

Benjamin Keniray Smith, PhD

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Professional Summary

Analyst, researcher, and scrum master with 15+ years of solving problems through stakeholder engagement, quantitative analysis, data visualization, user-centered design and documentation. I have worked on Federal contracts, for nonprofit clients, and in academia. My dissertation research was on data visualization usability.

Skills

Agile Leadership & Facilitation: Certified SAFe 6 Scrum Master, Agile ceremony facilitation, business analysis, backlog & sprint management, cross-functional collaboration, Jira (trained), IBM RTC (production use)

Research & Human-Centered Analysis: Requirements gathering & needs analysis, stakeholder interviews, usability & accessibility research, experimental design, survey & data collection, qualitative and quantitative analysis, user research

Data & Technical Tools: R, SPSS, Excel, Python, Java, Swift, Visual Basic, E-Prime, Splunk SPL, SailPoint, PowerPoint, Visio, GitHub, Bitbucket, Claude Code

Documentation & Compliance: Technical documentation, SOPs, user guides & knowledge articles, form & instruction design, FISMA and NIST compliance support & audit response, contributions to System Security Plans (SSPs) and PCLIAAs

Education

Doctor of Philosophy | University of Maryland, College Park, MD | May 2012

Program in Neurosciences and Cognitive Science, Department of Psychology. Affiliated with the Laboratory for Automation Psychology and the Human-Computer Interaction Lab. Dissertation research in data visualization and usability. Coursework in human-computer interaction, decision making, machine learning, data structures, user-centered design, cognitive psychology, quantitative methods (statistics).

Bachelor of Science | Brown University, Providence, RI | May 2000

Department of Psychology. Research in learning and conditioning. Additional coursework in computer science, educational software design, learning and behavior.

Professional Experience

Maximus Federal | Lead Technical Writer, Senior Analyst, Scrum Master | April 2019 – March 2026

I worked on a cybersecurity contract for a Federal client, the Internal Revenue Service, focused primarily on Splunk, SailPoint, and SharePoint. I served in several roles, including as a tech writer, scrum master, and analyst, and was promoted three times. I led the team that managed access controls for Splunk.

Agile Facilitation and Team Leadership. I was scrum master for two teams, implementing Q-Audit and Qualys dashboards. I led all agile ceremonies, managed the backlog and sprints, represented the teams at the ART sync and Scrum of Scrums, and communicated the team's progress to contract and client leadership through meetings, email, infographics, and reports. I also facilitated customer meetings including product demonstrations and user acceptance testing. Both teams successfully completed their implementation projects.

Technical Writing. I created and maintained documentation for Splunk access controls, including user access guides, troubleshooting guides, standard operating procedures, and tracking spreadsheets. I wrote SOPs for software development teams. I designed and maintained instructions and user-facing forms for access control requests. I wrote and edited Enterprise Life Cycle documentation, including audit responses and knowledge articles, and contributed to SSPs and PCLIAAs.

Access Controls Governance, Needs Analysis, and Implementation. I was the analyst who led a cross-functional team, including customer groups, management, and Subject Matter Experts, to determine appropriate access levels for users, developers, admins, and executives. I translated user needs into practical role requests, led them through

the approval process, and created them on the back end using SPL, GitHub, and Ansible. I worked with customers, engineers, and Operations & Maintenance on user access troubleshooting and root cause analysis. I supported multiple Splunk architecture and technology transitions, including SailPoint adoption and AWS cloud migration.

Self-Employed | Research Consultant | January 2014 – April 2019

I conducted research for nonprofit organizations, including data collection, data cleaning, information visualization, report writing and editing, and stakeholder engagement.

I provided academic and statistical consulting for doctoral candidates, helping to focus research questions and research designs, statistical methods, data visualization, and academic writing.

University of Mary Washington | Adjunct Instructor | June 2015 – June 2016

I taught undergraduate courses in statistics, research methods, and cognitive psychology for the Department of Psychology.

Center for Advanced Study of Language | Research Assistant / Associate | November 2008 – January 2014

I developed language aptitude test batteries for the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Study of Language, a University Affiliated Research Center, (which is now known as ARLIS), on contracts for Federal clients in Defense/IC. I developed measures of memory, attention, and phonemic discrimination, including item creation, computer programming, pilot testing, and validation. I adapted existing paper-based tests, converted older computerized tests to new formats, and created entirely new tests.

Certifications

- Certified SAFe 6 Scrum Master (March 2026)
- Splunk 8.2 Cloud Administration (July 2022)

Selected Projects

Academic Document Accessibility Tool. I am building a Python-based architecture using Claude Code and locally run AI models to convert scanned PDFs into the accessible PDF/UA format. This allows the documents to be read with assistive technology like screen readers, and meets the requirements of ADA Title II and Section 508. This tool uses AI models to provide optical character recognition that is better than standard options, as well as alt text for figures, heading detection, table formatting, reading order for complex pages, and other tagging to conform with the standard. As the sole owner of this project, I define the scope, requirements, logic, and acceptance criteria, prioritize the development backlog, write strategic documentation, and evaluate results. The tool is operational and is being used by university instructors.

Selected Publications

- Smith, B. K., Laskowski, S., & Lowry, S. (2009). Implications of Graphics on Usability and Accessibility for the Voter. In Ryan, P. & Schoenmakers, B. (Eds.), *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, Vol. 5767: E-Voting and Identity (pp. 54–74). Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer.
- Smith, B. K. (2012). Comparing Small Graphs: How distance, orientation, and alignment affect the comparability of small multiple bar graphs. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Maryland, College Park, MD.
- Linck, J. A., Hughes, M. M., Campbell, S. G., Silbert, N. H., Tare, M., Jackson, S. R., Smith, B. K., Bunting, M. F., & Doughty, C. J. (2013). Hi-LAB: a new measure of aptitude for high-level language proficiency. *Language Learning*, 63(3), 530–566.
- Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange. (2018). *Transportation Alternatives Spending Report: FY 1992 through FY 2017*. Washington, DC: Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Contact

References available upon request.

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