

Shane Alan Taylor

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TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS LEADER

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.

- 7 years managing, coaching, and mentoring a distributed team of technical writers. Built a cohesive, high-performing team from previously isolated writers with varying workflows, priorities, and experience.
- 20+ years as a software technical writer for a range of technical and non-technical audiences, applying best practices to meet customer needs throughout the product lifecycle.
- 17 years using DITA XML structured authoring.
- Created DITA specializations with RelaxNG and DTDs to support writer onboarding and improve consistency.
- Developed DITA plugins to build LLM context metadata, interactive content, and search indexes.
- Solved challenging content delivery problems in helps, including in-context registration code lookup and an interactive course creation help wizard.
- Built partnerships with local and globally distributed colleagues in product, support, marketing, and engineering.
- 8+ years agile content lifecycle management — roadmaps, issue refinement, estimation, and prioritization in JIRA, daily standups, retrospectives — with a focus on continuous improvement of processes and deliverables.
- Led multiple successful cross-functional collaborations, including global support content strategy, style guidelines, terminology, taxonomy, and company-wide DEIB educational initiatives.
- Inclusive and strategic leadership style based on continuous learning from and for my team, with a focus on listening, asking questions, and providing clarity not just in *what* we are doing but also *why* and *how*.
- Operationalized quality processes — peer reviews, SME review meetings, style guidelines, and content models — to ensure accuracy, consistency, and adherence to standards.

SKILLS SUMMARY

Managing people and projects

Agile/scrum frameworks • Aha! • Communication • Crucial conversations • JIRA • KPIs • Mentoring • Microsoft Teams • Performance management • Prioritization • SDLC • Slack • Smartsheet • Workday • Zoom

Content operations

Apache FOP • AWS • Confluence • DITA Open Toolkit • Docs as code • GEO/SEO • Git/Bitbucket/GitHub • HTML/CSS • JavaScript • Jenkins CI/CD pipelines • OpenAPI • ServiceNOW • XML/RelaxNG schemas • XSLT, XSL:FO

Technical writing

Accessibility and inclusivity • Adobe Acrobat • API/CLI docs • Content strategy • Contextual help • DITA XML • End user documentation • FrameMaker • Google Workspace • Information architecture • MadCap Flare • Markdown • Microsoft Office • Oxygen XML Editor • RoboHelp • SOPs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cengage Learning, Inc.

Independence, KY

Senior Manager, Technical Communications

7/2022 – 5/2025

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 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-facilitated support workflows.
- Shortened average help release cadence from 2× monthly to weekly by improving release deployment and testing.
- 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

8/2017 – 7/2022

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

- 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.
- Developed embedded user assistance for the new placeU placement test application.

Technical Writer

12/2008 – 11/2016

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

- Led conversion of FrameMaker source to DITA, shifting from print-first to web-first content delivery.
- Built and maintained a git-based CI docs workflow using Jenkins and Bitbucket.

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 modeling 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

Appalachian Trail Conservancy — Konnarock and Rocky Top Trail Crews

DITA Open Toolkit — Contributor

Felton Grove High School Band Boosters — 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

Graduate Study in English, University of Denver, Denver, CO

BA in English, Murray State University, Murray, KY

AWARDS, PUBLICATIONS, AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Taylor S, Shanahan A. (2019, April 15–17). *Darwin and Linnaeus: Implementing a Content Taxonomy in DITA* [Conference presentation]. CIDM Content Management Strategies, Durham, NC.

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

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

Taylor S. (2014, October 27–29). *Creating User Assistance with Agile Teams* [Conference presentation]. 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*. [Conference presentation]. SpeedCon Unconference on Technical Communication, Raleigh, NC.

Taylor S. (2014, February 8). *Technical Communications in Agile Environments*. [Conference presentation]. SpeedCon Unconference on Technical Communication, Raleigh, NC.

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