
10 Key Factors to Consider When Choosing RPA Software



While it is widely accepted that menial tasks rob workers of time they could spend on more productive activities, time saving solutions are far and few between. However, IT experts say that when done right, RPA can banish lots of mindless chores.

Businesses use Robotic Process Automation or RPA software to create software bots that perform pre-defined, structured jobs that typically involve filling in electronic forms, processing transactions, or sending messages.

How does RPA work?

RPA works by pulling information out of your existing IT systems, says CIO contributing Editor Martin Heller. Either through an interface to the backend or by emulating how a human would access the system from the front end. With legacy enterprise systems, you must often go through the front end, because you can't access the back-end system directly.

Advantages

- Time savings for employees from off-loading repetitive tasks to bots
- Reduced error rates on tasks automated by RPA
- Shorter times to perform automated tasks
- Increased business capacity when the rate-limiting tasks have been automated

Limitations

- Cost and time to set up bots, including IT involvement, identifying automation candidates, and possible consulting
- Need to monitor and maintain bots
- Inability of bots to extract information from unstructured and hand-written documents (but some products apply ML to mitigate these issues)
- Inability of bots to detect or deal with exceptions in standard tasks (but some products have a human review mechanism)
- Inability of bots to automate non-standard tasks

10 criteria for choosing RPA tools

Heller offers advice on key factors in choosing a system:

1. Ease of bot setup
2. Low-code capabilities
3. Attended vs. unattended
4. Machine learning capabilities
5. Exception handling and human review
6. Integration with enterprise applications
7. Orchestration and administration
8. Cloud bots
9. Process and task discovery and mining
10. Scalability

Ultimately, the success or failure of your RPA implementation will depend on identifying the highest-reward processes and tasks for automation.

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