

FURTHERING THE CONVERSATION

RPA Overview in Layman Terms



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The capabilities and use of Robotic Process Automation can be a daunting subject to tackle, especially in the rapidly changing world of digital technology. Here is the first installment in a series of articles to purposefully visualize the world of RPA and how it pertains to you. So, what exactly is RPA?

‘The First rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency’ – Bill Gates

CEO and Founder of Ui Path, Daniel Dines, describes RPA as process automation in which *"software robots mimic and integrate human actions within digital systems to optimize business processes."* To simplify the definition, RPA completes the tasks by using a combination of automation, machine learning, and computer vision that replace repetitive tasks or processes to save time consumption.

These mundane tasks are not the bulk of operation but also work in tandem with functions that can communicate with different applications via API. Knowing what RPA is is half the battle; correctly identifying and qualifying processes that can benefit from the introduction of RPA is the other half of the pie. RPA can be a fantastic tool if used correctly for qualified processes but can also create an inefficient outcome as a result of implementation if used incorrectly. Bill Gates explains the dichotomy in using RPA efficiently by stating, *"The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency"*. Understanding what RPA can handle and where it fits best is ultimately the second step after identifying the differences between RPA & AI/Machine Learning.

KEY TAKEAWAY

RPA can be a very influential tool if used correctly. The first step is to correctly identify highly repetitive tasks with limited variability to set the organization up for success as a part of their automation strategy. In Volume 2, I will explore the do's and don'ts of process qualification with a deeper dive into RPA use case identification.