Intelligent Automation Will Drive the Future Workforce

MARKET TRENDS REPORT

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Executive Summary

When people think about automation, they often assume it's a zero-sum game: The work once done by humans is now done by technology.

But this assumption misses the greater potential offered by today's intelligent automation (IA): a hybrid workforce in which human workers collaborate with digital workers to enable humans to work more effectively — and with greater satisfaction. Additionally, it serves as an accelerator for digital transformation, allowing systems, processes and people to collaborate across departments and agencies, and even governmentwide.

Traditionally, robotic process automation (RPA) was focused on automating routine tasks, like onboarding new employees, in the style of robotic desktop automation (RDA). RDA can be installed on a single machine for generating reports or automating Excel spreadsheet processing. But intelligent automation, which is RPA enhanced with technologies such as machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI), can do considerably more.

The future is now, and a hybrid workforce offers more: more security, more capabilities, more control and more transparency. It's been proven time and again that leveraging a digital workforce has gifted the public sector the ability to "do more with less."

A hybrid workforce that works across environments can enable agencies to handle complex, enterprisewide challenges and increase organizational efficiency. It can also address agencies' aging workforces and the steady loss of intellectual capital to the private sector.

To learn more about strategically implementing intelligent automation department- and agencywide, GovLoop teamed with Blue Prism, a recognized leader of IA. This report will examine the challenges agencies face in adopting IA, the steps they can take to overcome them and the benefits IA can deliver.

By The Numbers

63%

say their agency could benefit from the use of intelligent automation.

38%

say their agency is currently using intelligent automation.

110%

is the amount that federal agencies' automation deployed between 2019 and 2020 increased.

195%

is the increase in annualized hours saved by those deployments.

50%

of agencies will struggle to scale AI and IA solutions without an enterprisewide AI strategy.

82%

of federal executives expect employees to work remotely at least three days a week after the COVID-19 pandemic.

54%

of employees believe they could save 240 hours annually — or two hours daily — through automation.

$20.73 billion

is the projected market for IA by 2026, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about **12%**.

"CIOs [are looking] for ongoing AI opportunities, whether that is using RPA to automate routine elements of workflow processes, strengthening cybersecurity efforts or thoroughly combing through public assistance applications for signs of fraud."

– The National Association of State Chief Information Officers' (NASCIO) "Digital Government Rising"

Intelligent Automation and Tomorrow's Hybrid Workforces

Challenge: Insufficient Talent and Resources

Elastic, highly scalable cloud infrastructures — and the layers of complexity they bring — make a compelling case for additional automation. But agencies also have workforce and resource challenges that make adopting IA necessary. Furthermore, the heavy reliance on remote workforces compelled by the COVID-19 pandemic — and the mobile, hybrid workplace that agencies will eventually return to — are other reasons for automating more than simple tasks.

Demand exceeds capacity: As offices around the world closed their doors due to COVID-19, the demand for online services grew, pressuring agencies to improve their operations and enhance constituents' online experiences. But many agencies at the federal, state and local levels, bound by tight budgets and skills shortages, were already working at capacity. As demand increased, citizen satisfaction declined.

The burden of technical debt: A persistent drag on any agency's digital transformation is the amount of critical IT resources that are tied up in managing legacy systems. Outdated, siloed systems prevent agencies from easily accessing, analyzing and sharing their data, hindering their ability to increase efficiencies and improve services.

Cybersecurity in the crosshairs: Security is always a top concern for agencies, and it becomes more critical as their infrastructures grow beyond on-premise systems into the cloud and out to the edge. Agencies at all levels have an urgent need to strengthen their cybersecurity postures, especially by reducing human error, which is the primary cause of 95% of security breaches.

Solution: Intelligent Automation

Intelligent automation makes it possible for agencies to deploy solutions that address very technical challenges while also integrating seamlessly with how employees work.

The evolution of automation: IA represents the next step in automation, working holistically with human employees and digital workers to create efficiencies across the enterprise. It builds on the basic automation of rote tasks, as seen with RDA, and the expanded ability of RPA to extract and process data across systems. IA incorporates RPA with technologies such as AI, ML and natural language processing to automate entire processes and workflows. It can improve the citizen experience — through better contact center support, intelligent case management, efficient service delivery and personalized experiences — with "multi-threaded" digital workers capable of multiple tasks and processes as opposed to working on a one-to-one ratio.

Employing a hybrid workforce: A key ingredient of IA is its integration with a hybrid workforce of human and digital workers to collaborate on operations ranging from service requests to cybersecurity. Digital workers are multi-tasking software robots capable of managing repetitive, tedious tasks and handling complex questions, such as analyzing historical workloads to optimize workflows. They can, for example, provision virtual machines in accordance with demand, giving agencies more flexible scalability in the cloud.

Efficiency and getting stuff done: As society moves inevitably toward the conditions making up the future of work, the fundamental concept of getting stuff done (GSD) is emerging as an essential principle. With GSD a priority, the overriding consideration becomes selecting the proper combination of resources at hand (both human and digital). IA also allows managers to distribute work more efficiently — letting digital workers handle routine tasks and freeing humans for more mission-focused activities.

Best Practices for Adopting Intelligent Automation

Preparing for IA

Implementing IA involves a fundamental shift in how agencies approach IT operations. As with any enterprisewide change, it works best from the top down and requires that contracting procedures are in place to accommodate the change. Senior leadership should ensure that policies and procedures are in place for incorporating IA and that they have made a digital workforce a priority.

Changing the Culture

IA is part of a cultural shift toward a hybrid workforce. It uses the latest technology to enhance operations, increase efficiencies and improve services, which involves more than technology. The GSD paradigm, for instance, should be viewed as a human workforce transformation project — as part of building a 21st century workforce — versus a solely technical IT project.

Oftentimes change sparks opposition. Barriers could arise when adopting intelligent automation, so organizations should plan for them.

- **Fear:** Provide various forms of education and data-driven statistics.
- **Employee alienation:** Involve employees in the process from the start and keep them informed throughout.
- **Bolstering excitement:** Incorporate creative ways to humanize your digital workforce that include employee participation.
- **Disappointment:** Set realistic goals and expectations; have a clear plan.
- **Job takeover:** Hire from within.
- **Low morale:** Tap into people's emotions with success stories and personal goals.

Contracting for the Future

The requirements for RFPs or RFIs for automated systems are still in the early stages. Government should be sure to allow IA-related factors on its solicitations. For example, contracting officers should ask a bidder offering digital labor questions, such as what percentages of human and digital workers they are proposing. Preparing for IA and DW solicitations and proposals should be a priority, since agencies are most likely going to be doing a lot more of them. Many don't have the knowledge in-house to implement and maintain an IA workforce, so partnering with a provider that has the right tools and experience will likely be effective in making the transition.

Strengthening Security

IA can enable significant improvement in cybersecurity, including in these key areas:

- **Application inventory tracking:** By automating the discovery and classification of sensitive data, IA can ensure data flows between legacy and new systems. Artificial intelligence and machine learning can further automate risk classifications. This not only eliminates the element of human error, but it improves compliance with programs that can run with perfect accuracy 24/7.
- **Data loss detection:** Easily created digital workers, deployed and orchestrated in the IA platform, can discover potential data loss and kick-start new security controls to correct problems and prevent further loss.
- **Threat exposure:** IA improves detection and response times in the event of security breaches, and automatically deploys security controls when vulnerabilities are discovered.

Case Study: County Streamlines Arrests With RPA

A police department in a southwestern city with a population of over 1 million people was experiencing a serious bottleneck when booking arrestees, effectively double-booking them in time-consuming processes across two systems that were isolated for security and compliance reasons.

At the time of an arrest, a deputy would spend an average of 45 minutes entering the suspect's personal information and the charges against them into their cruiser's onboard computer. After arriving at the jailhouse, detention officers spent another 20 minutes transferring the data to the jail's system as part of the end-to-end booking procedure.

To speed up the process — and get deputies back on the street more quickly — the county implemented intelligent automation. A digital worker gathers data from the deputy's cruiser system and transfers it to the jailhouse system while meeting security and compliance requirements. The automated process creates the arrest entry and notifies jailhouse clerks, who can then prepare for the arrestee's arrival. The second round of data entry into the jailhouse system is avoided altogether.

Over the course of one recent year, the county's deputies arrested 10,366 individuals and realized savings of at least 6,000 hours spent on the booking process, translating to about $180,000. In addition to saving time and money, the possibility of human error was eliminated from at least one part of the process.

HOW BLUE PRISM HELPS

Blue Prism has long been a leader in intelligent automation, having implemented IA solutions at scale for businesses and agencies around the globe. The company's robotic operating model (ROM™) takes 20 years of experience and provides a strategic method for building a foundation and managing a digital workforce to augment the work of agencies' human employees.

The ROM provides a highly scalable technical architecture that can accommodate agencies' growth strategies; the framework allows an agency to create a digital workforce in line with its organizational strategy. It helps assess and select the processes to build a sustainable automation pipeline and implement governance for a controlled and secured digital workforce, based on applying the appropriate roles and skills.

Blue Prism's expertise, coupled with its intelligent automation platform and ROM, can put agencies on the path to building a digital workforce.

Learn more: blueprism.com/products/rom

Conclusion

Automating processes doesn't do enough to relieve employees of their workloads or improve efficiencies.

But intelligent automation allows agencies to develop fully fledged digital workforces supplementing their human employees. When this happens, it can lighten employees' workloads and boost their job satisfaction agencywide.

Hybrid workforces can also be part of a holistic effort to solve complex, enterprisewide challenges and streamline operations. They allow agencies' leadership teams to align work with the appropriate internal resources, including a stable of multi-tasking, intelligent digital workers that will make human employees more efficient and effective. Ultimately, agencies are empowered to recruit and retain the workforces of the future.

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ABOUT BLUE PRISM

Blue Prism is the global leader in intelligent automation for the enterprise, transforming the way work is done. At Blue Prism, we have users in over 170 countries and more than 2,000 businesses, including Fortune 500 and public sector organizations, that are creating value with new ways of working, unlocking efficiencies, and returning millions of hours of work back into their businesses. Our intelligent digital workforce is smart, secure, scalable and accessible to all; freeing up humans to re-imagine work.

To learn more visit www.blueprism.com and follow us on Twitter @blue_prism and on LinkedIn.

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ABOUT GOVLOOP

GovLoop's mission is to "connect government to improve government." We aim to inspire public-sector professionals by serving as the knowledge network for government. GovLoop connects more than 300,000 members, fostering cross-government collaboration, solving common problems and advancing government careers. GovLoop is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to connect and improve government.

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