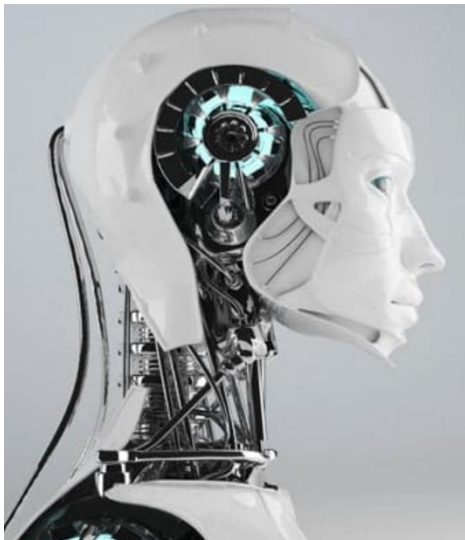


Robotics, AI and Machine Learning – Are you ready?

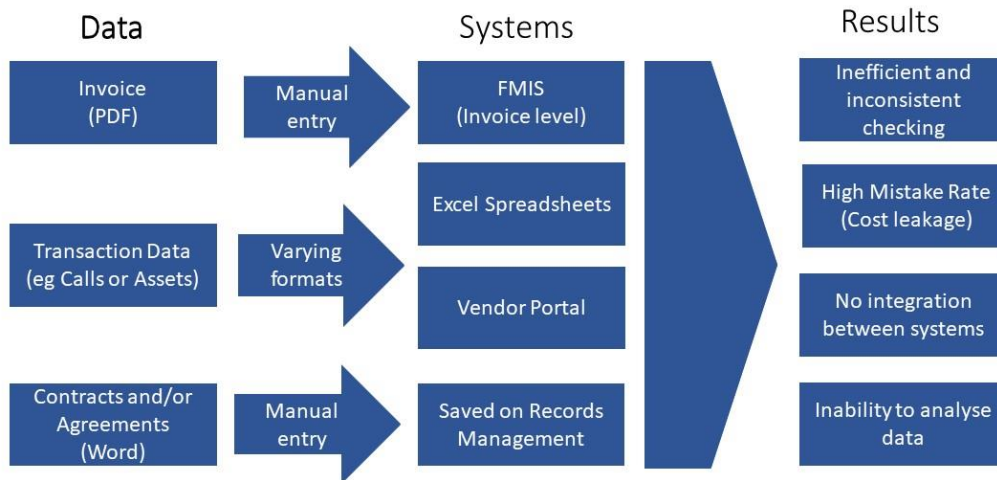
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With the emergence of robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning as cost effective tools of trade in the office, there are numerous challenges for organisations to navigate in obtaining real value without wasting time and money and still maintaining a laser focus on the core business and clients.

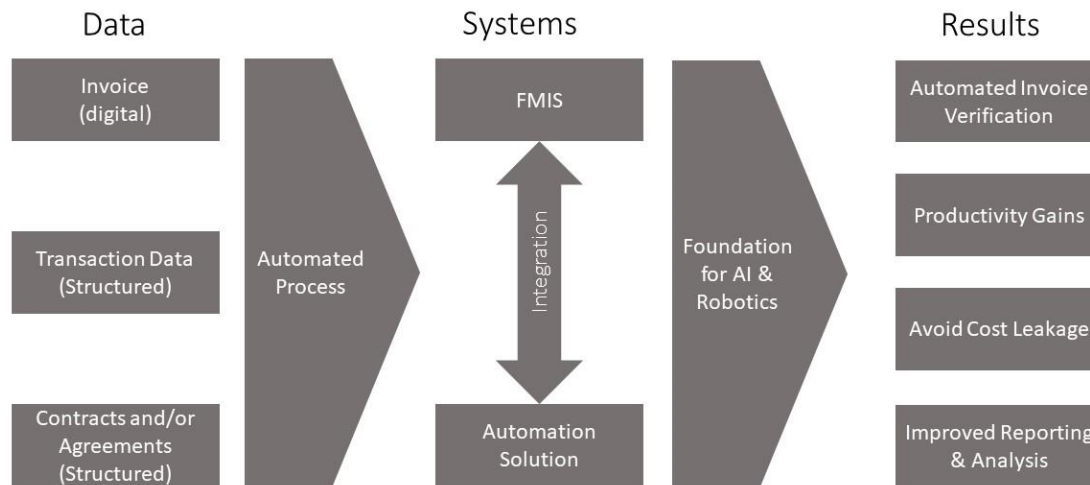
Taking contract and invoice management for outsourced services such as ICT as an example, usually managed through your FMIS (Financial Management Information System) or through specialist software. The following view is reasonably typical from my experience.

Current State – Outsourcing Agreement Example



So we see that the invoice and support data is provided and accessed in a variety of ways. Even using vendor portals can be time consuming and extracting the data for analysis can be a complicated and exhaustive process. So what does all of this have to do with Robotics or AI? Well one of the first steps in being ready to take advantage of these technological advances is to digitally transform the corporate functions. Using the above example, having the contracts digitized including the pricing catalogue and SLA's, having automated structured data feeds from source data systems, including the vendor transaction data to support the monthly invoice all start to get organisations ready to take advantage of AI and robotics, as illustrated in the following view.

Future State – Foundation for AI & Robotics



By taking these important steps, even without AI or robotic ambitions, significant benefits can be realised relatively quickly.

Once you have an digitized structure established (the topic of previous articles: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/invoice-reconciliation-management-benefits-from-data-brett-petersen/>), you are then in a position to both exploit and harvest the opportunities from the freed up resources now available both as savings and to re-invest to improve competitiveness and also the client experience.

With robotics, you can automate the processes that usually require manual interactions, such as logging into different systems to key in data or obtain information. Again though, I would question that further remediation work in terms of establishing a truly service oriented architecture would further minimise the work needed by robotics.

Robotics performing current manual processes is just trying to make the ‘horse run faster’. A new way of thinking is required that looks across the entire organisation and the ways things are done.

With AI and machine learning, you can have systems understand new data structures on their own and then adapt processes automatically. These situations can amplify the risk of issues both in terms of volume and scale if the appropriate controls and business rules are not in place.

While I have only touched on this topic, I wanted to reflect on my thoughts of what I have been hearing from executives and leaders on how robotics, AI and machine learning will help their organisations, which in itself is a very forward thinking and optimistic sentiment. At the same time, this should be seen as a real opportunity to get the foundation ready.

If you would like to discuss further then please feel free to email, message or call me.