

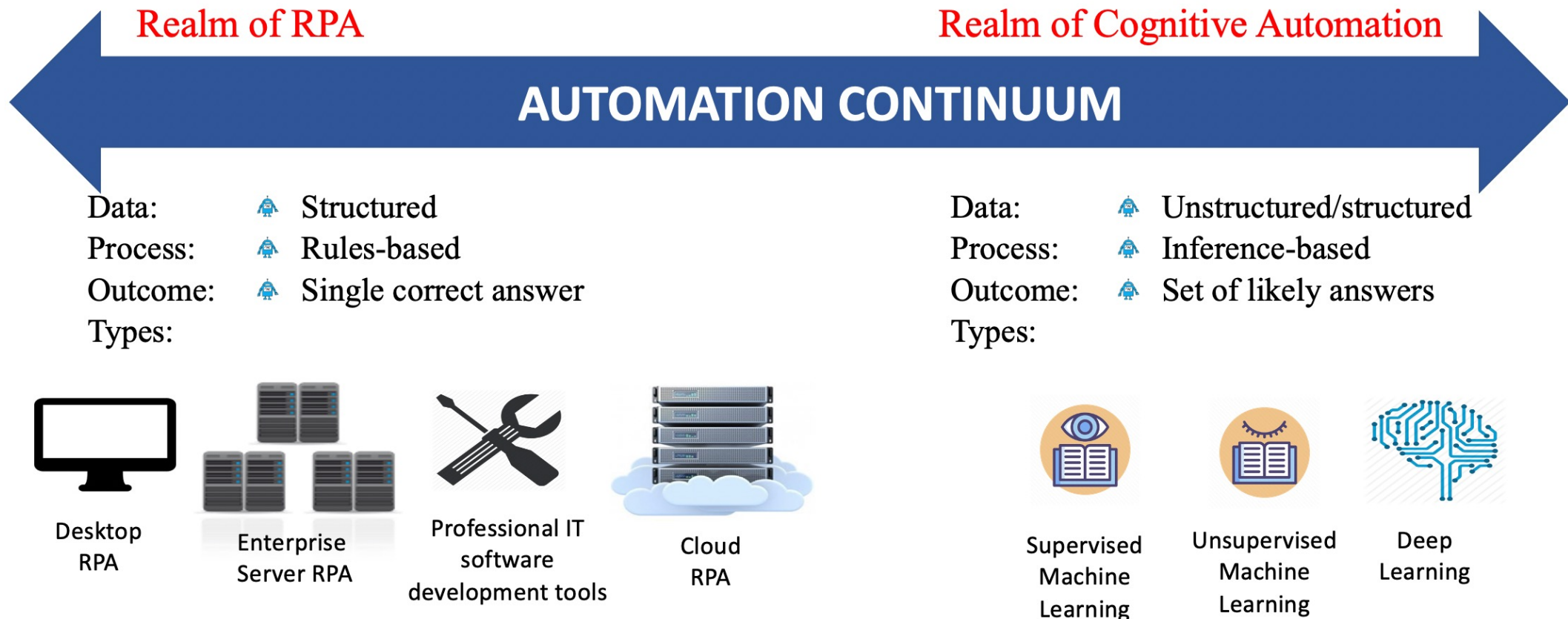
Robotic Process Automation In Simple Terms: Background and Use

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What is Robotic Process Automation?

- RPA for short
 - Office automation
 - Performs rule-based tasks
 - Repetitive, routine, and tedious tasks
 - Examples: Process transactions, manipulate data, trigger responses, communicate with other digital systems
- The technology
 - Software applications that mimic human actions taken on a computer
 - Does not need to be integrated into the IT infrastructure; its not part of the IT infrastructure but sits on top
 - Works across application, non-intrusive, and utilizes existing infrastructure

Where does RPA fit in intelligent automation?



Lacity, M., & Willcocks, L. (2021). Becoming Strategic with Intelligent Automation. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 20(2), 169-182.

Benefits/Limitations

- Benefits
 - Accuracy
 - Performance – 24/7
 - Speed
 - Cost savings
 - Easy to configure; does not require programming skills
 - Frees employees to do higher level work
- Limitations – will be overcome at some point
 - Cannot read non-electronic documents
 - Different formats of information complicate deployment
 - Business processes must be optimized before deployment to get the most benefit

How is RPA used?

- RPA can be used across a wide variety of functions
 - Example: A supplier sends an invoice; information from that document must be entered into an Enterprise Resource Processing system
- Common areas of application
 - Finance
 - Human Resources
 - Purchasing
 - Auditing and compliance
 - Data analytics
 - Reporting

US Federal Government Use of RPA

- Presidential Executive Order, 2018 – Shifting From Low Value Work to High Value Work
- General Services Administration sponsored RPA Community of Practice
 - Published an RPA Program Playbook in Jan 2020; includes a formal maturity model. <https://digital.gov/guides/rpa/rpa-playbook/>
 - 2020 State of Federal RPA Report Nov 2020
 - 23 agencies had deployed about 460 automations
 - 2021 State of Federal RPA Report in work now
 - Significant work done to move RPA forward in US federal government
 - List of federal RPA use cases <https://digital.gov/guides/rpa/rpa-use-case-inventory/>

Federal Playbook and Privacy

- One of the 10 capabilities areas



Privacy - While Security/ATO and Credentialing are policy challenges largely addressed at the program or enterprise-level, privacy concerns around RPA are specific to individual automations. All agencies have privacy policies in place to govern how data is stored, accessed, and used. The applicability of those privacy policies will be specific to the capabilities and functionality of individual automations designed by the RPA Program.

In general, privacy thresholds for RPA depend on the sensitivity of the data processed by the automation. The RPA program should work with the CPO, Senior Agency Official for Privacy, CIO or technology management shop to design clear policies for interacting with data at each relevant sensitivity level. For automations that handle Personally Identifiable Information (PII), formal Privacy Threshold Assessments (PTA) may be required to identify potential risks and ensure adequate safeguards. For less sensitive data, a Privacy Threshold Assessment (PTA) could be populated with approvals by the Senior Agency Official for Privacy (SAOP).

“privacy concerns are linked to individual automations”

”privacy thresholds depend on the sensitivity of the data processed by the automation”

“work with the CPO....to design clear policies for interacting with data at each relevant sensitivity level”

PRIVACY POLICY

MATURITY MODEL ALIGNMENT

Emerging RPA Program

LEVEL 2

- Pilot Privacy Assessment

Impactful RPA Program

LEVEL 3

- Advanced Privacy Assessments
- Documented Policies and Procedures

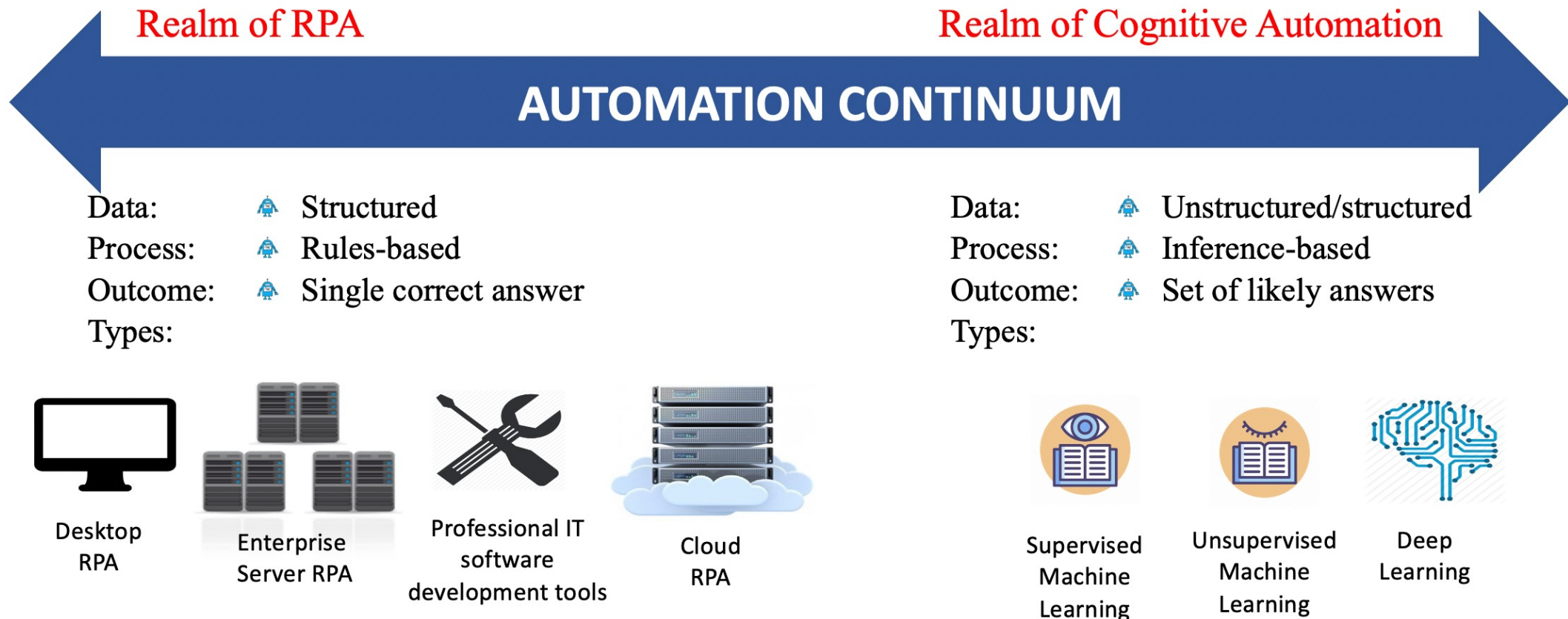
Federal Agencies and Privacy

- Two-tier approach in their privacy policy for RPA
 - Tier 1 – broad review of privacy implications
 - Target system/application descriptions, capabilities, and functionalities.
 - Categories of data within the system (by sensitivity level and type).
 - Existing system users and proposed additional users.
 - Interfaces between target systems and other agency systems/applications.
 - Current security and information safeguards monitoring system use and access.
 - Tier 2 – includes a more rigorous Privacy Impact Assessment
 - Established limits on data sharing for relevant fields manipulated/disseminated by the automation.
 - Procedures and controls in place to ensure privacy standards are met.
 - Monitoring mechanisms and compliance requirements.
 - Data quality and potential verification/validation concerns.

What should we be thinking about?

- RPA has a place in many organizations; must do the upfront work to understand where/if it makes sense for you
 - What processes are you automating?
 - How do those processes lead to decisions?
 - How do you ensure transparency and accountability?
 - What are your privacy policies and how are they enacted?
- As you combine RPA with other types of automation, you move further to the right on the intelligent automation continuum

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