Shane Alan Taylor

Experienced leader who builds trust and achieves results by asking questions, listening, and solving problems for the team, the business, and customers.

Skills summary

Managing people and projects

Agile / scrum frameworks • Aha! • CAI team leader certificate • Communication • Crucial conversations • Education technology • JIRA • LMS platforms • Prioritization • Workday

Content operations

Accessibility • Apache FOP • CSS • DITA Open Toolkit • Git / Bitbucket • HTML • JavaScript • Jenkins pipelines • Linux/UNIX shell scripting • Regular expressions • RelaxNG schemas • SEO • XPath • XSLT • XSL:FO

Technical writing

Adobe Acrobat / Distiller • DITA XML • FrameMaker • Google Docs • Information architecture • Microsoft Office • Microsoft Teams • Minimalism • Oxygen XML Editor • RoboHelp • Slack • Topic-based writing • Zoom

Professional experience

Senior Manager, Technical Communications
8/2017 – 5/2025
Cengage Learning, Inc.
Independence, KY (remote) • 800-354-9706

Transformed technical communications at Cengage from dozens of scattered agent-focused PDFs and proprietary helps into a coherent self-service experience with 6500 customer-focused articles and FY25 case deflection savings of $10.8 million[1].

- Built a high-functioning distributed technical communications team with partnerships across support, technology, marketing, and content development.
- 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.
- Implemented agile practices for the team to manage workload and ensure timely delivery on commitments. This included issue tracking and refinement in JIRA, rubric-based prioritization, daily standups, and retrospectives.
- Improved SEO of self support information so customers could easily access needed articles from Google.
- Reduced work and regressions by implementing modern content operations practices such as git source control, peer reviewed pull requests, release testing, and Jenkins continuous integration builds and deployments.
- Standardized content operations and enabled content reuse by converting or rewriting legacy content from Word, FrameMaker, and Flare to DITA.
- Supported writers and customers with DITA schema specializations for consistent topic structure and custom filtering attributes.
- Increased consistency of terminology and usage across platform, marketing, sales, support, and help collateral by developing and evangelizing consistent style guidelines and content taxonomy.
- Changed how help information is viewed internally from a pro-forma responsibility to an opportunity to solve real-world problems for our customers and provide real value to the business.
- Enabled support agents and customers easier access to help information with an automated index of articles for use by the Agentforce AI chatbot in Salesforce.
- Addressed ongoing usability problems by developing and staffing a new UX writer role, providing improved consistency in terminology and developing rules, standards, and a pattern library for UI microcopy.

Senior Technical Writer

12/2008 – 8/2017 (first 6 months as contractor)

Cengage Learning / Advanced Instructional Systems, DBA WebAssign

Raleigh, NC • 800-354-9706

Researched and wrote topic-based help, embedded user assistance, and quick start guides for WebAssign and PlaceU learning platforms.

- Authored user interface text with input from UX and product management.
- Wrote and maintained DITA-OT plugins for customized help, embedded user assistance, and PDF deliverables.
- Developed content strategy, vision, and architecture for user assistance / help.
- Wrote and maintained application code for online help and embedded user assistance.
- Wrote and maintained scripts for Jenkins continuous integration builds.
- Wrote and maintained XSLT scripts for ingesting content from varied sources.
- Led conversion of FrameMaker documentation to DITA.

Technical Writer

5/2005 - 11/2008

CTG, Inc., contracted to IBM

Research Triangle Park, NC • 919-337-1351

Wrote topic-based content for the IBM Director systems management software.

- Built Eclipse information center, PDF, and HTML help deliverables using ID Workbench and Ant-based transformations.
- Maintained style guide for the IBM Director information development team.
- Served as backup to the team lead.

Technical Writer

4/2005 – 5/2005

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

Trinity, NC • 336-861-3919

Wrote IT security policy/SOP documents for Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, updated internal policies website, and created templates and publishing process for future SOPs and policies.

Technical Writer

2003 – 2005

T-P-S Inc., contracted to ABB

Raleigh, NC • 919-460-9644

Updated and expanded the seven user guides, training materials and two online help systems for the CADOPS, netCADOPS and FeederAll software for modeling electrical distribution networks.

Technical Writer

2000 – 2001

Make Systems, Inc. (now OpNet Technologies)

Cary, NC • 919-461-2445

Updated and expanded web-based help and PDF documentation of the NetMaker network modeling tool.

Associate Program Mgr. for Computer Organization

1996 – 2000

UPBEAT Program, VA GLAHS & UCLA Jonsson Cancer Center

Los Angeles, CA • 310-268-4000

Provided technical writing, administrative, and computer support to a nine-site national VA demonstration project assessing the benefits of psychogeriatric screening, intervention, and follow-up in over 2500 elderly veterans.

Teacher / Graduate Student

1994 – 1996

University of Denver English Department

Denver, CO • 303-871-2266

Taught first-year undergraduate English core curriculum classes focusing on expository writing and research skills; facilitated computer writing labs.

Education

- Graduate Study in English, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado
- BA in English, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky

Volunteer work

Cengage Learning Women in Technology Men as Allies Co-Lead

2023 – 2025

Founding member of Men as Allies subgroup of Cengage's Women in Technology, developed internal podcasts, communications, and training sessions "calling in" men to be better aware of common workplace issues affecting women and know how and when to better support our women colleagues.

Apex Friendship and Felton Grove High School Band Boosters

2021 – present

Serve marching band booster organizations in several capacities: VP, Logistics; VP, Volunteers; props and pit crews. Founding member of the new Felton Grove Band Booster organization.

DITA Open Toolkit working group

2014 – present

Contribute documentation improvements and code fixes to the DITA Open Toolkit.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Konnarock and Rocky Top Trail Crews

2013 – 2017, 2023 – present

Volunteer one week each year helping rehabilitate or reroute heavily-used parts of the Appalachian Trail in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Awards, publications, and conference presentations

Taylor S. "Creating User Assistance with Agile Teams." Presentation at WritersUA East, Charleston, SC, October 27-29, 2014.

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

Taylor S. "Technical Communications in Agile Environments." Presentation at SpeedCon Unconference on Technical Communication, Raleigh, NC, February 8, 2014.

Taylor S. "Brushing your teeth with DITA." Presentation at DITA 2006 Conference, Raleigh, NC, March, 2006.

Taylor, S. *From the Museum.* Honorable Mention, 2002 Randall Jarrell/Harperprints Poetry Chapbook Competition.

Royer CM, Dickson-Fuhrmann E, McDermott CH, Taylor S, Rosansky JS, Jarvik LF. "Portraits of change: case studies from an elder-specific addiction program." *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neurology* 13, no. 3 (2000): 130-3.

Schonfeld L, Dupree LW, Dickson-Fuhrmann E, Royer CM, McDermott CH, Rosansky JS, Taylor S, Jarvik LF. "Cognitive-behavioral treatment of older veterans with substance abuse problems." *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neurology* 13, no. 3 (2000): 124-9.

Peer-reviewed research poster presentations at professional conferences (1997-2000): UCLA Research Conference on Aging, Gerontological Society of America, International Psychogeriatric Association, American Psychiatric Association.

National Merit Scholar, 1988.

Contact

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in linkedin.com/in/shaneataylor/

References

Available on request.

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[1] 3.93 million unique pageviews × 10% deflection rate × $27.60 average per support case