

How to Make Automation Work for You: Tips & Takeaways

You've probably heard the word "automation" hundreds of times, but the term is misunderstood. It is not, for instance, about robots replacing people.

So what is automation, really? At a recent [online training](#), GovLoop got down to basics and explained what automation does, how it can benefit you and how to automate in government successfully. Here are tips and takeaways from our government and industry experts.

How Automation Helps You

What exactly are the benefits of automation? How can it make your working world easier?

- ✓ It eliminates mundane, time-consuming tasks.
- ✓ It streamlines slow and bureaucratic workflows.
- ✓ It encourages short- and long-term innovation.
- ✓ It allows time for higher-level work.
- ✓ It reduces costs and budget pressures.
- ✓ It improves individual and office morale.

"Automation is really augmenting ... workflows and just eliminating the redundant tasks that people don't really want to spend their time doing anyway because [they're] taking them away from doing what [people] were hired to do in the first place." — Jonathan Smith, GSA

5 Key Areas

Automation can do so many things, but there are five general areas in which it's helpful.

1. Streamlining outdated, repetitive, manual processes
2. Responding to/remediating cyber and other network events
3. Making security and other patches/updates to IT systems
4. Managing infrastructure and software in the cloud
5. Managing software design and development

"Automation is not going to replace people... It's going to give us the space and time to really look at some of the things we're doing and understand 'how do we do it better?'... It is a culture, it is a mind shift, but ... once people get into it ... they start to look for more and more opportunities to do it." — Shea McGrew, Maricopa County

SPEAKERS

Shea McGrew, Chief Technology Officer in the Office of Enterprise Technology, Maricopa County, AZ

Jonathan Smith, Deputy Director of the Process Optimization and Automation Division, U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

Nick Rubin, Automation Specialist in Red Hat's North America Public Sector

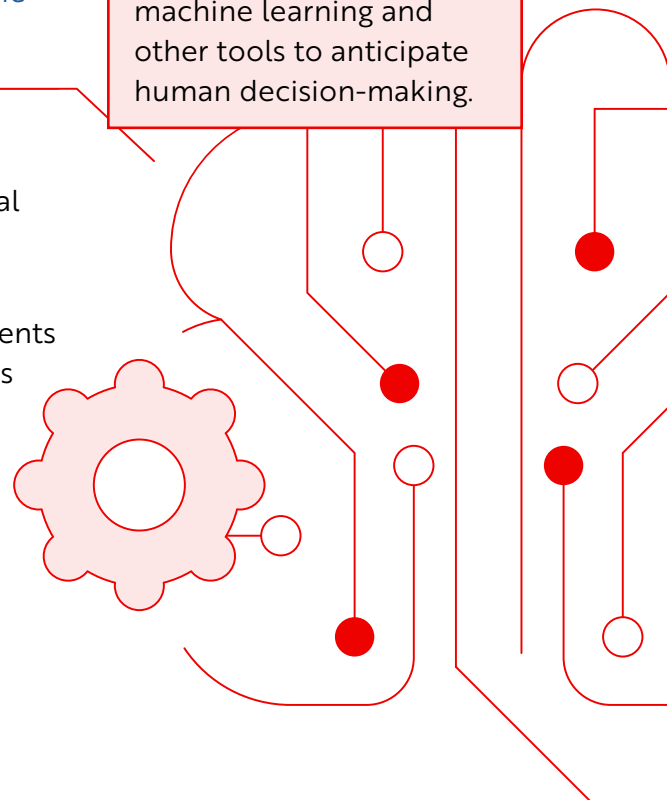
DEFINING IT

Robotic Process

Automation: Technology used to mimic human interactions and perform repetitive tasks.

Intelligent Automation:

Uses artificial intelligence, machine learning and other tools to anticipate human decision-making.



Automation Tips

- ✓ **Crawl, walk, run.** Start with small projects that don't require much investment.
- ✓ **Identify your stakeholders.** Engage with them (security, finance, etc.) early.
- ✓ **Establish a good technical foundation.** Locate help if you need it.
- ✓ **Find organizations in your situation.** Learn from what they've accomplished.
- ✓ **Don't be left stranded.** Choose a vendor that provides consulting/training.
- ✓ **Select an easy-to-adopt platform.** Make transitioning to automation simple, and cloud-based.
- ✓ **Don't get locked into one approach.** Find a solution with some flexibility.
- ✓ **Ensure workload portability.** Make sure, for instance, that you can move work from the cloud to an on-premises system or other cloud application when you need to.
- ✓ **Choose an automation platform with management tools.** Retain some control to increase your productivity and system stability.

"Fear is one of those things that prohibits people from embracing change. The reality is that everything is changing, and if you don't get on board with change or get comfortable with change to a degree, then you will get left behind."

— Nick Rubin, Red Hat

FIND THESE TASKS FRUSTRATING? AUTOMATE THEM

- Sending impersonal form letters/emails
- Chasing down hard-copy signatures
- Manually entering data into Excel spreadsheets
- Filling out routine, standardized forms
- Syncing data from other departments/agencies
- Sending meeting and deadline reminders
- Tracking recruitment activity
- Preparing data-intensive reports
- Sending invoices, one by one

Write down what you do every day and ask yourself, "What is redundant? What could I automate?"

Best Practices for Rolling out a Successful Automation Project



Be a champion for the project, not just a sponsor of it.



Align the project to a business objective.



Support change and workforce collaboration.



Encourage project adoption by investing in the people it impacts.



Find a middle ground between what's automated and what's not.

For more tips on making automation work for you, visit redhat.com/en/solutions/it-automation