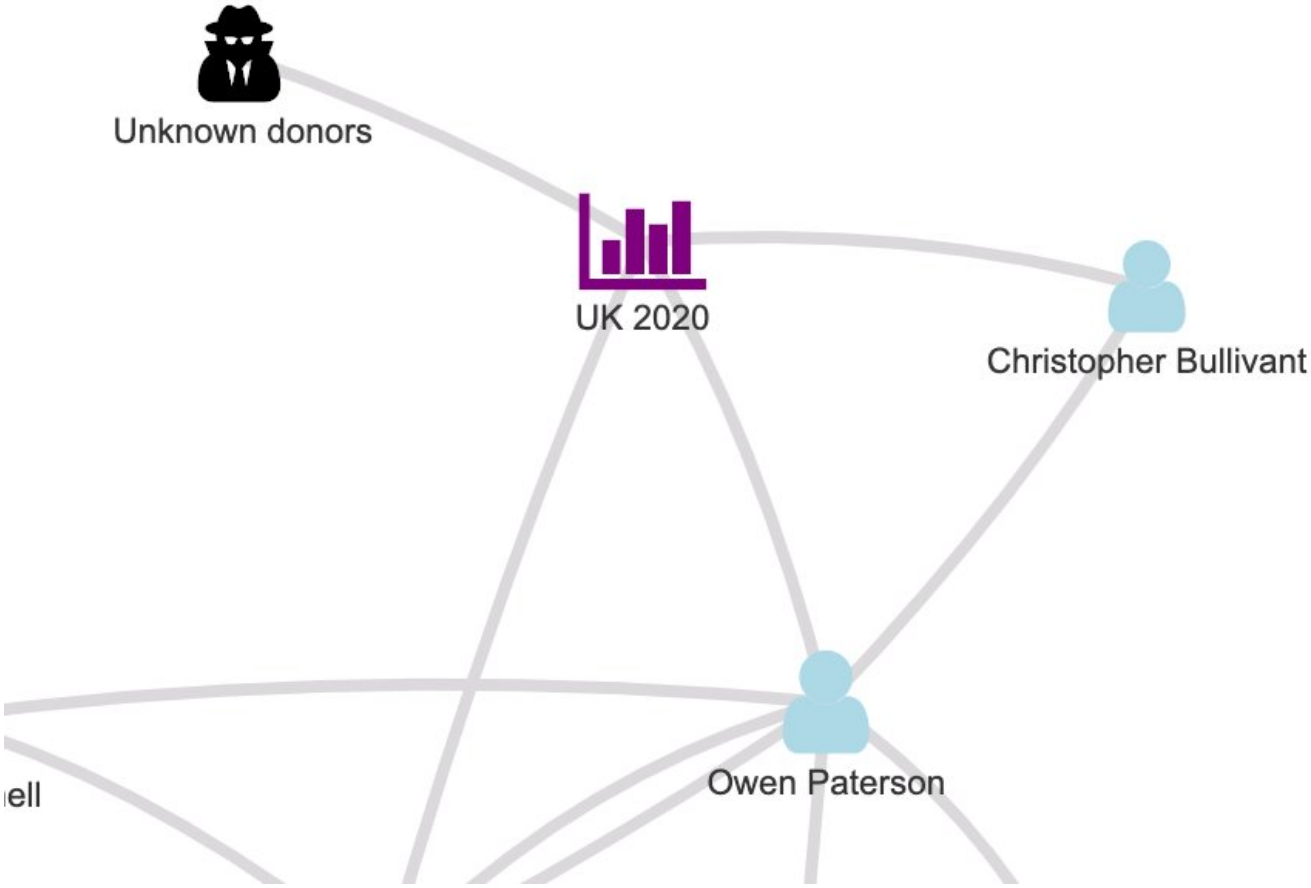
You'll notice that I included a column for "type" in the nodes file. This allows me to use different icons for people vs firms vs political organizations.



All the icons are taken from @fontawesome. I *think* the visNetwork ■ currently only works with fontawesome version 4.7, which is a bit limited – e.g. I decided to use a book icon to represent the fringe Evangelical Christian sect "Exclusive Brethren"! ■

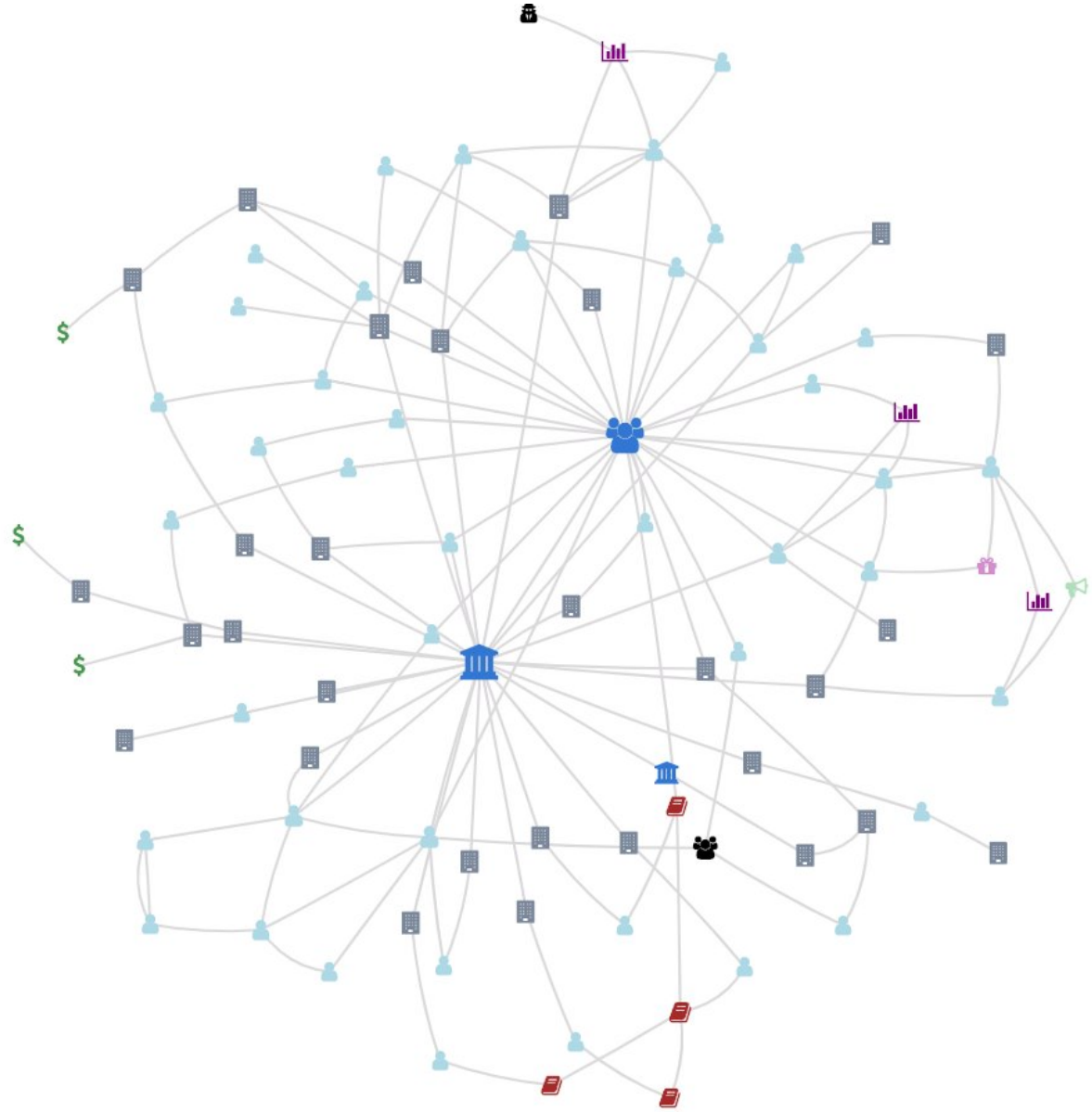


I very much enjoyed getting to use the "incognito" icon to represent all the unknown donors that have funded Tory MP Owen Paterson's overseas jaunts!



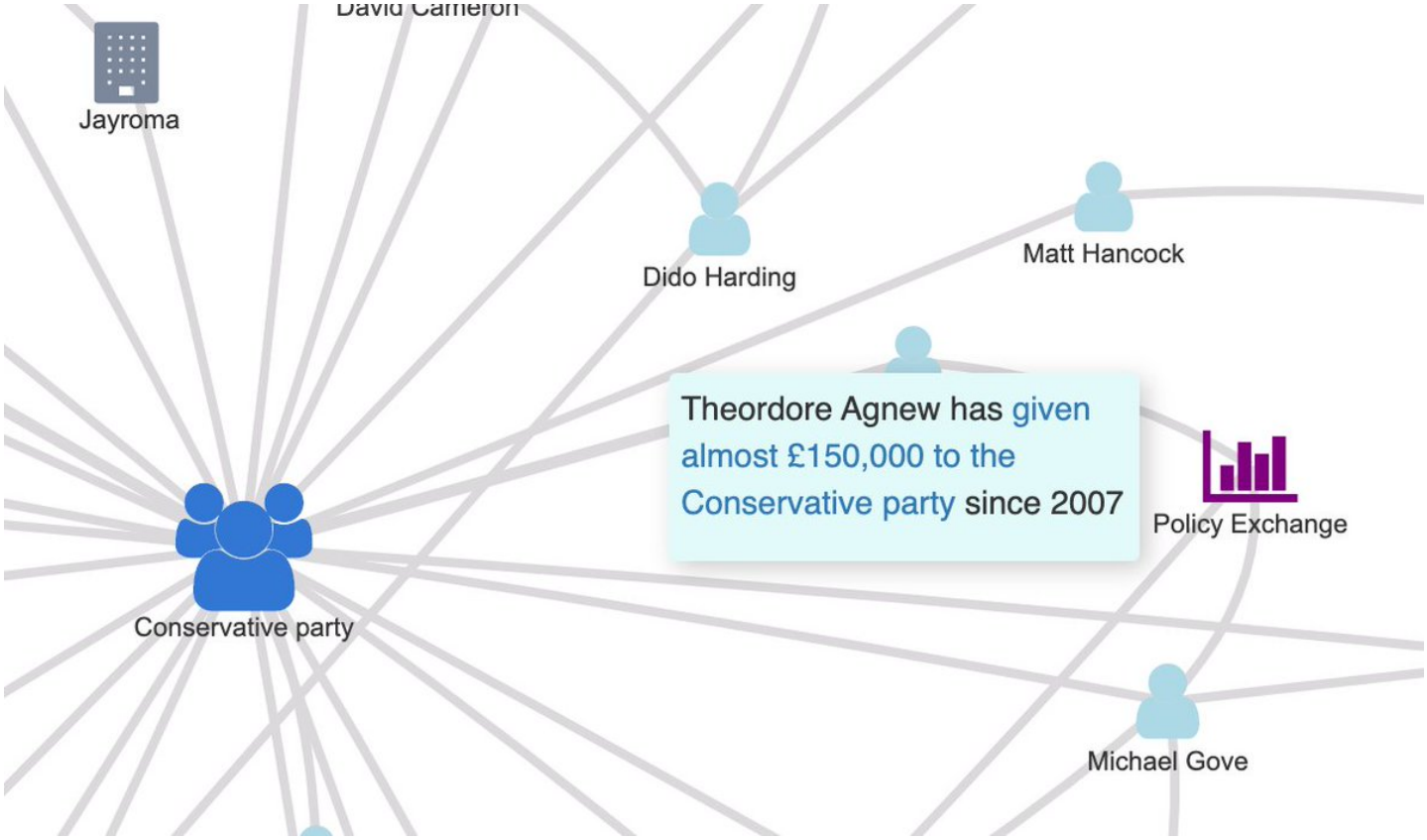
The icons are also scaled by how many "edges" connect to each "node".

Unsurprisingly, this means that the UK government and the Conservative party emerge as the most connected nodes in this network!



The great thing about visNetwork ■ is that it's SO easy to make this visualization interactive with #RShiny.

You can add pop-up boxes ("tool-tips") that show more information when the user hovers over a node or edge – perfect for linking to the original reporting that I used.



Check out the full code and data on github! https://t.co/rWuCxbCnW3