

# Shane Alan Taylor

---

[shane@taylortext.com](mailto:shane@taylortext.com) • [taylortext.com/portfolio.html](http://taylortext.com/portfolio.html) • [linkedin.com/in/shaneataylor/](https://linkedin.com/in/shaneataylor/) • [github.com/shaneataylor](https://github.com/shaneataylor)

## TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS 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:** 14 years using modern structured documentation tools and processes including Markdown, DITA XML, git-based docs-as-code, 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:** Operationalized peer reviews, SME review meetings, and automated release testing to support content accuracy, consistency, retrievability, 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 • SQL • Static site generators

### Technical writing

Accessibility and inclusivity • API and CLI docs • Content strategy/governance • Content reuse methods • Contextual help • Developer docs • DITA XML • FrameMaker • Information architecture • MadCap Flare • Markdown • Pedagogy/learning design • Release notes • RoboHelp • Single-sourcing/conditional inclusion • SOPs • Taxonomy/terminology • Translation/localization • User-focused docs • UX writing/UI text • Video learning scripts

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Cengage Learning, Inc.

Remote - US

#### Senior Manager, Technical Communications

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

8/2017 – 7/2022

Transformed technical communications at Cengage from a cost center with dozens of scattered agent-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.