

R cookbook for the casual dabbler (2nd edition)

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Chapter 1

Introduction

G'day and welcome to *R cookbook for the casual dabbler (2nd edition)*.

RCCD 1st edition was originally published in 2020 as a side project during the COVID-19 pandemic in Melbourne.

As I wrote in the midst of lockdown:

I use R a lot for work and for side projects. Over the years I've collated a bunch of useful scripts, from macroeconomic analysis to quick hacks for making map legends format properly.

Historically my code has been stored in random Rpubs documents, medium articles, and a bunch of .Rmd files on my harddrive. Occasionally I feel like doing things properly - and upload code to a repository on github.

It doesn't take a genius to realize this isn't a very sustainable solution - and it also isn't very useful for sharing code with others. It turns out 2-years of lockdown in Melbourne was enough incentive to sit down and collate my best and most useful code into a single place. In the spirit of open source, a book seemed like the most logical format. The following is a very rough book written in **markdown** - R's very own publishing language.

RCCD1e had surprisingly good (and long-lasting reviews). Alas, five-years on, a lot has changed - in both the R community, and the world more broadly. As such, RCCD2e includes significant revisions. The most major of these is a restructure to make the chapters flow more logically. The Australian specific chapters have also been grouped together (e.g. election data).

1.1 Usage

In each chapter I've written up the background, methodology and code for a separate piece of analysis.

Most of this code will not be extraordinary to the seasoned R aficionado. However I find that in classic Pareto style ~20% of my code contributes to the **vast** majority of my work output. Having this 20% on hand will hopefully be useful to both myself and others.

1.2 Additional resources

The R community is continually writing new packages and tools. Many of these are covered extensively in various free books available on the bookdown.org website.

The rise of LLM's over the past 2-years has also made it significantly easier to find, refine, and expand on R code. I recommend using them as a first point of call.

1.3 Limitations

If you find a bug (along with spelling errors etc) please email me at charlesf-coverdale@gmail.com with the subject line 'RCCD2e'.

1.4 About the author

Charles Coverdale is an economist based in Melbourne, Australia. He is passionate about economics, climate science, and building talented teams. You can get in touch with Charles on twitter to hear more about his current projects.

Chapter 2

Hello bookdown

All chapters start with a first-level heading followed by your chapter title, like the line above. There should be only one first-level heading (#) per .Rmd file.

2.1 A section

All chapter sections start with a second-level (##) or higher heading followed by your section title, like the sections above and below here. You can have as many as you want within a chapter.

An unnumbered section

Chapters and sections are numbered by default. To un-number a heading, add a {.unnumbered} or the shorter {-} at the end of the heading, like in this section.

Chapter 3

Cross-references

Cross-references make it easier for your readers to find and link to elements in your book.

3.1 Chapters and sub-chapters

There are two steps to cross-reference any heading:

1. Label the heading: `# Hello world {#nice-label}`.
 - Leave the label off if you like the automated heading generated based on your heading title: for example, `# Hello world = # Hello world {#hello-world}`.
 - To label an un-numbered heading, use: `# Hello world {-#nice-label}` or `{# Hello world .unnumbered}`.
2. Next, reference the labeled heading anywhere in the text using `\@ref(nice-label)`; for example, please see Chapter 3.
 - If you prefer text as the link instead of a numbered reference use: any text you want can go here.

3.2 Captioned figures and tables

Figures and tables *with captions* can also be cross-referenced from elsewhere in your book using `\@ref(fig:chunk-label)` and `\@ref(tab:chunk-label)`, respectively.

See Figure 3.1.

```
par(mar = c(4, 4, .1, .1))  
plot(pressure, type = 'b', pch = 19)
```



Figure 3.1: Here is a nice figure!

Don't miss Table 3.1.

```
knitr::kable(  
  head(pressure, 10), caption = 'Here is a nice table!',  
  booktabs = TRUE  
)
```

Table 3.1: Here is a nice table!

temperature	pressure
0	0.0002
20	0.0012
40	0.0060
60	0.0300
80	0.0900
100	0.2700
120	0.7500
140	1.8500
160	4.2000
180	8.8000

Chapter 4

Parts

You can add parts to organize one or more book chapters together. Parts can be inserted at the top of an .Rmd file, before the first-level chapter heading in that same file.

Add a numbered part: `# (PART) Act one {-}` (followed by `# A chapter`)

Add an unnumbered part: `# (PART*) Act one {-}` (followed by `# A chapter`)

Add an appendix as a special kind of un-numbered part: `# (APPENDIX) Other stuff {-}` (followed by `# A chapter`). Chapters in an appendix are prepended with letters instead of numbers.

Chapter 5

Footnotes and citations

5.1 Footnotes

Footnotes are put inside the square brackets after a caret `^[]`. Like this one ¹.

5.2 Citations

Reference items in your bibliography file(s) using `@key`.

For example, we are using the **bookdown** package (Xie, 2025) (check out the last code chunk in `index.Rmd` to see how this citation key was added) in this sample book, which was built on top of R Markdown and **knitr** (Xie, 2015) (this citation was added manually in an external file `book.bib`). Note that the `.bib` files need to be listed in the `index.Rmd` with the YAML `bibliography` key.

The RStudio Visual Markdown Editor can also make it easier to insert citations: <https://rstudio.github.io/visual-markdown-editing/#/citations>

¹This is a footnote.

Chapter 6

Blocks

6.1 Equations

Here is an equation.

$$f(k) = \binom{n}{k} p^k (1-p)^{n-k} \quad (6.1)$$

You may refer to using `\@ref{eq:binom}`, like see Equation (6.1).

6.2 Theorems and proofs

Labeled theorems can be referenced in text using `\@ref{thm:tri}`, for example, check out this smart theorem 6.1.

Theorem 6.1. *For a right triangle, if c denotes the length of the hypotenuse and a and b denote the lengths of the **other** two sides, we have*

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

Read more here <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/markdown-extensions-by-bookdown.html>.

6.3 Callout blocks

The R Markdown Cookbook provides more help on how to use custom blocks to design your own callouts: <https://bookdown.org/yihui/rmarkdown-cookbook/custom-blocks.html>

Chapter 7

Sharing your book

7.1 Publishing

HTML books can be published online, see: <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/publishing.html>

7.2 404 pages

By default, users will be directed to a 404 page if they try to access a webpage that cannot be found. If you'd like to customize your 404 page instead of using the default, you may add either a `_404.Rmd` or `_404.md` file to your project root and use code and/or Markdown syntax.

7.3 Metadata for sharing

Bookdown HTML books will provide HTML metadata for social sharing on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, using information you provide in the `index.Rmd` YAML. To setup, set the `url` for your book and the path to your `cover-image` file. Your book's `title` and `description` are also used.

This `gitbook` uses the same social sharing data across all chapters in your book—all links shared will look the same.

Specify your book's source repository on GitHub using the `edit` key under the configuration options in the `_output.yml` file, which allows users to suggest an edit by linking to a chapter's source file.

Read more about the features of this output format here:

<https://pkgs.rstudio.com/bookdown/reference/gitbook.html>

Or use:

```
?bookdown::gitbook
```

Bibliography

Xie, Y. (2015). *Dynamic Documents with R and knitr*. Chapman and Hall/CRC, Boca Raton, Florida, 2nd edition. ISBN 978-1498716963.

Xie, Y. (2025). *bookdown: Authoring Books and Technical Documents with R Markdown*. R package version 0.42.