



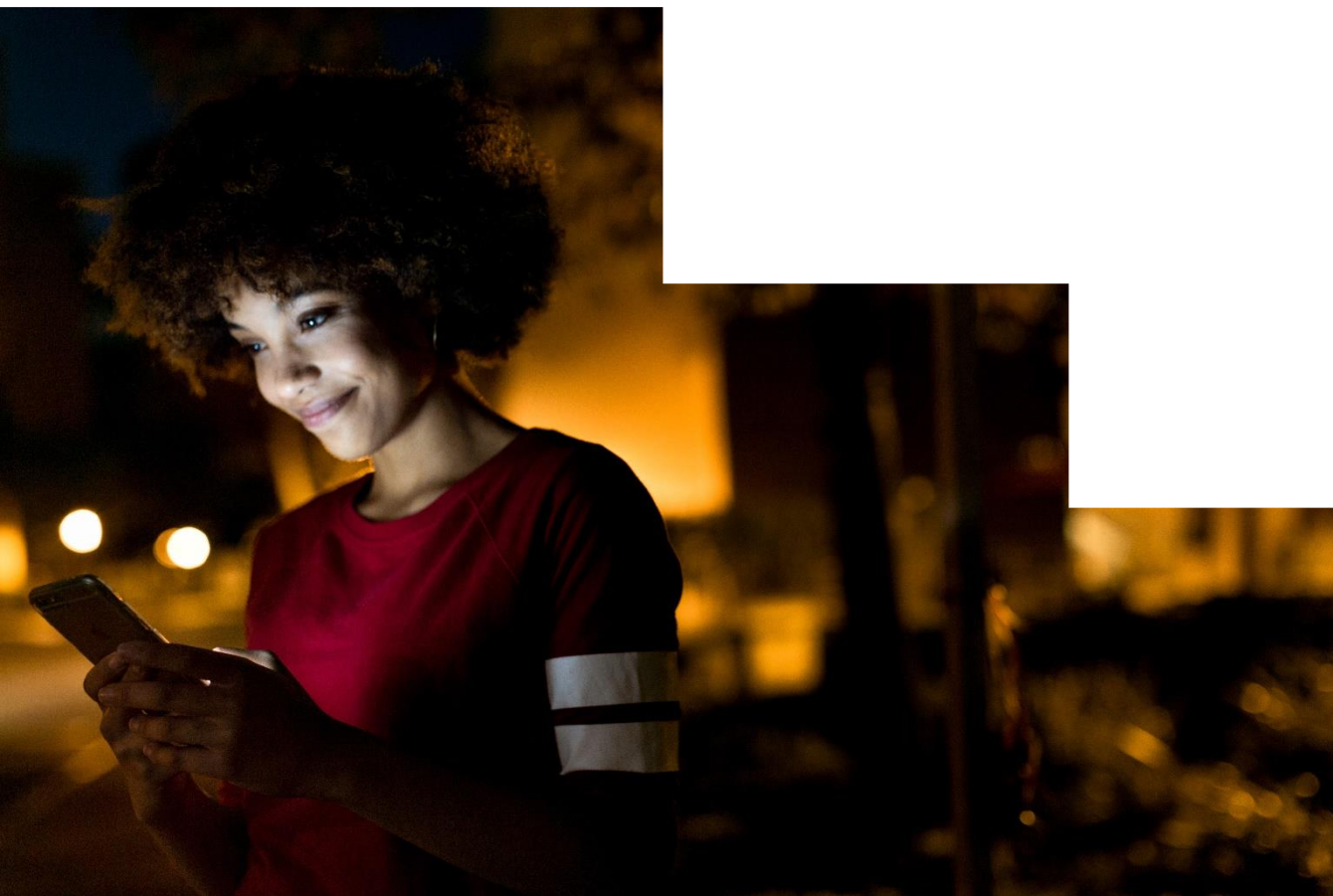
Robotic Process Automation in a Day

Lab 10 – Error handling (Optional)

30 mins

April 2023

Applies to Power Automate Desktop v. 2.31.105.23101 ([more](#))



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Lab Overview

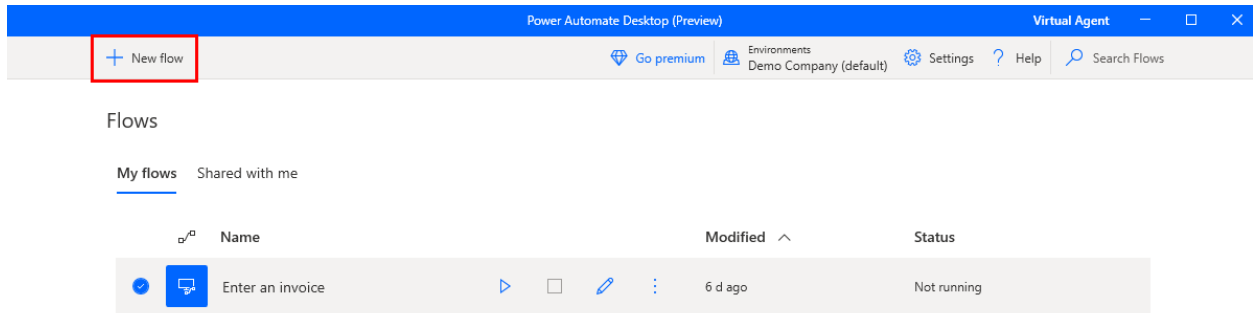
Power Automate provides error handling both at desktop flow and cloud flow level.

On block error action on the desktop flow acts like the **Scope** action in cloud flows. When an exception occurs in a block, we can configure it to perform subsequent actions like call a Subflow. This ensures all the exceptions are caught and handled gracefully. As a result, your automations become much more resilient and robust.

This lab we will walk you through how to do Error handling in desktop flow

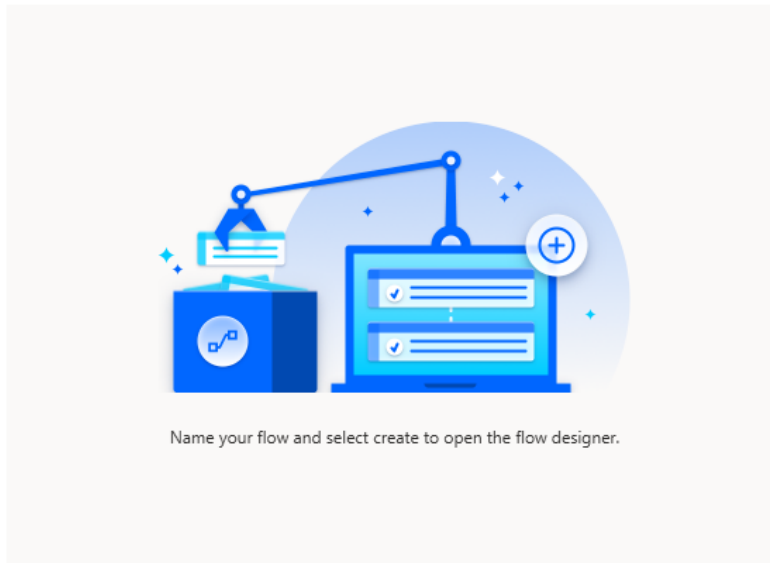
Lab steps

1. Let's first create a desktop flow to learn some error handling method. Open Power Automate desktop app and click + **New flow**



2. Name the flow **Error Handling** then click **Create**.

Build a flow



Name your flow and select create to open the flow designer.

Flow name

Error Handling

Create

Cancel

3. Under **Variables**, drag **Set variable** from the left drop down list to the right.

4. For the practice purpose, we will now set an ErrorLocation variable. Use below information to fill out **Set variable**:
- Set: %ErrorLocation%
 - To: Main

Then click **Save**.

Set variable ✕

{x} Set the value of a new or existing variable, create a new variable or overwrite a previously created variable [More info](#)

Set: ErrorLocation {x}

To: Main {x} ⓘ

Save

Cancel

5. Create a new Subflow.

The screenshot shows the Power Automate Desktop interface. On the left, the 'Actions' pane has a 'Subflows' dropdown menu open, with a '+' button highlighted. On the right, the 'Variables' pane shows a list of variables. Under 'Flow variables', the variable 'ErrorLocation' is listed with a '{x}' icon next to it.

6. Name the subflow **exception_handler** then click **Save**.

Add a subflow ✕

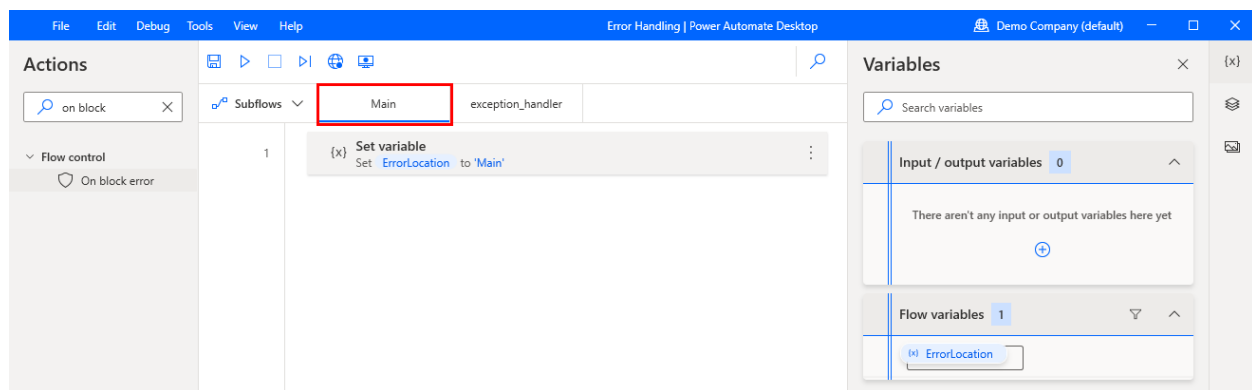
☒ Segmenting a flow into subflows makes it easier to manage—especially if it has a lot of actions or complexities. [More info](#)

Subflow name

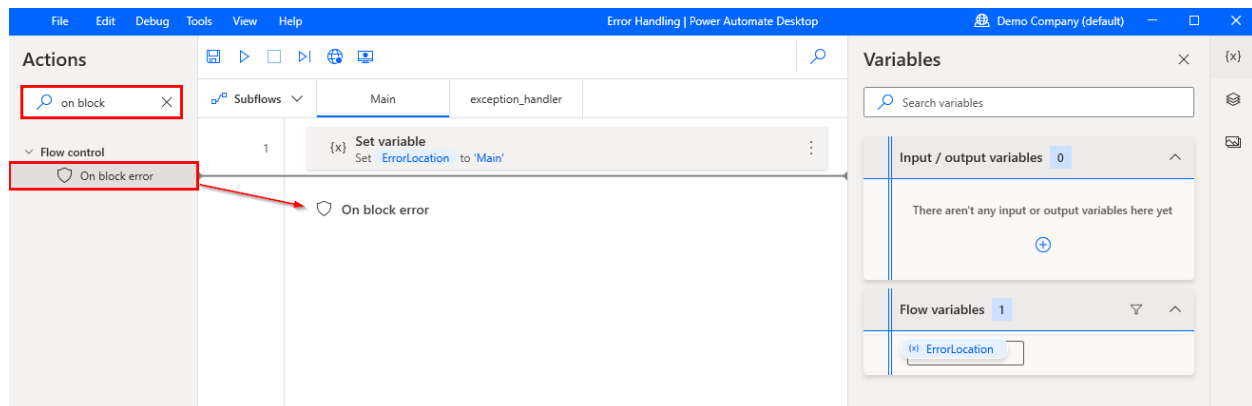
Save

Cancel

7. Go back to Main flow.



8. Now we will create a new error handling rule. Search **on block** on the search bar and drag the **On block error** action to the canvas list under the first step.



9. Name it **Launch_Application** the click **New rule**.

On block error



 Marks the beginning of a block to handle actions errors [More info](#)

Select parameters

Name:

Launch_Application






 New rule

 Clear all

No rules added

Continue flow run

Throw error

Capture unexpected logic errors ☐ 

Save

Cancel

10. If an error occurs within this block, we want to call our exception handler subflow. We can achieve this by creating a **New rule** that will **Run subflow** option.

On block error



Marks the beginning of a block to handle actions errors [More info](#)

Select parameters

Name:

New rule

Clear all

No rules at {x} Set variable

Continue flow run

Run subflow

Capture unexpected logic errors ☐

Save

Cancel

11. Select **exception_handler** subflow and click **Save**. Now if an error occurs, we will run the **exception_handler** subflow.

On block error



Marks the beginning of a block to handle actions errors [More info](#)

Select parameters

Name:

New rule Clear all

Run subflow

Continue flow run

Throw error

Capture unexpected logic errors ☐

Save

Cancel

12. Under **System**, drag **Run application** to the canvas list under step 2.

The screenshot displays the Power Automate Desktop interface during the configuration of an 'On block error' subflow. The 'Actions' pane on the left shows the 'System' category expanded, with 'Run application' highlighted. The main canvas shows a flow with three steps: 1. Set variable (ErrorLocation to 'Main'), 2. On block error (Launch_Application), and 3. End. The 'Variables' pane on the right shows the 'ErrorLocation' variable.

13. Enter the location path of Contoso Invoicing app under **Application path**. Then click **Save**.

Run application

Executes an application or opens a document by executing the associated application [More info](#)

Select parameters

Application path:

C:\Program Files (x86)\Contoso, Inc\Contoso Invoicing\LegacyInvoicingApp.exe

{x}

Command line arguments:

{x}

Working folder:

{x}

Window style:

Normal

After application launch:

Continue immediately

> Variables produced

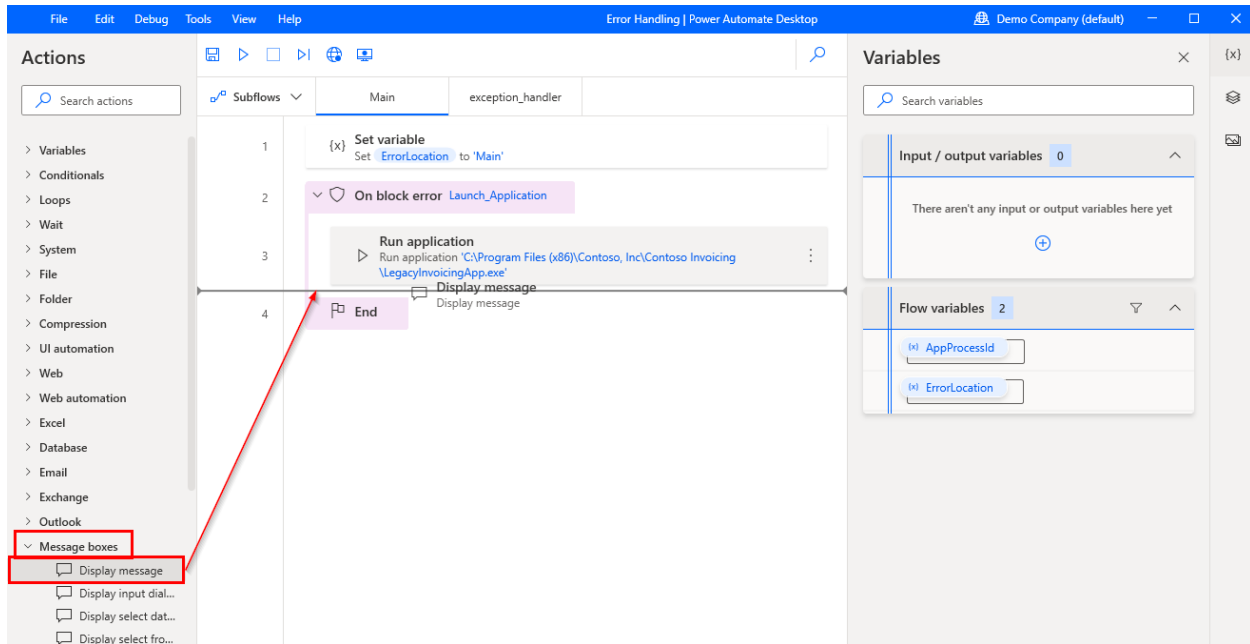
AppProcessId

On error

Save

Cancel

14. To create an error, so that our exception handler will be called for this lab, we will manually close the application so the following step cannot locate the window anymore. To do this we will use a message box step to allow us some delay time to close the application manually. Under **Message boxes**, drag **Display message** to the canvas list under step 3.



15. Enter **My delay** in **Message box title**. Turn on **Keep message box always on top**. Then click **Save**.

Display message

×

Displays a message box

[More info](#)

Select parameters

Message box title:

My delay

{x}

ⓘ

Message to display:

{x}

ⓘ

Message box icon:

None

▼

ⓘ

Message box buttons:

OK

▼

ⓘ

Default button:

First button

▼

ⓘ

Keep message box always on top:

☒

ⓘ

Close message box automatically:

☐

ⓘ

> Variables produced

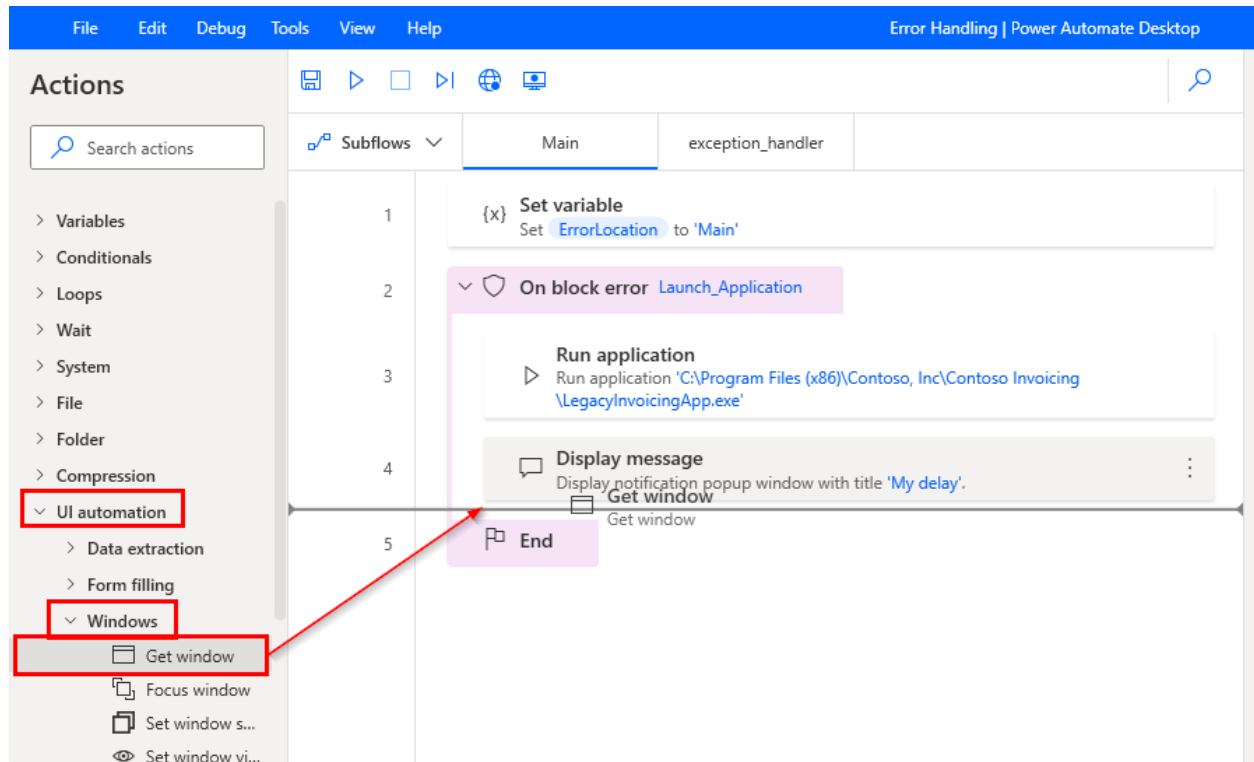
ButtonPressed

On error

Save


Cancel

16. Now let's create a **Get window** step that will fail because we manually close the application. Open Contoso Invoicing App. Next expand **UI Automation**, under **Windows**, drag **Get window** to the canvas list under step 4.



17. Select **Specific window** in **Get window** dropdown list. Select **UI element** in the **UI element dropdown list**. Because this process hasn't recorded any UI elements yet, it will display text "There are no UI elements to display" together with the button to add new one. Click the button.

Get window ×

 Gets a running window, for automating desktop applications [More info](#)

Select parameters

Get window:

Specific window ▼ i

UI element:

▼

i

Bring window to front:


There are no UI elements to display

Add a new UI element

i

> Advanced

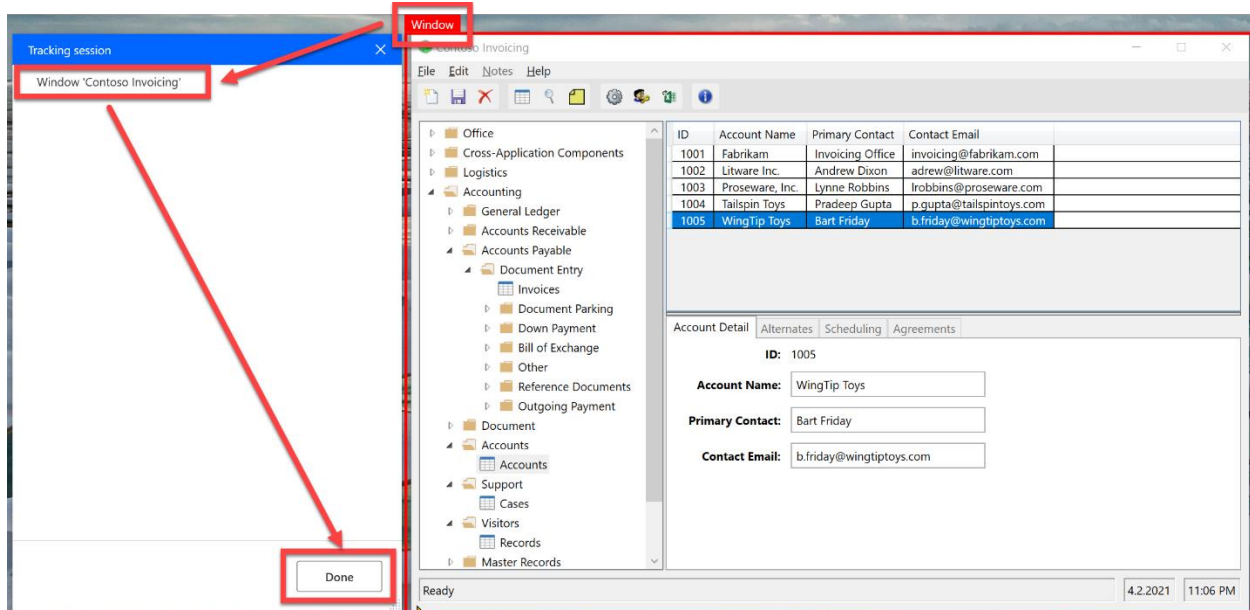
> Variables produced AutomationWindow

 On error

Save

Cancel

18. Then once the **Tracking session** window appears, hover mouse cursor over the **Contoso Invoicing** app, so that the **"Window" selector** appears (application window is surrounded with red border) and then, while having **"Control" (Ctrl)** keyboard key pressed, click **left mouse button**, what will add new UI element to the list. Then click **"Done"** button.



19. Now select newly added UI element. Also, turn on **Bring window to front** option.

Get window [X]

Gets a running window, for automating desktop applications [More info](#)

Select parameters

Get window: Specific window ⓘ

UI element: %appmask["Window \'Contoso Invoicing\'"]% ⓘ

Bring window to front: ☒ ⓘ

> Advanced


> Variables produced AutomationWindow

On error

Save **Cancel**

20. Expand **Advanced**. Turn on **Fail if window isn't found** option and set **Timeout** as 3 seconds.

Get window ×

 Gets a running window, for automating desktop applications [More info](#)

Select parameters

Get window:

Specific window ▼ ⓘ

UI element:

%appmask['Window \Contoso Invoicing\']% ▼ ⓘ

Bring window to front:

☒ ⓘ

▼ Advanced

Fail if window isn't found:


☒ ⓘ

Timeout:

3 {x} ⓘ


> Variables produced

AutomationWindow

 On error

Save

Cancel



21. To show that this is the step where the automation fails, we will set the **ErrorLocation** variable here. To do that, click **On error** button.

Get window

✕

📄 Gets a running window, for automating desktop applications [More info](#)

Select parameters

Get window:

Specific window

⌵

①

UI element:

%appmask['Window \'Contoso Invoicing\'']%

⌵

①

Bring window to front:

☒

①

⌵ Advanced

Fail if window isn't found:

☒

①

Timeout:

3

{x}

①

> Variables produced

AutomationWindow

🛡️ On error

Save

Cancel

22. Click **+New rule**.

The screenshot shows a 'Get window' dialog box with a close button (X) in the top right. Below the title bar, a light blue banner contains a shield icon and the text 'The following rules will apply if the action fails [More info](#)'. Below this is a toggle switch labeled 'Retry action if an error occurs', which is currently turned off. Underneath is a section for error handling rules, starting with 'All errors'. To the right of this text is a button with a plus icon and the text '+ New rule', which is highlighted with a red rectangle. Below the rule list are two buttons: 'Continue flow run' and 'Throw error'. At the bottom, there is a section labeled 'Advanced' with a shield icon, and three buttons: 'Return to parameters' (with a left arrow), 'Save' (in blue), and 'Cancel'.

23. Select **Set variable**.

This screenshot is similar to the previous one, but the '+ New rule' button is no longer highlighted. Instead, a dropdown menu is open, showing three options: '{x} Set variable' (highlighted with a red rectangle), 'Run subflow' (with a play icon), and an option that is partially visible as 't / outp'. The rest of the dialog box, including the 'Retry action if an error occurs' toggle, the 'Continue flow run' and 'Throw error' buttons, and the 'Advanced' section with 'Return to parameters', 'Save', and 'Cancel' buttons, remains the same.

24. Set %ErrorLocation% to "Couldn't get window for app". Then click Save.

Get window

The following rules will apply if the action fails [More info](#)

Retry action if an error occurs

All errors

New rule

Set **ErrorLocation** {x} to Couldn't get window for app {x}

Continue flow run

Throw error

Clear all

Advanced

Return to parameters

Save

Cancel

25. Now let's write what should happen in the **exception_handler** subflow. In this exercise we will just display the ErrorLocation value supplemented with details about the last exception. In the future you can create any of your own error handling logic. Go to **exception_handler** subflow.

Subflows

Main

exception_handler

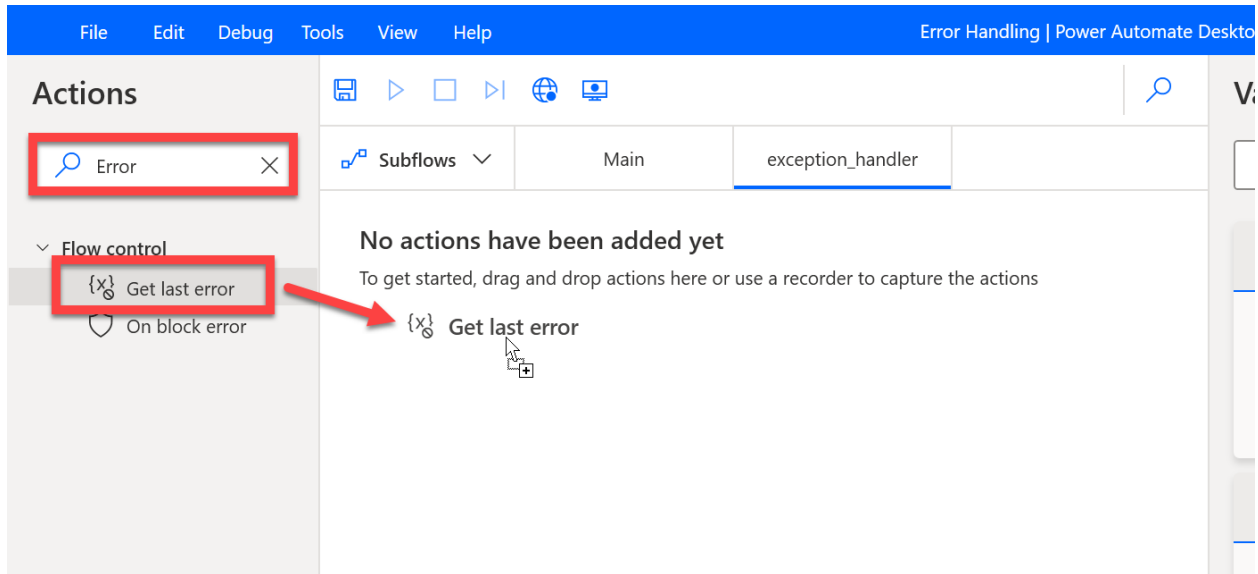
No actions have been added yet

To get started, drag and drop actions here or use a recorder to capture the actions

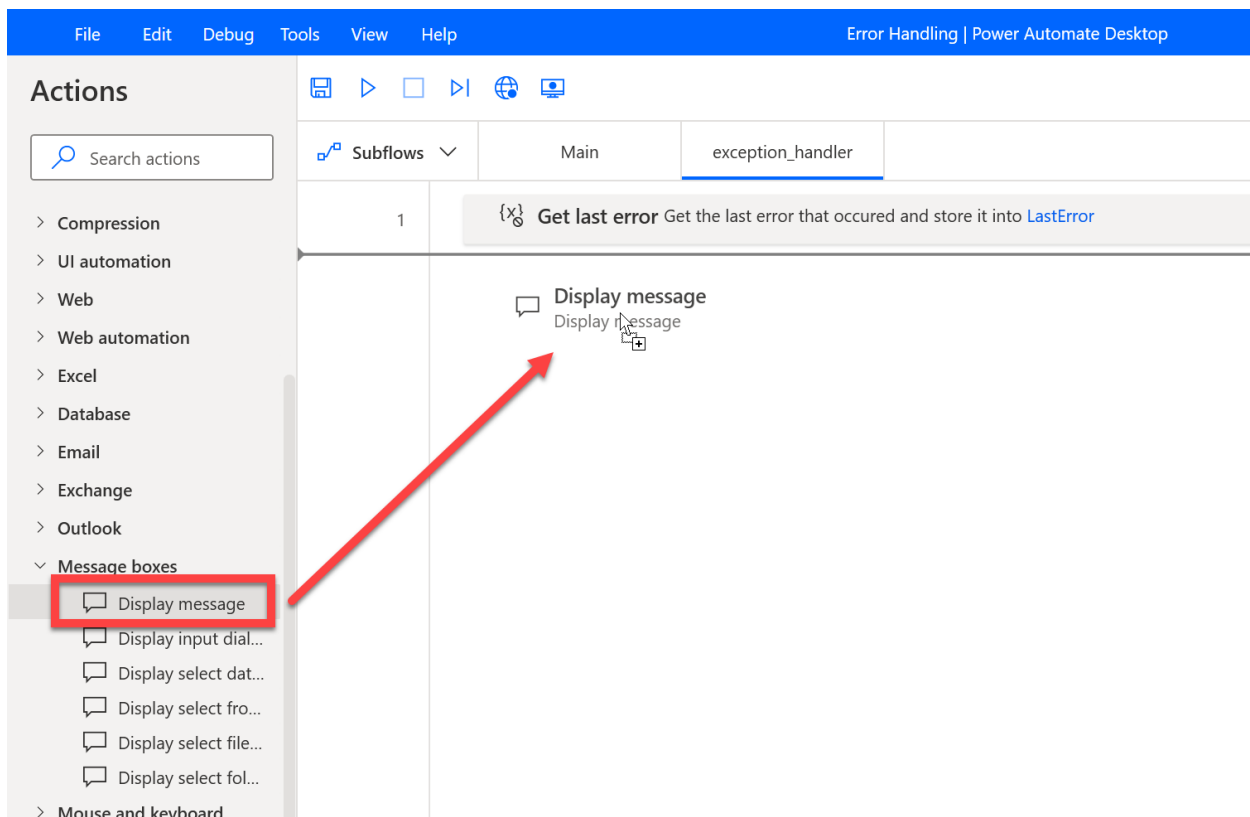
Robotic Process Automation in a Day, Lab 10 – Error handling (optional)

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26. In **Search actions** type **Error**, then drag **Get last error** action to the canvas list. It will produce the **LastError** variable.



27. Next, under **Message boxes**, drag **Display message** to the canvas list.



28. In **Message box title** column enter **My Exception Handler**, and in **Message to display** column enter:

An Exception has occurred : %ErrorLocation%.

Error details:

%LastError%.

Then click **Save**.

Display message



Displays a message box [More info](#)

Select parameters

Message box title:

My Exception Handler

{x}



Message to display:

An Exception has occurred : %ErrorLocation%.
Error details:
%LastError%

{x}



Message box icon:

None



Message box buttons:

OK



Default button:

First button



Keep message box always on top:



Close message box automatically:



> Variables produced **ButtonPressed**

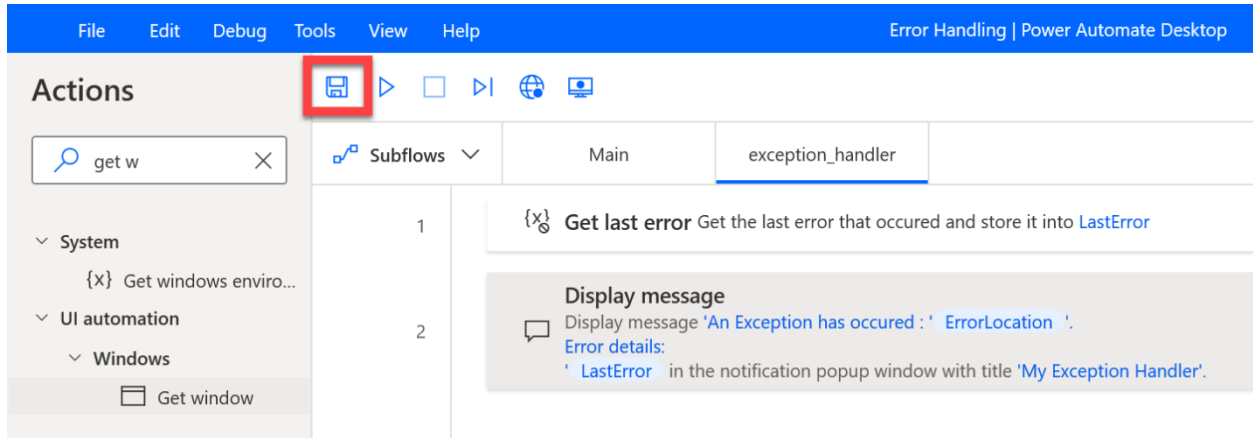
On error

Save

Cancel

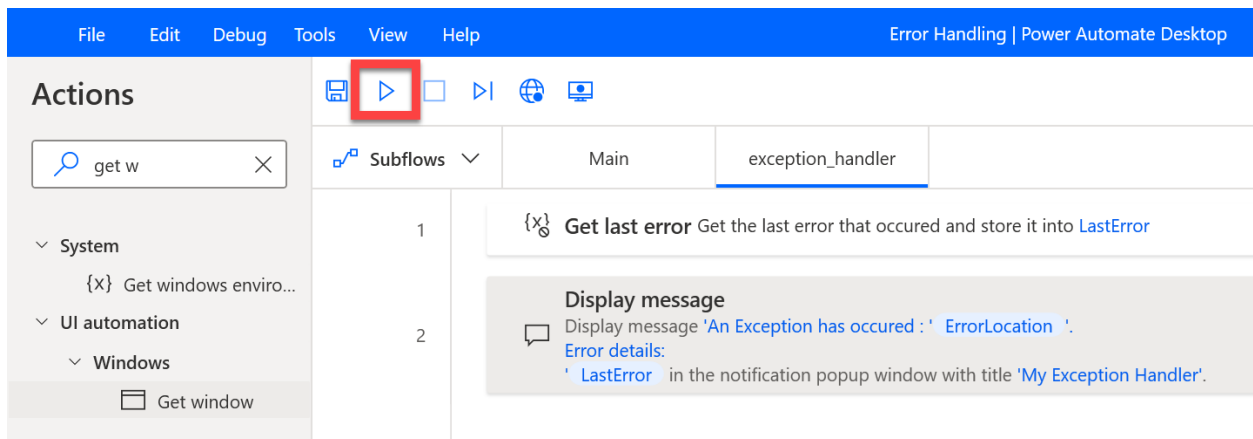
29. Click **Save**.

Note: We are using a **Display message** action for illustrative purposes. In a real-world scenario you can include additional logging/debugging information here including calling custom APIs or sending emails to a support team supplemented with screenshots.



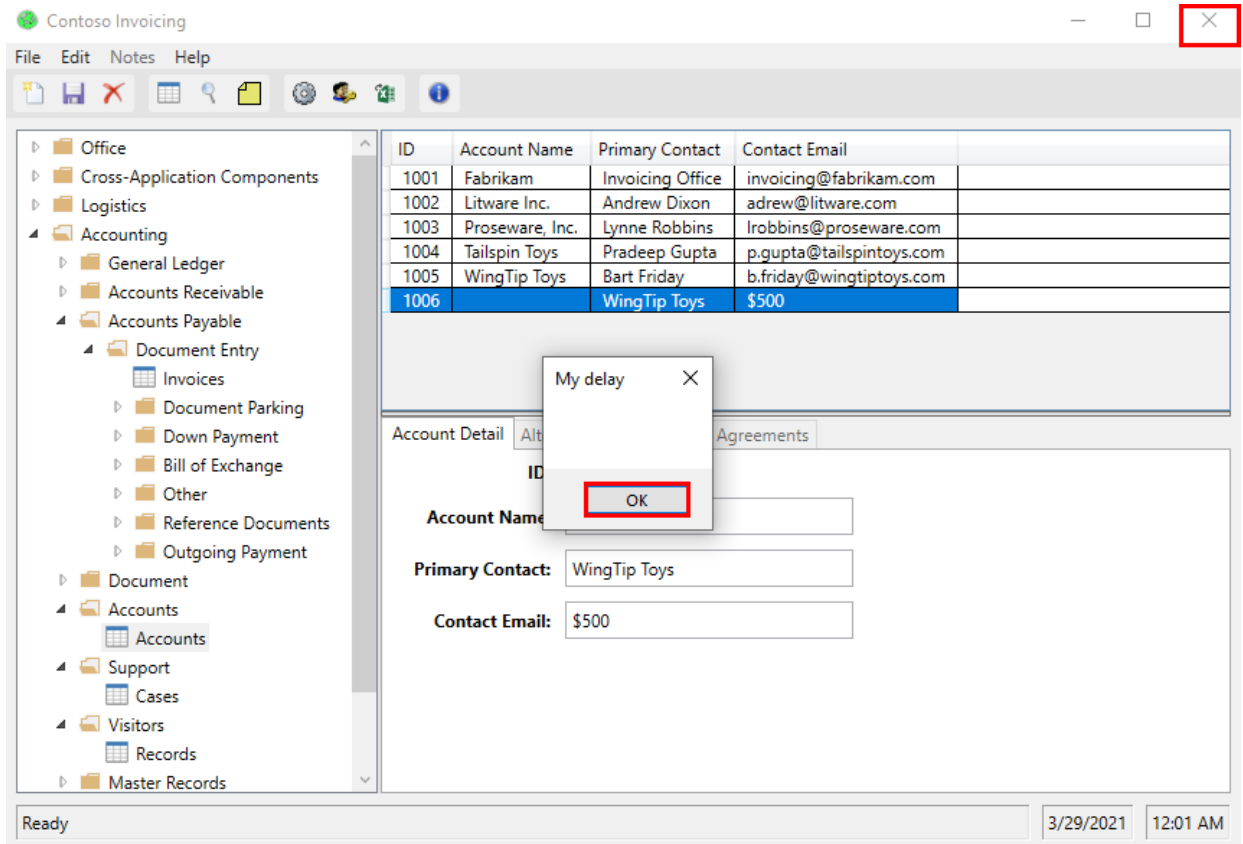
30. Test the desktop flow.

Note: you need to close all opened Contoso Invoicing apps page before testing the desktop flow.

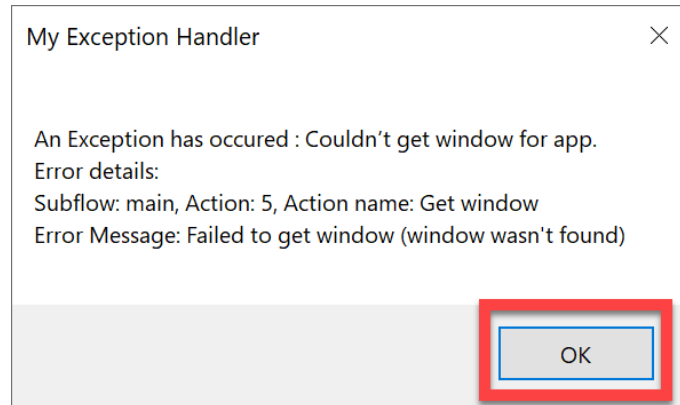


31. Contoso Invoicing application will automatically start and you will see the My delay message box pop up. Here you will first close the **Contoso Invoicing application** to ensure that the following step will fail. After you closed the application, click **OK** to close **My delay** message box and continue the process.

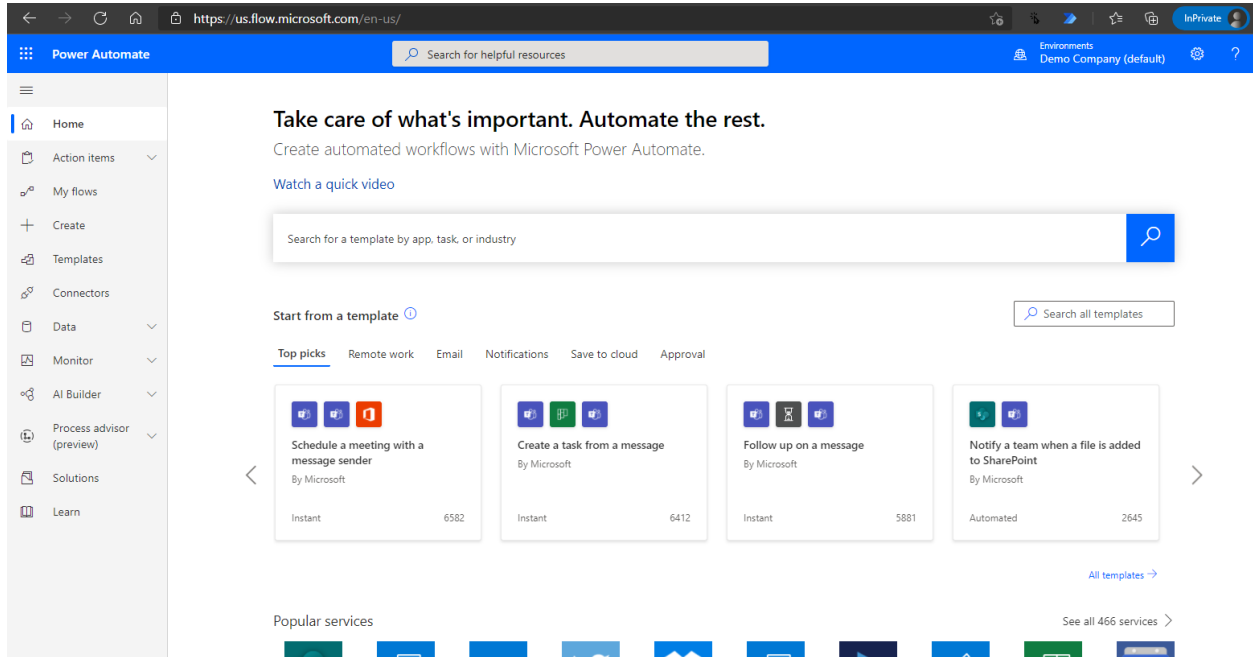
Note: you need to close Contoso Invoicing app before you close the message box.



32. Now the flow will run the next step to **Get Window**, but since you have closed the application, this step will fail and will set the **ErrorLocation** variable value to be **Couldn't get window for app**. Then the **On Block Error** will handle this error automatically by running the **exception_handler** subflow. You will verify the exception handling run as expected if you see this prompt message: **An exception has occurred: Couldn't get window for app** together with detailed error information. You can click **OK** to close it.



33. Now let's see what the expected behavior from cloud flow side is. Navigate to <https://powerautomate.microsoft.com>



34. Go to My flows – cloud flows

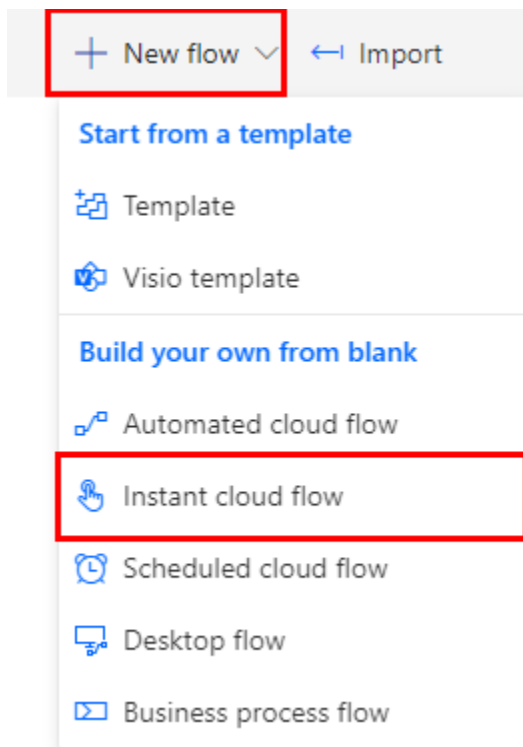
The screenshot displays the Microsoft Power Automate web interface. On the left sidebar, the 'My flows' option is highlighted with a red rectangle. The main content area shows the 'Flows' section with the 'Cloud flows' tab selected, also highlighted with a red rectangle. Below the tabs, a list of flows is shown, including a flow named 'Manual trigger Desktop flow to enter invoice' with a blue trigger icon.

Flows

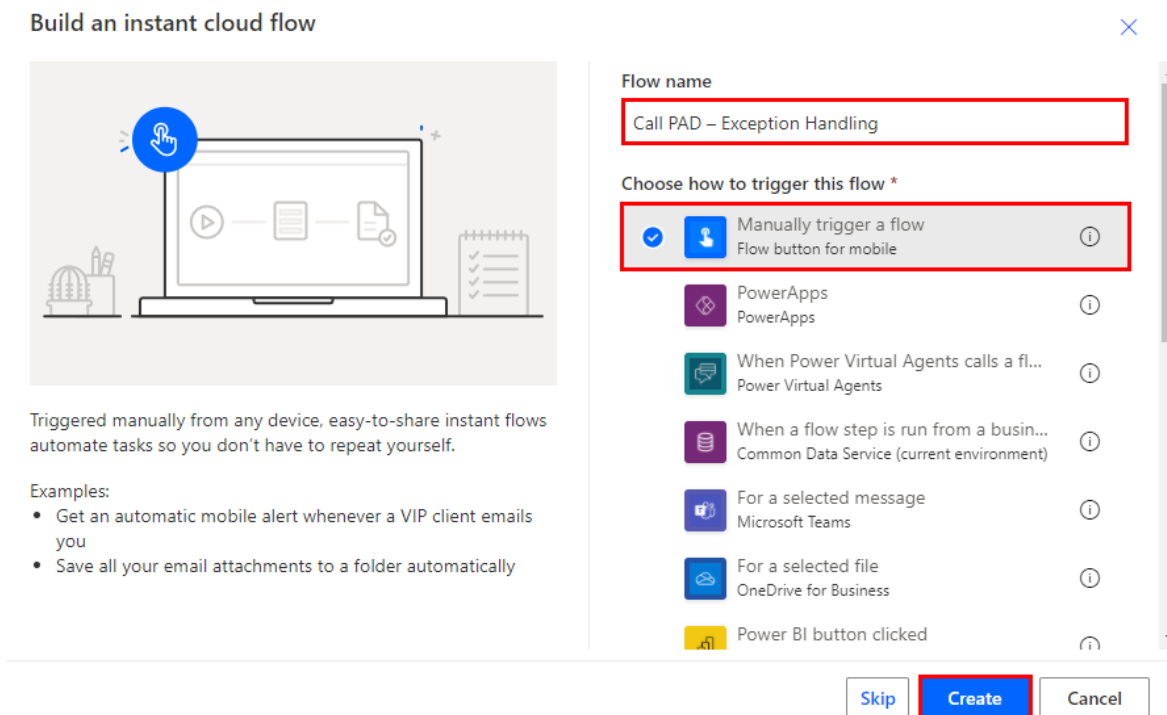
Cloud flows Desktop flows Business process flows Shared with me

Name
Manual trigger Desktop flow to enter invoice

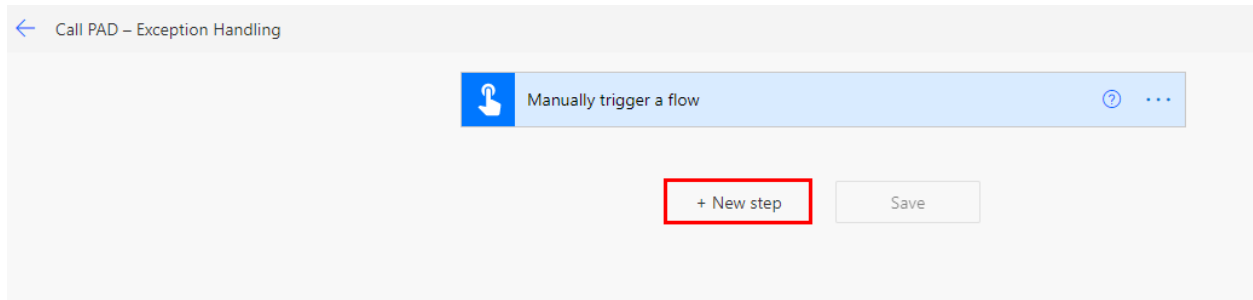
35. Click **New flow – Instant cloud flow**.



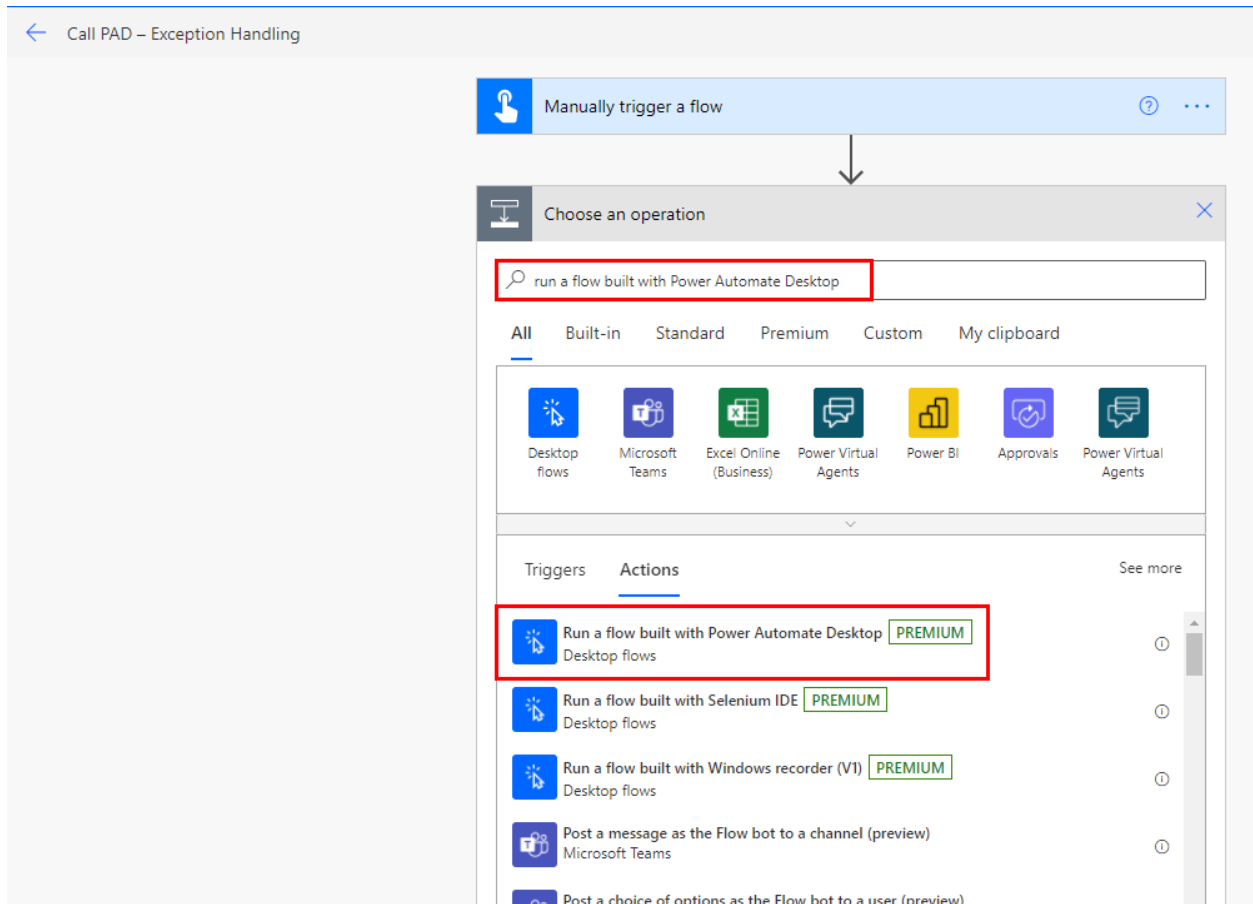
36. Name the flow **Call PAD – Exception Handling**. Select **Manually trigger a flow**. Then click **Create**.



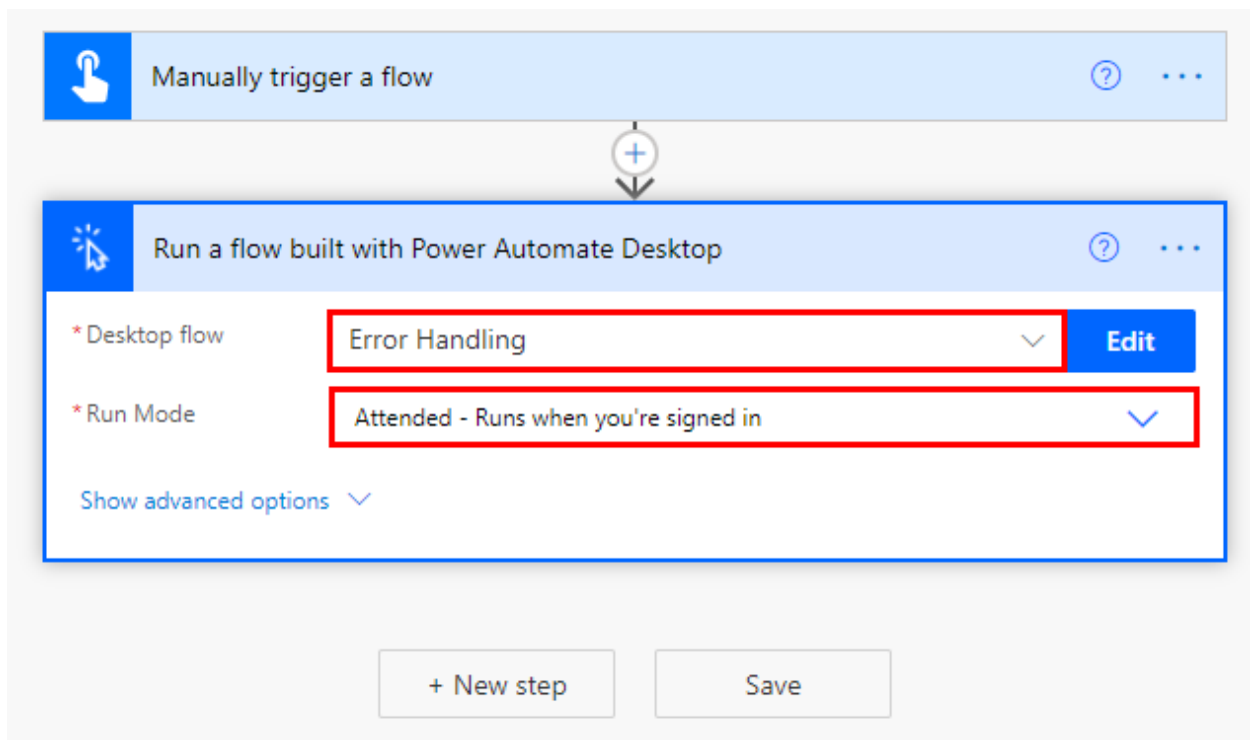
37. Click **New step**.



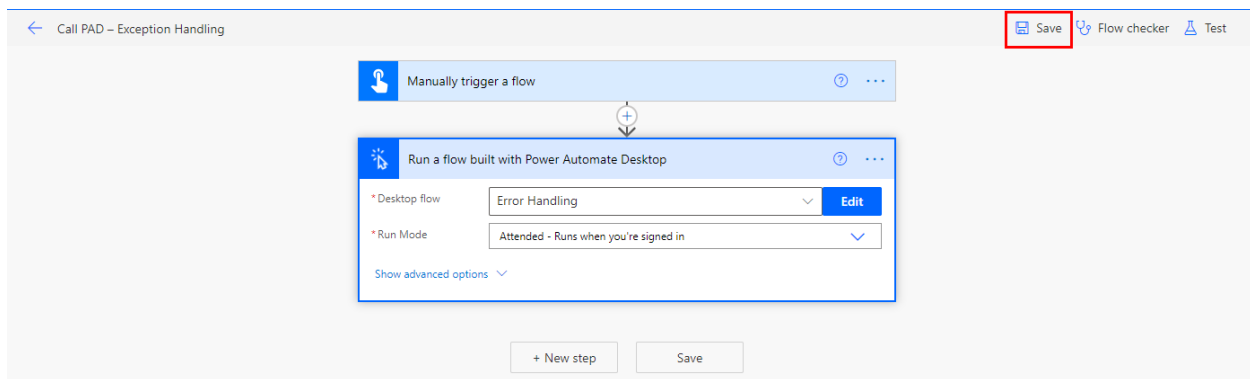
38. Select **Run a flow built by Power Automate Desktop** using search bar.



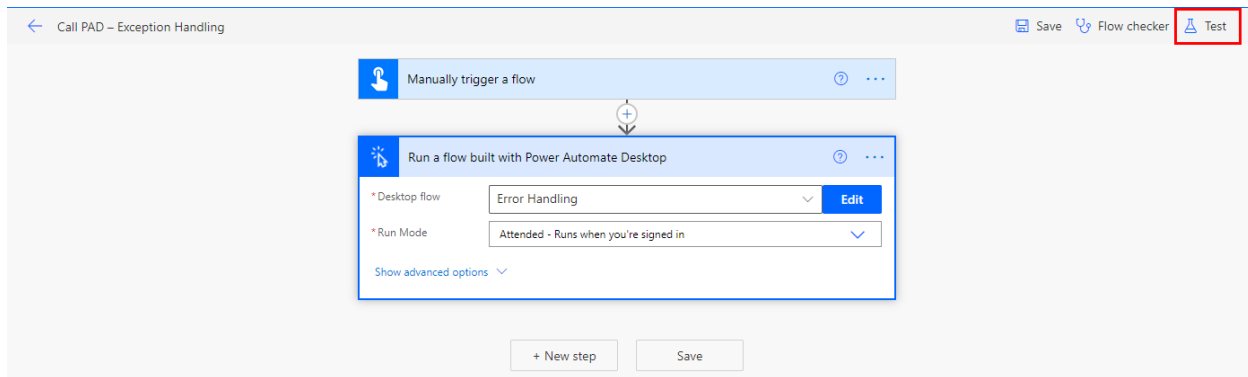
39. Select **Error Handling** desktop flow and in **Attended** run mode.



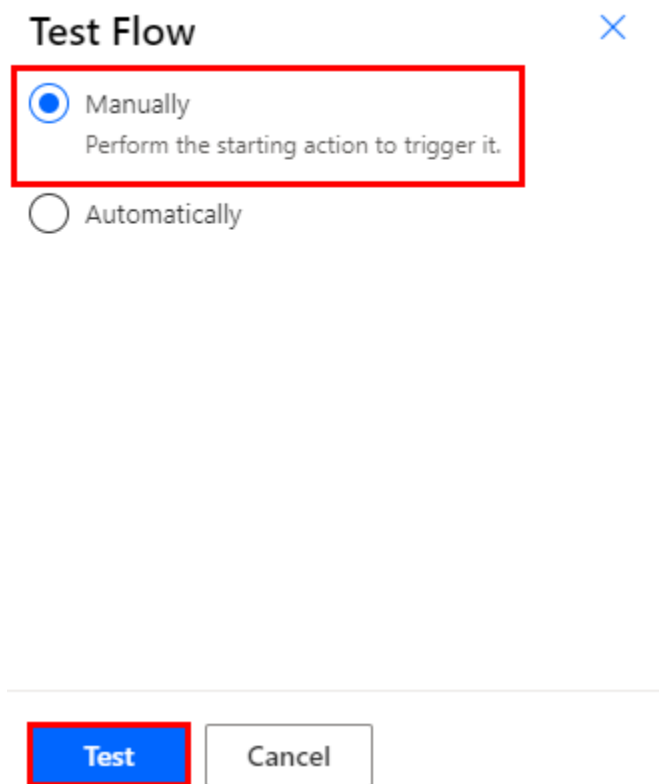
40. Click **Save**.



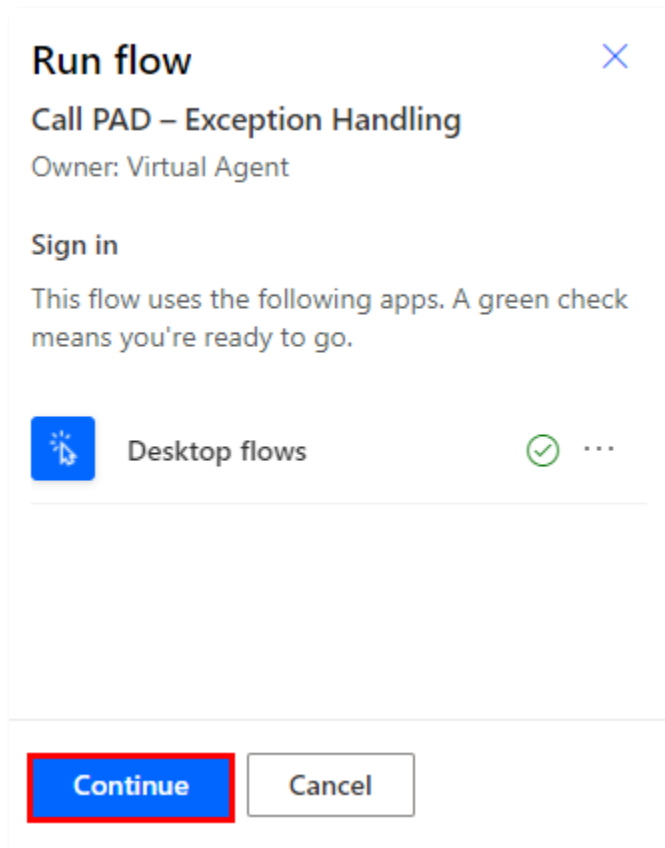
41. Click Test.



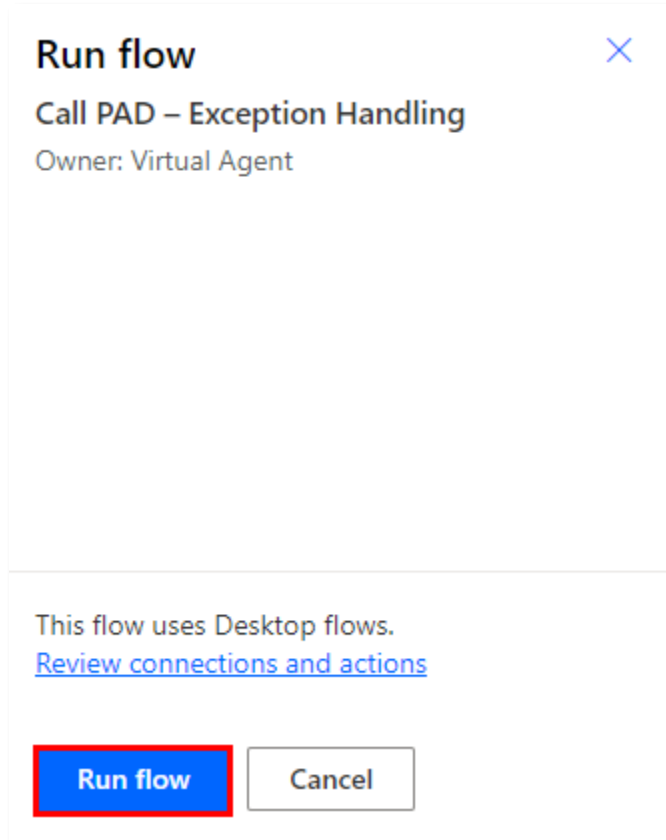
42. Select Manually and click Test.



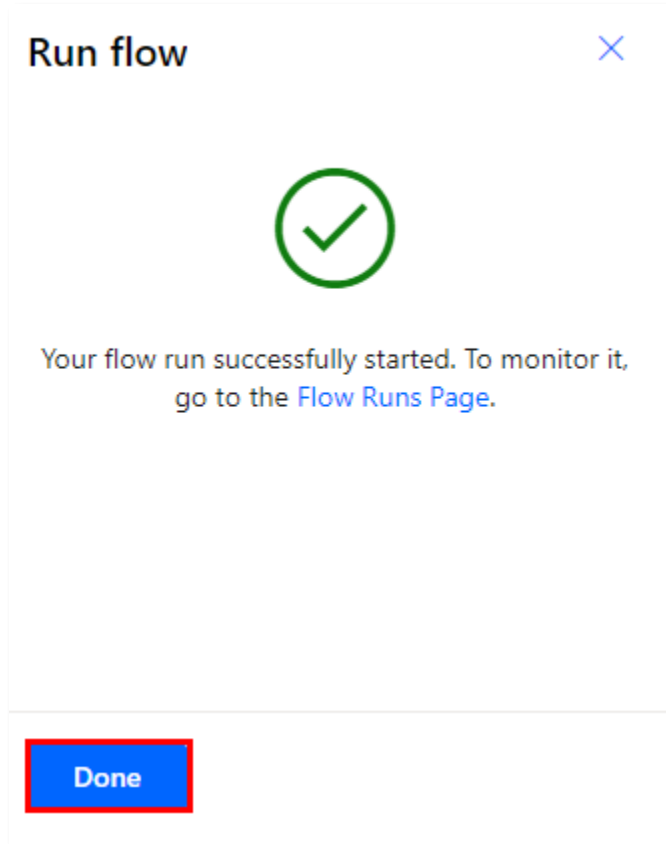
43. Click **Continue**.



44. Click **Run flow**.



45. Click **Done**.



46. You will notice that the cloud flow run failed. This is important for users to get accurate telemetry send from the desktop back to the cloud. Although the exception has been gracefully handled within the desktop flow, we still want all the exception errors to surface in the cloud flow and let users be aware what error has occurred and where it occurred.

Call PAD - Exception Handling

Flow run failed.

Manually trigger a flow 0s

Run a flow built with Power Automate Desktop 54s

Error Details

Start time: Mar 29, 04:06 PM (1 min ago) Duration: 00:00:54

Error Action: 'Run_a_flow_built_with_Power_Automate_Desktop' failed

Error Details

Problem while executing action 'GetUseTimeout'. Failed to get window (window wasn't found)

Documentation

Learn more about Desktop flows /connectors/uiflow/

How to fix

To make this flow work, inspect the inputs to this action and ensure they would provide the correct inputs.

47. From the cloud flow Run history, expand on the **Run a desktop flow** action to see more failure details, and lick the **See run details** link at the bottom to browse to the detail desktop run history.

← Call PAD – Exception Handling

⊗ Flow run failed.

Run Mode

attended

OUTPUTS Show raw outputs >

Body

```
{
  "error": {
    "code": "UIAutomation.GetWindowError",
    "message": "Problem while executing action 'GetUseTimeout'. Fai
  }
}
```

Headers

```
{
  "Pragma": "no-cache",
  "x-ms-run-id": "bd640160-e390-eb11-b1ac-000d3a9cc809",
  "x-ms-request-id": "westus:398aa7be-4083-41d5-9e34-7466c8a6e4dc",
  "x-ms-correlation-request-id": "398aa7be-4083-41d5-9e34-7466c8a6e4dc",
  "x-ms-flow-mobile-ios-version": "1.3.0",
  "x-ms-flow-routing-request-id": "WESTUS:20210329T230714Z:398aa7be-4083-41d5-9e34-7466c8a6e4dc",
  "Strict-Transport-Security": "max-age=31536000; includeSubDomains"
}
```

Status Code

400

See run details

Flow run failed.

Action	Subflow	Start	Duration	Status
Set variable	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	01 ms	Succeeded
On block error	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	02 ms	Succeeded
Run application	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	10 ms	Succeeded
Display message	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	00:00:06	Succeeded
Get window	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	00:00:05	Failed
Set variable	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	00 ms	Succeeded
	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	01 ms	Succeeded
Run subflow	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	00:00:03	Succeeded
Display message	exception_handler	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	00:00:03	Succeeded
	main	Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)	01 ms	Succeeded

Error Details

Start time

Mar 29, 04:06 PM (32 min ago)

Duration

00:00:05

Error

Action 'Get window' failed.

Error Details

Problem while executing action

'GetUseTimeout': Failed to get window

(window wasn't found)

Inputs

[See input details](#)

Outputs

[See output details](#)

48. From this detailed steps' log, you can see the Get window step has failed with error details, and then the exception handler subflow was run as designed.

Note: if your cloud flow run did not report as failed, it could be because you do not have the latest Power Automate Desktop version (v2.6 or later). In that case, please update to the latest Power Automate Desktop and re-test.

Check your knowledge

Lab 10

5 mins

1. You need to close all opened Contoso Invoicing apps page before testing the desktop flow.

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: A. True - Contoso Invoicing application will automatically start when your desktop flow start running

2. In order to create an error case for this lab we will manually _____ the application so the following step cannot locate the window anymore.

- A. Open
- B. Close
- C. Either A or B
- D. None of the above

Answer: B. Close – Once we closed the application, our desktop flow cannot locate the window anymore

3. If your desktop flow run did not report as failed on step 46, it could be because you _____.

- A. You do not have the latest Power Automate Desktop version (v2.6 or later)
- B. You do not have the latest Power Automate Desktop version (v2.4 or later)
- C. None of the above

Answer: A. You do not have the latest Power Automate Desktop version (v2.6 or later)

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