Help:Items

This is the approved revision of this page, as well as being the most recent.

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Item is the term used in Discourse DB to refer to every editorial, opinion column, blog post, and other source text indexed in the system. Items are the basic building blocks of Discourse DB.

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What items fit in Discourse DB?

Items originate in opinion pieces, columns, editorials and blog posts. A statement by a leader, politician or other celebrity, even as part of a long speech, does *not* qualify as a Discourse DB item. There are a large number of political statements made every day, and in order to apply some sort of filter to them, Discourse DB requires that every item included be written by an author in a notable source publication. Of course, sometimes politicians and celebrities write newspaper and online opinions, and, assuming the publication is notable, these are appropriate.

Not every post in a notable blog belongs in Discourse DB, and not every editorial, commentary or analyis from a printed publication belongs here either. To be included here, an op-ed or blog post must offer some opinion about a political *event* or *policy* (not just a political figure or group), and it must provide some sort of argument to back up that opinion. It must also have been written by the author of that op-ed or post, and not be simply an approving quote of (or an approving link to) someone else's writing.

Representing items

Every item in Discourse DB gets its own page. The following are the main fields that should be included for every item:

- **Quote** - a one-to-four-sentence quote of the original column/editorial/post, distilling the

message of that piece of writing. Substitutions and ellipses (...) are allowed in quotes, for the sake of clarity, but they should be surrounded by brackets ([]) to make it clear that a change was made. If you want to use brackets, by the way, note that you can't simply use the characters [and], because brackets are already used in MediaWiki to indicate links; rather, you should type in **[** and **]** for the left and right bracket, respectively.

- **Source** - the opinion must have been published in at least one notable source publication - see Help:Sources.
- **Author** - the author or authors of the opinion; there must be at least one - see Help:Authors.
- **Date** - the original publication date of the opinion.
- **URL** - optionally, there can be a link to the full text of the opinion, if it can be found online.

The title of an item page should be the title of the original editorial, column or post that that opinion derives from. If the editorial/column contains both a title and a sub-title, only the title should be used. If the source material had no title, the title of the page should be the first four or five words of the origial source, in quotes. If two or more opinion pages share the same name, these should be disambiguated using the item's subtitle, if there was one, or the author's name (see the Wikipedia disambiguation help page for more on disambiguation).

Organizing items

There are two ways in which items can be organized: positions and topics.

Positions

If an item expresses specific opinions about a topic, that should be represented as the item taking a stance (for, against, or mixed) on a position relating to that topic; this is most easily done by using the "opinion" template - see Help:Positions and Help:Opinions for more information on that.

Topics

What if an item discusses one or more political topics that are (or should be) in the Discourse DB system, but only in neutral terms, without stating any opinions about it? This item should be listed as covering that topic but not covering a position on it. This should also be done using the "opinion" template - see Help:Topics and Help:Opinions for more information.

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