Timothy P. McMackin

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Summary

I simplify complicated software suites by providing thorough, useful information that guides customers through their tasks.

I lead teams that provide complete and continuously delivered information services for software products, guiding them to stay coordinated and to cover all aspects of the products.

I get my hands dirty with technology by implementing informational enhancements to our products and by working closely with customers, development, design, sales, and support teams.

Experience

IBM, Durham, NC	2004-Present
Advisory Technical Writer/Team Lead	2012-Present
Staff Technical Writer/Team Lead	2007-2012
Technical Writer	2004-2007

– Leading a seven-person team providing documentation for IBM UrbanCode software, a suite of enterprise-level continuous delivery, application release automation, and automated cloud provisioning tools, with mobile, cloud-hosted, mainframe, and on-prem components.

– Providing complete information services for UrbanCode products, including documentation, education, videos, white papers, customer forum response, and support response. Covering a wide range of realistic customer DevOps scenarios, such as blue-green deployments, rolling deployments, dark launches, continuous delivery, and mainframe deployments.

– Providing documentation for services on IBM's Bluemix platform, including cognitive, DevOps, continuous monitoring, and integrated toolchain services.

– Adapted documentation processes from waterfall delivery on on-prem software to continuous delivery on hosted and mobile systems; migrated documentation to GitHub and Jenkins.

– Working closely with the 70-person development team to provide technically detailed documentation on a continuous-delivery DevOps production lifecycle.

– Contributing to products at a technical level, writing code samples, coding progressive disclosure information, installing Jenkins pipelines, and implementing enhancements to product information in Java, JavaScript, and Python.

– Coding systems that provide complete technical information by merging automatically generated API documentation with written explanations and examples using Java and XSLT.

– Researching and writing custom documents for our largest customers and for critical needs, including videos and topology models that are tailored to customers' specific situations. Contributed directly to sales deals in the millions of dollars.

– Working with support teams to identify customer needs and to focus efforts on preventing support calls. Reduced average time to documentation error resolution from 8 days to 2 days.

Lohre & Associates Advertising, Cincinnati, OH, Copywriter	2000-2003

– Wrote magazine articles, press releases, and client-to-customer print and email communication.

– Prepared reports for research, media planning, competitive analysis, and web traffic tracking.

Education

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA	Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH
M.A. Professional writing	BA English rhetoric and literature

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Publication samples

Performance characteristics of IBM UrbanCode Deploy

I planned, wrote, and typeset this white paper based on testing data from our product development teams. I consulted with the performance testers about what the test results meant and with the customer-facing teams that needed to explain the performance of the product to current and potential customers.

Creating and updating full-stack cloud environments with IBM UrbanCode Deploy 6.1.2

I planned, wrote, and recorded this video in Camtasia for a set of customers who were upgrading to DevOps-enabled cloud provisioning features. The video demonstrates new automatic provisioning and updating of cloud environments for customers, including animation and live demo.

Rollback scenarios in IBM UrbanCode Deploy

This video addresses customer confusion that I learned about from support requests. It demonstrates techniques for reversing problems automatically, and it teaches customers about a common misconception about the product at the same time. Our internal support call analysis showed significantly fewer customer issues in this area after I delivered and promoted the video.

Connecting the blueprint design server to Microsoft Azure

These instructions that I wrote for connecting IBM UrbanCode Deploy to Microsoft Azure take a step-by-step strategy to a complicated and technical task.

Creating custom reports with BIRT and Rational Team Concert

This is part one of a series of articles that repurposes knowledge that I learned about advanced use of one of our products. This series generated several sales leads and more than 100,000 views before it was archived to a PDF.

"No more waterfall word counts!"

This blog entry on using DevOps techniques to save money during the translation process was part of a DevOps social media "residency" to promote DevOps techniques.

REST API documentation for the IBM UrbanCode products

This reference information is generated with a custom tool that I wrote in Java, XSL, and DITA. Our customers required both Javadoc-style generated information and clearly written examples and explanations, so the tool retrieves information from the software and collates examples that my team writes.

Standard Collaborative Lifecycle Management Topologies

IBM's CLM products have a near-infinite number of configurations; to keep development, test, sales, documentation, and customers working together, I drove the process of identifying this set of "golden" topologies that represent configurations that were known to satisfy customers. I spent a long time discussing the most common topologies with development, sales, support, and documentation to get everyone in agreement on the best-practices for installing the product, and as a result, everyone was working to support the same customer scenarios. The topologies have been updated through many new versions after I left the product, but the version at this link is the first version and the direct result of my work.