Technology Trend Topic: Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Publish Date	ITC SMEs Marquita Washington, April Ramey, Darrel Davis, Ellery Taylor, Muneeb Khan, Jesse Brasart, Leif Powell, QT2A 'Team Romeo' focuses on RPA and contracting concepts- (Sponsor) Rodger Hoover	Current ITC Vehicles: Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS), 8(a) STARS II, Alliant 2, VETS 2, Software Licenses 511210 (formerly SINs 132-32 and 132-33), Software Maintenance Services 54151 (formerly SIN 132-34), IT Professional Services 54151S (formerly SIN 132-51), Automated Contact Center Solutions (ACCS) 561422 (formerly SIN 132-20), and Cloud and Cloud-Related IT Professional Services 518210C (formerly SIN 132-40)
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Overview

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) automates business processes using software-generated bots. These digital workers can relieve humans of monotonous, simple tasks, freeing them to focus on higher-value duties. **- GovLoop**

No job descriptions say, 'You will cut and paste, cut and paste, cut and paste.' So that's what RPA is letting us give up; it enables employees to feel more productive. **-NextGov**

> **"RPA will continue to help build efficiencies in our contracts to enhance our business advisor role."** - Marquita Washington, Director IT Schedule Governance

The GSA-launched Federal RPA Community of Practice (CoP) is a thought leadership and collaborative body designed to rapidly accelerate the adoption of RPA technology. The CoP consists of representatives from more than 50 Federal agencies and over 900 members.**- RPA Playbook**

RPA aligns with the President's agenda goals for IT Modernization and can be a good tool to meet The President's Management Agenda (PMA) Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goal 6, "Shifting from Low to High Value Work." RPA allows agencies to automate or enhance tasks which allows employees to focus on higher value-add work. **-CIO.gov**

Beyond workload reduction, RPA can reduce human error, increase compliance, and allow agencies to act on a growing volume of data; RPA effects can ripple outwards into cost savings, bigger mission gains and employee recruitment and retention. - **Federal News Network**

Existing business processes are often overly complex. Redesigning processes while implementing RPA can increase the time and cost of the overall initiative, but the return on investment can be as great or greater. **- Harvard Business Review**

RPA establishes the building blocks for A.I. in terms of IT infrastructure and task standardization. With effective RPA deployment, machine learning and A.I. are only a few, manageable steps away. **-RPA Playbook**

Market Trends

COVID-19 led to an accelerated interest in RPA as agencies sought to ensure business continuity and make up for the fact that few workers were in offices. **- Fed Tech Magazine**

> **"GSA has a lofty goal for 2020 and beyond: help civilian agencies free up nearly $1 billion worth of productive time across the government through RPA. If you save seven, eight hours per employee at an agency, you get to $1billion dollars. At GSA we're close to six hours per employee."** - Gerard Badorrek, GSA's CFO

With nearly one-third of the federal workforce retirement eligible in the next few years, RPA helps agencies build capacity where there are retirements without replacements. **- Federal News Network**

The RPA Services Market will grow to reach $12B by 2023. - **Forrester**

By 2025, RPA and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) will replace 16% of U.S. jobs but create the equivalent of 9% new jobs. **- Forrester**

Use Cases/Applications

GSA saw its 52nd bot go into production in MAY including its Truman bot which pulls data from multiple sources from GSA/FAS' Multiple Award Schedules into a single report. This saves time for GSA contract specialists and led to measurable increases in customer satisfaction. **- NextGov**

> **"The Office of Telecommunications Services (OTS) initiated an RPA Project to improve the timeliness of the Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) contract modification process. This is anticipated to lower costs and improve productivity; Phase 1 is targeted for 1st quarter FY21."** - April Ramey, Telecom Program Manager

> **"I recently saved ~200 hours using a bot to search the System for Award Management (SAM), the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and the Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) websites for responsibility-related information on over 1,000 firms."** - Jean Fluevog, ITC CO

Good candidates for RPA tend to be static rules-based processes, require minimal human input or decision making, repetitive, can be performed during off-peak hours, data driven and involve data manipulation and high error rates. **- RPA Playbook**

- **NASA's Washington bot** uses RPA to copy and paste text, open emails, move folders, scan files and performs procurement processes like establishing grants packages.
- The **Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)** uses RPA to more efficiently respond to its 5,000+ FOIA requests. DLA also uses RPA to automate onboarding new employees so they have new accounts and emails set up on their first day
- The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** uses RPA to deploy self-service HR "LaunchPad", resolving 25% Tier 1 inquires and has a defined escalation process
- The **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** uses RPA to phase out legacy systems by providing an effective user experience by keeping data the same in both systems.
- The **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** uses RPA to run standard procurement compliance checks to determine whether a vendor remains in good standing before the agency awards a contract.

Risks/Challenges/Myths

Myth: building RPA automations is time consuming and resource-intensive. RPA coding should take no more than a week, with a few additional weeks required for testing/vetting. However, process redesign, security approvals, technology procurement can be time consuming.**- RPA Playbook**

Many agencies miss out on RPA's full potential because their scope is too limited. Deploying four or five bots isn't enough, dozens or hundreds are needed for enterprise-wide innovation. **-GovLoop**

Humans will always be involved; they must keep any ethical or bias concerns in check. **-GovLoop**

Some question whether RPA qualifies as AI. RPA does not learn as it goes. If something changes in the automated task – a field in a web form moves, for example – the RPA bot typically won't be able to figure that out on its own. **- The Enterprise Project**

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