

Shane Alan Taylor

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TECHNICAL WRITING LEADER

“Making the complicated simple — awesomely simple — that's creativity.” — Charles Mingus

Hands-on people leader, content engineer, and technical writer with deep expertise in DITA structured authoring, content models, metadata, and docs-as-code content workflows. Led operational and content transformation from a couple dozen intermittently updated PDFs for agents to a continuously maintained self-service ecosystem of 6500 articles with annual case deflection savings of \$10.8 million.

- **Team leadership:** 7 years managing, coaching, and mentoring a distributed team of technical and UX writers. Built a cohesive, high-performing team from previously isolated writers with varying workflows, toolsets, priorities, and experience.
- **Technical writing:** 23 years supporting internal and external users with help, user guides, quick starts, API/CLI reference, and release notes for software used in electrical distribution networks, server management, healthcare, and education.
- **AI and automation:** Implemented automation, AI, and content reuse where they could improve documentation workflows — information gathering, drafting, builds, testing, and deployment — to scale team impact and shorten docs release cycles.
- **Structured docs-as-code:** 21 years using modern structured documentation tools and processes including DITA XML, Markdown, git version control, single-sourcing, and static site generators.
- **Analytics:** Instrumented feedback, use, and satisfaction metrics; used data to improve support and product experiences.
- **Agile:** 8 years agile content lifecycle management — roadmaps, issue refinement, estimation, and prioritization in Jira, daily standups, retrospectives — with a focus on continuous improvement of team culture, processes, and deliverables.
- **Cross-functional leadership:** Used communication and interpersonal skills, influence, and domain expertise to lead cross-functional initiatives establishing support content strategy, style guidelines, terminology, and taxonomy.
- **Quality processes:** Developed enterprise style guidelines and structured documentation templates. Operationalized peer reviews, SME review meetings, and automated release testing to ensure content accuracy and adherence to standards.

SKILLS SUMMARY

People management

1:1s • Coaching • Crucial conversations • Hiring/recruiting • KPIs • Mentoring • Performance management

Product/project management

Agile/scrum frameworks • Aha! • Change leadership • Cross-functional collaboration • Executive communication • Influencing without authority • Jira • OKRs • Prioritization • Reporting and analytics • Process improvement • Requirements management • SDLC • Smartsheet • Strategic planning

Content operations

AI enablement • AWS • CMS/CCMS • Confluence • DITA Open Toolkit • Docs as code • GEO/SEO • Git/GitHub • HTML/CSS • JavaScript • Linux/UNIX shell scripting • OpenAPI • Sharepoint • SQL • Static site generators

Technical writing

Accessibility and inclusivity • Acrobat • API and CLI docs • Content strategy/governance • Content reuse methods • Contextual help • Developer docs • DITA XML • FrameMaker • Information architecture • Learning design • MadCap Flare • Markdown • Release notes • RoboHelp • Single-sourcing • Snagit • SOPs • Taxonomy/terminology • Translation/localization • User-focused docs • UX writing

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cengage Learning, Inc.

Remote - US

Senior Manager, Technical Communications (technical writing)

7/2022 – 5/2025

Player-coach, product manager, and content engineer. Realized an FY25 case deflection savings of \$10.8 million by improving team effectiveness, adding a dedicated UX writer role, optimizing SEO, and integrating help with Salesforce AI.

- Enabled Salesforce Service Cloud Agentforce AI to deliver relevant help information in customer and agent support workflows, resulting in a 25× increase in the topics available in self- and agent-led support workflows.
- Shortened average help release cadence from 2× monthly to weekly by automating release deployment and testing steps.
- Led a cross-functional working group that implemented a shared information taxonomy to standardize terminology and improve SEO across platform, marketing, sales, support, and help collateral.

Manager, Technical Communications (technical writing)

8/2017 – 7/2022

Transformed technical writing at Cengage from a cost center with dozens of scattered product-focused PDFs into a world-class self-service help experience with more than 5000 searchable customer-focused articles.

- Developed iHub Integration Playbook REST API documentation for third party tool integration, automating builds of reference information and integrating that with writer-created context and examples.
- Built a high-functioning distributed team by aligning writers' workflows, tools, and backlogs, resulting in faster delivery and improved consistency and quality. Trained team in DITA, git, agile, and CI build workflows.
- Successfully managed competing development timelines, business priorities, and customer pain points across a portfolio that included eight online learning platforms, seven LMS integrations, and hundreds of titles.

Senior Technical Writer

11/2016 – 8/2017

Developed content strategy, vision, and architecture for user assistance/help.

- After Cengage's purchase of WebAssign, supported MindTap and SAM learning platforms and worked with new Cengage teammates to create shared style guidelines.
- Wrote user interface text with collaboration from UX and product management.
- Wrote and maintained DITA-OT plugins for customized help, embedded user assistance, and PDF deliverables.

Technical Writer

12/2008 – 11/2016

Wrote topic-based help, embedded user assistance, and quick start guides for the WebAssign learning platform.

- Built and maintained a git-based CI docs workflow using Jenkins and Bitbucket.
- Wrote 90% of the WebAssign question coding reference in addition to application help.
- Developed an AngularJS context-sensitive user assistance module for the new placeU placement test product.

OTHER TECHNICAL WRITING EXPERIENCE

CTG, Inc., contracted to IBM — IBM Systems Director server management CLI

TekSystems, Inc., contracted to Sealy, Inc. (IT Department) — IT SOPs

T-P-S Inc., contracted to ABB — CADOPS, netCADOPS, FeederAll electrical distribution network management software

Make Systems, Inc. (now OpNet Technologies) — NetMaker network modeling software

UPBEAT Program, VA GLAHS & UCLA Jonsson Cancer Center — Psychogeriatric care coordination study data

VOLUNTEER WORK

DITA Open Toolkit — Contributor (bugfixes and docs) to open-source project used by most commercial applications

Appalachian Trail Conservancy — Konnarock and Rocky Top Trail Crews

Felton Grove High School Band Boosters — VP, Communications; VP, Logistics (founding member)

Apex Friendship High School Band Boosters — VP, Volunteers; props and pit crews

Cengage Women in Technology ERG — Men as Allies Co-Lead (founding member)

EDUCATION

BA in English, Murray State University, Murray, KY

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Taylor S, Shanahan A. (2019, April 15–17). *Darwin and Linnaeus: Implementing a Content Taxonomy in DITA*.

CIDM Content Management Strategies, Durham, NC.

Pinter M, Taylor S. (2018, April 23–25). *DITA for Small Teams*. CMS/DITA North America, Denver, CO.

Taylor S. (2018, April 23–25). *Jenkins, Meet DITA-OT*. CMS/DITA North America, Denver, CO.

Taylor S. (2014, October 27–29). *Creating User Assistance with Agile Teams*. WritersUA East, Charleston, SC.

Malloy J, Pinter M, Taylor S. (2014, February 8). *DITA for Three: How a Small Tech. Comm. Department Converted to DITA and Improved Our Agility and Quality*. SpeedCon Unconference on Technical Communication, Raleigh, NC.

Taylor S. (2014, February 8). *Technical Communications in Agile Environments*.

SpeedCon Unconference on Technical Communication, Raleigh, NC.

Taylor S. (2006, March). *Brushing your teeth with DITA*. DITA 2006 Conference, Raleigh, NC.