

Atos Breakout session
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Using AI to Transform Automation

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Abstract:

Automation is not new. Since the start of civilisation we have been using tools to save manual effort be it in the field, factory or office. In the world of business technology, approaches to automation have been disrupted over the last few years by Robotic Process Automation (RPA). At its simplest this is akin to the robot in the factory which does repetitive, often mundane work in the same way as a semi-skilled employee. But just as robots in factories become more sophisticated over the last decades, RPA software robots have also transformed but over an even shorter timescale. Today both hardware and software robots work faster than humans; work more reliably; produce fewer errors; and provide safer working environments. They both take up less real estate (space); are quicker to train; and can work nearly continuously. Yet AI is beginning to transform software robots to a new level: developing capabilities in awareness, learning, and controversially cognition. At the same time, organisations like Atos are offering these new intelligent software robots to our clients in more commercially attractive offers – we can offer intelligent automation which not only can deliver the above benefits, but is also more flexible and cheaper than the human equivalent. And it can almost be infinitely scaled, allowing our clients to offer new levels of service to their customers.

This paper explores how AI is transforming RPA. It demonstrates how more and more human work can now be automated, with fewer exceptions that still have to be handled manually. It explores the developing capabilities of RPA to handle unstructured and semi-structured data, voice, vision, sound, and motion. It also explores how AI can help RPA learn, both to improve the automation and to improve the process performance. Lastly it explores cognition in automation to determine if it just marketing hype or a useful framework to understand where AI may next transform automation.

Finally, to keep our perspective, we reflect that whilst automation isn't new, Atos is already using AI to transform our automation services we use and offer to our clients. AI isn't science fiction.

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