



RPA glossary.



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There is a reasonable chance that you have heard the term RPA, or Robotic Process Automation. RPA has been a hot topic for a long time - and that is unlikely to change.

It's hardly surprising if you consider the fundamental underlying assumption of RPA, which is that humans should not waste their mental capacities on tasks that software robots can perform automatically, faster and flawlessly.

Yes, the term RPA is now synonymous with cost reduction, scalability and accuracy. At the same time, our brains can be used to realise innovation and growth.

Isn't that like music to your ears? If so, it would be worth finding out how RPAs could add value to your business. A good place to start would be to familiarise yourself with common RPA-related terms!



artificial intelligence (AI).

AI is a technology that enables machines to perceive, understand, act and learn in a manner similar to humans. AI enables machines to solve problems, make predictions, plan, perform voice recognition, etc.

AI strengthens your RPA processes and enables the software bots to take more accurate and complex decisions. In short, it makes the bots smarter. Intelligent Process Automation (see below) consists of enriching RPA with other technologies.



application programming interface (API).

An API enables diverse systems to communicate with each other. In short, APIs enable the automatic exchange of information between systems. RPAs communicate via the front-end, while APIs do so via the back-end. Automation solutions often combine both RPA and API.



attended RPA bots.

Attended RPA bots perform automated processes that require human intervention. Desktop automation (see below) is one example of this. They optimise tasks by taking the execution of a part of it away from humans. Such bots are used where full automation of a process is not possible.



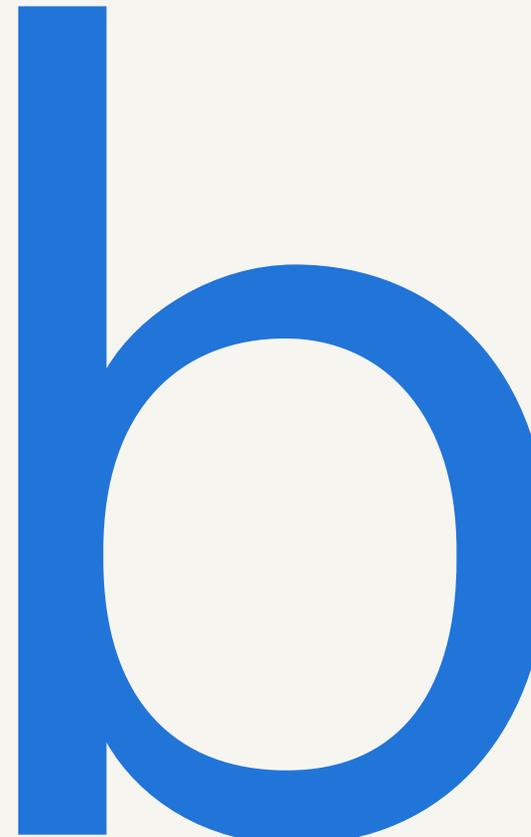
automation design.

How do you roll out RPA in your organisation? Your plan must include processes that are best suited for automation, along with the rollout requirements to ensure higher productivity.



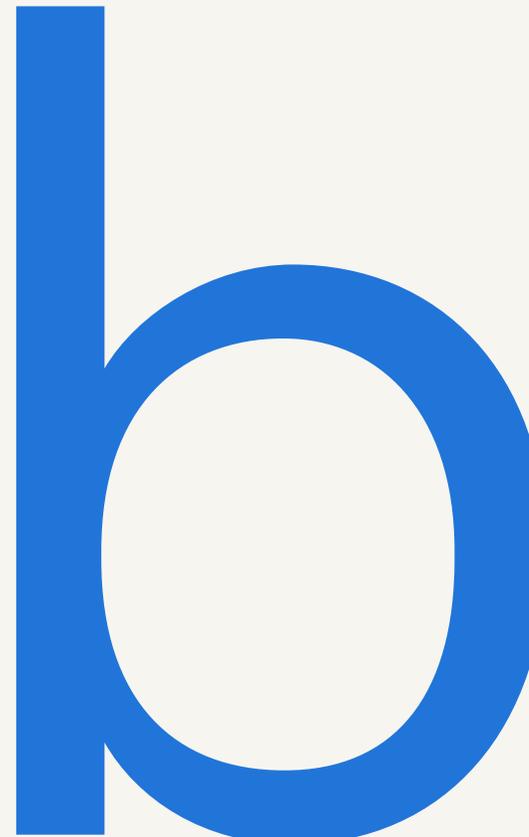
business intelligence (BI).

BI comprises the set of strategies and processes that enable the collection, processing and presentation of large amounts of company data. Excel and other documents are still used to acquire and process the data required for successful BI. RPA can help automate these time-consuming and less challenging tasks.



business process automation (BPA).

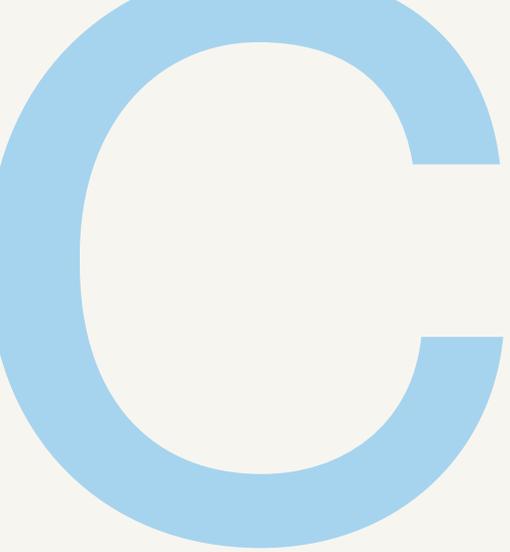
Business Process Automation comprises all the tools and applications embedded within an organisation to streamline business processes.



business process management (BPM).

Business Process Management is a discipline that streamlines business processes to interconnect and optimise them. Processes are examined from a bird's eye perspective, with a view to improving efficiency. Automation may or may not be part of a BPM strategy.





cloud RPA.

Cloud RPA uses cloud-based bots instead of using bots on a specific computer to process tasks.





cognitive RPA.

Cognitive RPA goes beyond traditional RPA, which is limited to processes that require almost no interpretation. Combining AI techniques enables it to extract insights from unstructured data. These platforms can handle symbolic and conceptual information.





command-line interface.

A Command-line Interface is a text-based user interface. The user types commands in the interface, and receives an answer through the same medium. This enables users to communicate with the operating system and applications. Today, most interfaces are GUIs (see below).



deep learning.

Deep learning consists on learning to mimic the human brain through the use of artificial neural networks (a network of algorithms). Applications include: image recognition (such as facial recognition), speech recognition and translation. In other words, Deep Learning thus aims to imitate the functioning of the human neural networks in the brain. It is part of Machine Learning (see further).



desktop automation.

The robot is man's virtual assistant and works on his/her computer. This limits access to the software bot. In most cases, users themselves issue commands to the bot, thereby activating it.



enterprise resource planning (ERP).

ERP systems still often form the core of a company's back office. Via an ERP system, companies can manage various activities (accounting, purchasing, logistics, HR, etc.) and bring them together via software packages. When ERP is combined with RPA, this automates the manual work still required by ERP systems today.



graphical user interface (GUI).

A Graphical User Interface is an interface based on visual components. The user can activate actions via windows, menus, buttons and icons. RPA also uses these typically human interactions to automate actions.



hyperautomation.

Hyper automation refers to the use of various advanced technologies to automate business processes. It also refers to the refinement of automation. Thus you can combine RPA with AI and Machine Learning in order to maximise the benefit.



intelligent document processing (IDP).

Intelligent Document Processing is an umbrella term for OCR and cognitive RPA. OCR refers to the ability to read, import and process scanned as well as unscanned documents. Cognitive RPA is about recognising data and making decisions based on that data. This can be done using AI (see above), but also with other, more traditional programming techniques.



intelligent process automation.

Intelligent Process Automation (or Intelligent RPA) combines RPA with AI (see above). This makes the software bots more intelligent. For example, they can interpret data and then make decisions.





machine learning.

Machine Learning is part of AI and refers to the process used by software bots to learn and improve it based on algorithms. This is done without prior programming or human intervention. The software bots improve intelligence by combining Machine Learning (and thus AI) with RPA. This is also called Intelligent Process Automation (see above).



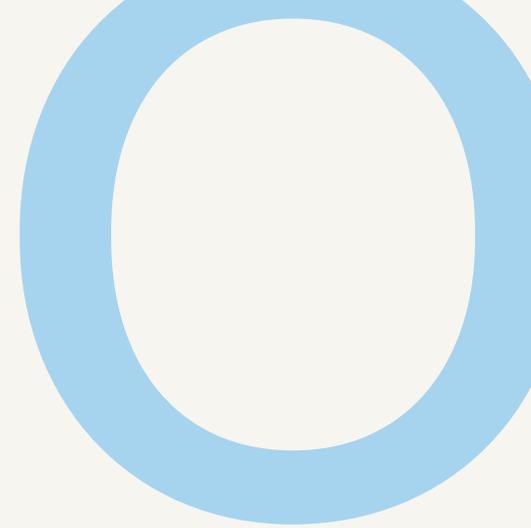
natural language processing (NLP).

NLP is used to teach computers to understand, interpret and mimic human language, both written and spoken. NLP technologies learn automatically through Machine Learning. For example, chatbots, voice assistants and automatic e-mails are integrated with NLP. However, this integration can be time consuming. Such integration can be facilitated by combining it with RPA.



optical character recognition.

OCR software recognises numbers and symbols. Optical Character Recognition is often used to digitise typed or handwritten documents. Paper documents can then be digitally processed. OCR is often indispensable in ensuring a good RPA solution. It enables software robots to retrieve information from images and PDFs, for example.





pilot program.

This step follows the Proof of Concept (see below). A more advanced test situation is used, to find out whether the robot performs as it should in all aspects.





proof of concept (POC).

A Proof of Concept can best be described as a first test version of the automation software you want to use. The purpose of the test is to spot possible limitations.



RPA center of excellence.

The RPA Centre of Excellence is a separate in-house cell that facilitates and supports the implementation of RPA. The team comprises colleagues from different departments in your organisation.



RPA roadmap.

An RPA Roadmap can be established immediately after identifying the processes that can be automated. A critical component of such roadmaps is the cost-benefit analysis. After all, it helps you take well-founded decisions about whether or not to automate a process. The scalability of your RPA solution is another indispensable part of your roadmap.



role-based access control.

In an RPA environment, Role-based Access Control ensures that colleagues and bots only have access to information that they require to perform their task. This enables you to monitor access to sensitive information and to make it more secure.



scripting.

A script is best described as custom code. That code can automate monotonous tasks and link applications. The heart of an RPA bot consists of script containing instructions that the bot has to execute. In most cases, this script is created by a human. When used by AI, parts of this script are modified by the bot itself as it learns.



software robots.

Software Robots interact with other applications via an interface. The bots automatically perform repetitive tasks that are traditionally performed by humans.



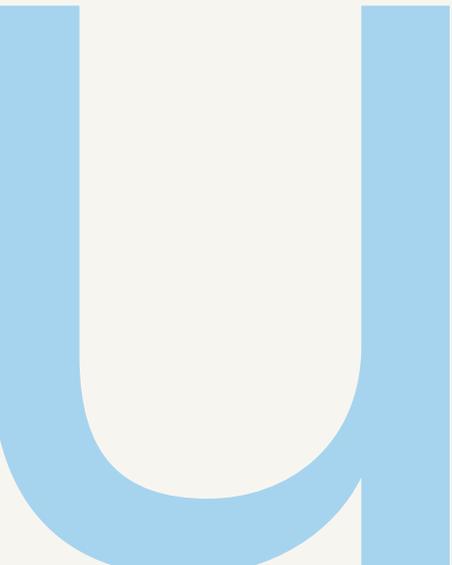
structured data.

Structured data have a predefined format. Address details or bank card numbers are examples of these. This is in contrast to unstructured data (see below). This type of data is easily processed by a RPA bot.



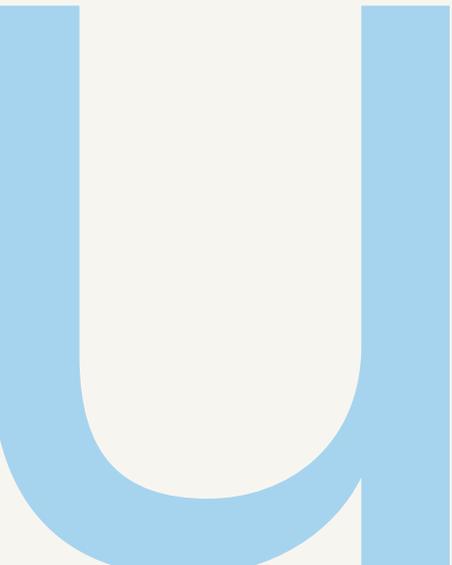
unattended RPA.

Unattended RPA refers to software bots that require little or no human intervention. They can therefore easily 'work' 24/7.



unstructured data.

Unstructured data do not have a predefined format. Examples are text, audio, mobile activity, etc. It is much more difficult for RPA bots to process this type of data and as a consequence, it is often necessary to use and integrate techniques such as AI and OCR in order to process the same.





workflow automation.

A workflow comprises an orchestrated and repeatable sequence of operations and tasks performed within a company - for example to process payroll administration. Workflow Automation consists of automating this entire workflow from start to finish. Although this is the ultimate objective, only a few operations and tasks are initially automated.

The entire workflow is automated. Consequently, an entire task will therefore be executed automatically from start to finish.



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