# Robotic Process Automation

## What does it do?

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a developing technology and is a part of the Artificial Intelligence community. *It is governed by business logic and structured inputs, which is aimed at automating business processes.* Using RPA applications, an engineer can configure a robot to record and interpret many applications. These applications can include (but also not limited to) processing transactions, manipulating data, initiating responses and communicating with other technology systems.

RPA lets someone engineer a ‘robot’ to emulate the task or tasks of humans or computer processes. The only difference being is, that a robot never has to sleep and if configured correctly does not make any mistakes. As stated previously, robots can emulate humans so they are capable of what ever a human can do on a computer. For example, a robot can log into applications, copy and paste information, move files and folders and many other tasks.

There are 3 trends that appear to be shaping the future of RPA:

* Developing RPA solutions for easy deployments. Leading Providers are currently working on developing their applications in containers, which will simplify deployment as well as making it easier to migrate to different cloud services.
* As RPA evolves around repetitive business tasks, developers investigating ways to further integrate RPA with other technologies.
* As products become similar, we can expect to see some open source varieties

Whilst implementing RPA, it is highly suggested to develop a Centre of Excellence which is alternately known as the CoE. A CoE is a governing body of the RPA team, it looks at which processes might take priority or what will make the best business impact. But whilst doing these processes it gives business the opportunity to review processes in general. Although they might not get to be incorporated into an automated task, it allows the CoE if necessary, to improve the current process.

One of the best advantages that RPA can provide is better value for time and efficiency. Below, you will read about an example of company utilising the technology to mitigate staffing and timing issues to undertake a contract that the business has been awarding.

## What is the likely impact?

There are many theories of how robotic automation has and will impact people. Firstly, we can discuss the positive outcomes. RPA can drastically reduce the time that a human conduct repetitive or time-consuming tasks. One of the best examples I can give, is from a webinar I heard recently. A company had one a contract to value approximately sixteen thousand properties. After being told that they won the contract, they had two weeks to start valuing the properties. Now, the issue that the company was faced with, it would take approximately sixty days to hire new resources and onboard them. This is where RPA came in, a technology company introduced RPA into the business and with in ten days they had all the necessary infrastructure installed and a robot had been constructed to help undertake the valuing task. The robot was able to gather the necessary information from the desired web resources with in eight days of coming online. That’s eight days of continuous work.

There are two ways at looking at the above scenario, there is both positive and negatives. The positive is that RPA was a time affective solution, mitigating the 60-day timeline to hire and onboard new staff. This allowed the business to achieve its outcome for their client. However, if you look at it from another point of view, that one robot replaced human jobs. This can be concerning, what if people needed those jobs? It brings on concerns that business might use robotics to slowly start replacing humans, which would lower expenses.

As discussed above, there are both potentially positive and negative effects of Robotic Process Automation Technology. The idea of RPA is not to replace its human counterparts in the workforce. However, it has been designed to help increase performance if worker. The idea of automation has been around since the first computer systems and programs are around. It can be assumed that RPA will eventually be replaced by a capable Artificial Intelligence.

## How will this affect you?

RPA currently affects in my day to day life, as I work with the automation team at work. Working with the team, vendors and clients it is very eye opening how this technology can have a positive impact on the IT Sector. I am slowly planning how to use this technology to in my daily tasks. How can I set it up to make these reports for me? How can I implement RPA with our security monitoring tools? When these tasks are set up, it will increase proficiency in both the reports and start investigating security activities instantaneously.

RPA would impact my family in a beneficial way. Especially my Dad and his colleague who operate the South Australian Division of their business. If they where able to get their monthly reporting and quoting automated, they would be able to focus a lot more on the field operation side of the business.

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