UiPath™

Is RPA A Band-Aid for The Public Sector?

How to Take Advantage of RPA's Flexibility to Fix Short and Long-Term Problems

By Jim Walker, UiPath

Small or large cuts have required a bandage throughout mankind's history. Mixtures of substances including mud, clay or plants, according to the National Institute of Health created plasters that "were applied to wounds to provide protection and to absorb exudate."[1] It was not until 1920 that the Band-Aid, as we know it, first appeared. Now, after thousands of years without a truly sterile way to dress wounds, in the last 100 years we've gained more than 5,000 wound care products.

When the great innovative genius of Bill Gates and Steve Jobs was tied to DARPA's internet the government work space started to slowly bleed data. In 40 short years these small data cuts led to more and more data cuts creating the equivalent of an emergency room "code blue."

> "
> **John Lockwood**
> **RPA program manager in DLA Information Operations**
>
> The widespread application and potential benefit of this technology… is extraordinary, given the large number of business processes that can be automated with RPA.

---

[1] Jayesh B. Shah, *The History of Wound Care*, National Center for Biotechnology Informations

There are

$2.5
quintillion
bytes of data
created every day.
– Forbes

Government employees were burdened with more and more data coming in at faster and faster speeds. More importantly, the demands on capturing the data and using it outpaced the government's ability to add the necessary staff to its workforce. Just picture thousands of government employees on the assembly line of data, like Lucille Ball being forced to start eating the data as there was just no way to use the volumes of data their computer masters had created. No way, that is, until RPA.

RPA Use in Government Today

In my role as our Federal CTO and Director of Public Sector Marketing I get to evangelize RPA to city, county, state, and national level governments. It is an incredible opportunity to demonstrate to my former peers, burden by outdated administrative requirements and increasing demands by their citizen customers (who understandably demand better, cheaper, and faster government), that there is a path to managing the massive amounts of data pouring into agencies every hour.

Over the past 20 months, Washington, Robobot, Truman, and other RPA robots have begun integrating with federal employees to restructure their work and free them from what OMB's 18-23 guidance called low-value work. We finally can keep up with the volumes of these rich data sets to make smart, data-driven decisions by tasking robots to do computer work while we do analysis and make important decisions. Organizations such as DLA, NASA, NSF, Army, Navy, GSA, FDA, DHS, and Treasury are actively using robots as an ally to achieve to improve efficiencies and deliver more effective government.

Recently, in an hour-long discussion with an exceptionally gifted technologist at the General Services Administration, I was confronted with the statement, "RPA is just a band-aid." It was an emphatic statement and I loved the directness of the technologist. In that brief moment I realized that discussions in Gartner's RPA cohort, Deloitte's Federal Robotics and Cognitive Consortium, the Army's DOD Consortium, and UiPath's GovPath user group have all contributed to the rapidly maturing conversation around RPA. There is rarely a new question anymore around RPA; just a restated question. A leader in the Department of Defense with respect to RPA is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Financial Information Management (DASA-FIM). DASA-FIM had just asked this very question a week earlier (congrats DASA-FIM for another first).

Government employees are burdened with more and more data coming in at faster and faster speeds.

Essentially any high-volume, business-rules-driven, repeatable process qualifies for RPA.

An RPA "Band-Aid" Is No Small Thing

Yes, of course, RPA can be a band-aid. Thank goodness its flexibility and ease of use allow you to use it for splinters or wounds; with or without a doctor. Agencies with an "Automation First" mindset understand they need to have both flexibility and an easy-to-use RPA solution as they prepare for the integration of intelligent automation workers. Utilizing experiential learning platforms to retrain existing staff for the work of the future is critical to workforce management. Consider this use case:

CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY USE CASE

It is 2:17 pm on a Friday before a long weekend. You get a call from the Chief of Staff's office that the Agency has a FOUIA or Congressional Inquiry with a due date the Tuesday morning of your return. Approximately 257,321 forms must be reviewed to determine how many people were impacted by a natural disaster. Pulling each form up online to determine if a box was checked, copying and pasting the name and claim amount 257,321 times means no three-day weekend for you and several of your staff. Until someone says, "let's use our RPA bot to do this for us!"

As the task is a highly repetitive, mundane, and low-valued work, it is the perfect candidate for RPA. You are reflecting on your decision to have two on your staff enroll in the free UiPath Academy online. They learned to work with fillable PDDF forms and after working with UiPath Studio for a few hours your team created their solution. They have created a robot that interrogates 257,321 forms at a rate of one per six seconds. You anticipated your report needs and the robot also collects the name, address and nature of the disaster along with ensuring the verification box was correctly selected at the bottom of page three. You can set up a test while your team develops the bot.
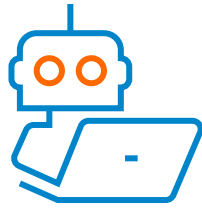
The Defense Information Systems Agency conducted a "Race the Bot" event in the office where the requirement was to pull supporting documentation for an audit request. In 15 minutes an employee was able to pull two items, while the bot pulled 150.

You randomly selected 50 forms, 5 with known exceptions, and when the team was ready the bot quickly completed the test and properly reported the 5 exceptions. Success!

Because you had qualified RPA trainers you did not need CIO resources and your 2:17 pm task finds you heading home by 7 pm. Your bot manager reminds you Orchestrator can dynamically assign the work to bots and as they all work off the same work instruction (or code, for your die-hards) you know your robots will complete the task sometime Monday. You plan to come in an hour early Tuesday and your Tableau savvy robot passes the data to Tableau so you can start visualizing and analyzing the data immediately. Your leadership arrives Tuesday to not only the slide created by Tableau, but when they ask those "stump the chump" question they always seem to have in their hip pocket, you are able to suggest the FOUIA or Congressional Inquiry question was too specific and you also captured those forms that were improperly completed and have that in a visual also.

Based on a very similar story told by the Tennessee Blue Cross and Blue Shield a few years ago. In their story only 25K of their 300K forms had to be worked by hand.

Years ago the government wrestled with teleworking. Some early adopters found jobs that could easily be performed at home just as well as they could be in the office. These innovative managers appreciated not every job could telework, but when used correctly, telework improved the office environment. The same can be said for the handful of managers who are not asking their life-long learners to take RPA training on our Academy platform. Free and experiential pockets of reskilled employees are developing robots for agencies. The managers/leaders are learning when and where to apply their RPA band-aid. Thanks to the band-aid that is RPA the team in the example above just hit a homerun. No overtime, no disgruntled employees, no incorrect data, and no panic all thanks to your robot band-aid.

Not using RPA to its full potential across the enterprise results in a limited ROI.

But RPA Can Be So Much More

Recently my wife hurt herself requiring shoulder surgery. Five small incisions later the doctor was glad to say this modern robotic surgery is going to give her full use of her shoulder. It did not require the significant surgery it took just a few years back and the outcome is full mobility. As we left he did remind us of one thing: use a band-aid. Yes, in a major surgery band-aids are still used to cover incisions to protect them and make the healing process more complete.

When your CIO is swamped with non-standard changes, unexpected virus emergencies, yet another of the rarely used COTS products needing testing and upgrades across the universe, and a backlog of incident tickets, you can benefit from the permanency of RPA. From DISA to MDA to NASA's Shared Services Center, I never heard a CIO boast they are over staffed and are not able to spend their budget. Nor did lines of business ever say we are so automated we can almost run "lights out."

What I did hear was more akin to this:

What is commonly heard is the Technology Review Board: Met today and prioritized all 87 change requests and was able to allocate resources for 31 projects for the upcoming fiscal year. Your idea was submitted at the data call conducted at the beginning of the previous quarter thus you now have waited four months to be told the idea for efficiently improving your team is not on the list. Even if it were you would probably have been number 31 in the priority so you likely wait 16 months or more for your automation. Sixteen months of asking your staff to reconcile purchase cards, scan documents and store them all day, to look in three databases for 12 derivatives of a person's name.

If RPA is a band-aid, who is responsible for it? Yes, RPA is a business tool. Yes, FITARA rightly places ownership of the servers, the ITSec and network squarely on the shoulders of the CIO. Yet FITARA does not suggest business processes are also owned by the CIO. An agency that accept an "iTunes store" posture with respect to RPA could easily find a significant number of its life-long learners and challenge them to automate some of the 56 tasks our example could not account for based on the CIO's budget.
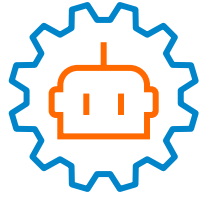
"Yes, RPA is a band-aid, but also so much more—a Swiss Army Knife."

Contact UiPath today to get the most out of your RPA investment.

GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

(844) 432-0455

uipath.com

RPA, when used by organizations with an "Automation First" strategy and democratized on every desktop is the band-aid that both protects the enterprise and allows for the creativity of every employee to boost the agency's mission.

Using RPA to its Full Potential

Over the past 50 years we have gone from almost no technology to the Internet of Things (IoT), and as technology has advanced, humans have been forced to take on more and more mundane, robotic work to make that technology function. RPA allows us to begin reversing the trend of human as robots. We are turning the ship to free your staff to engage with citizens in need of help longer, not fear that participation in intra- and inter- agency meetings means backlog, and finally deliver their mission the way they have always felt it needed to be delivered.

Yes, RPA is a band-aid, but also so much more—a Swiss Army Knife. For years in my role as a Deputy Operations Lead with a joint task force in Key West, as Operations lead in Huntsville, AL with the Missile Defense Agency or as Deputy CIO at the NASA Shared Services Center we bought software that performed a specific function; often using some to most of its capabilities. A tremendous amount of budget was spent trying to learn the software, struggling with the difficult installations, and engaging in stakeholders to convince them via change management to use this new quick and easy tool. Other than the enterprise ticketing system, almost all other software was procured for a siloed line of business. It was never uncommon to hear a vendor at their annual visit to discuss renewal of their software for them to remind me we were only using a fraction of the tools capabilities. I would ask the line of business why not do and use more only to hear we are comfortable with how we are using it. No malice, no fraud, no waste, no abuse, just comfort.

What makes RPA different is we have always bought software to do one thing. That software's power, strength and value was vertical in nature. RPA's power is vertical and horizontal, and should be used as such. We should not have accepted comfort before and we can ill afford it today. Not using RPA to its full potential across the enterprise results in a limited ROI.