

Intelligent Automation – a technology for today

While Intelligent Automation (IA), incorporating Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), may seem like a futuristic concept it is already saving valuable time and money in NHS hospitals. RPA could, in this instance, be referred to as *Repetitive Process Automation*, as the successful implementations tend to take repetitive processes, with little or no cognitive requirements, and automate them leaving NHS staff free to spend time on more clinically focussed activities.

The overall aims of this technology are:

- Increase efficiency and productivity
- Remove errors
- Improve staff morale and employee engagement
- Enhance patient outcomes & improve services

For example, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) has two impressive projects as part of their 'Making Time Matter' initiative. The first automates the process of collating all documents and tests relating to each GP referral, extracting these documents into a single PDF for hospital clinical use, in a fraction of the manual process time. The Trust handles 2,000 referrals per week and the cost saving is estimated at £220K per year and supports the 'Paper switch off' programme.

The second addresses the perennial bugbear - Did Not Attends! (DNAs). According to NHS England 8 million DNAs occurred in 2017/18 nationally. With each appointment costing the NHS c. £120, that equates to almost £1 billion worth of appointments missed in 1 year. In ESNEFT, the Blue Prism Cloud IA platform automated the exchange between the Trust's text reminder system and the Patient Administration System and allowed the reallocation of cancelled slots to other patients. In just 8 weeks, the solution prevented 1,356 appointments from being missed – saving £217K – and avoided wasting £2.1 million each year and cut waiting lists. And this is just for one hospital!

“When you think that we’re seeing these benefits in just one of our hospitals in our Trust, you can begin to imagine the impact that this type of services would have if deployed more widely in the NHS”, **Darren Atkins, Chief Technology Officer, (Artificial Intelligence & Automation) ESNEFT.**

Gift of Time – [TOPOL Review 2019](#)

The review focusses on how technological and other developments (including genomics, artificial intelligence, digital medicine and robotics) are likely to change the roles and

functions of clinical staff in all professions over the next two decades to ensure safer, more productive, more effective and more personal care for patients

2020 will see the focus on releasing 'hours back to the organisation'. And this is a clear directive in the TOPOL Review where he speaks of the importance of the 'Gift of time'. Technologies are not out to replace humans but augment them, giving staff more time to do what they are good at such as care, promoting deeper interaction with patients.

We are in an age of burgeoning data from virtually every source – primary, secondary and community care – and it's only going to increase. In order to tackle the increasing pressure on the NHS workforce, it is vital that simple, repetitive tasks are automated. And with automation comes the inbuilt data validation and accuracy, and inherent cyber security, that is so foundational in any cross-discipline data aggregation.

We all know we are in a time of an aging population with its increase in long-term conditions and the stress that is putting on our health service. The template for care must change and a number of leading NHS Trusts are already embracing this new technology in order to release pressure on resources. TOPOL also puts the focus on the 'Patients as Partners' and prevention, health and wellbeing – rather than the cure. He mentions that AI will transform patient-generated data into clinically useful information and empower patients to manage their own health or seek appropriate care. Patient benefit should be the driving force behind AI and Robotics design.

The skills of the workforce will also need to change. The NHS must build skills in data provenance, curation and governance and enhance the understanding of ethical consideration. Data automation, consolidation, integration and AI are vital to our future and to the support of our healthcare services and clinical staff.

Disruptive technologies - a platform for change

Automation and AI should now be considered vital platforms for the fundamental changes the NHS needs to make. Fortunately, they are already proving their worth. And the new Public Sector [Digital Transformation Framework](#) for the procurement of digital transformation solutions, primed by [Fortrus](#), readily embraces these disruptive technologies including one of our partners [Blueprism Cloud](#). The transformation framework offers best-of-breed solutions that can offer agile, innovative technologies that address real-life issues and enable us to future-proof our NHS.

To learn more about the Digital Transformation Framework or to book an Intelligent Automation demo please contact me directly:

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About Blue Prism Cloud

The Blue Prism Cloud Digital Workforce is a highly flexible SaaS based intelligent automation platform. It provides enterprises with access to a pool of intelligent digital workers straight from the cloud. These AI-enabled digital workers automate the tasks and processes that slow down your employees so that your team can do more and achieve more. With frictionless cloud deployment and as-a-service delivery, it requires no investment in infrastructure provides a fast route to ROI and a firm foundation for a scalable automation strategy that drives business transformation. www.blueprism.com

About Fortrus

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