

Tips For Task Automation

Vincent DiPippo, founder and president of FOCUS24 (www.focus24.com), an IT infrastructure optimization consultancy, recommends you keep several concepts in mind when automating routine IT tasks.

- You will have better results automating a large number of simple tasks than trying to automate a few complex ones. Automating complex tasks is sometimes as complex to implement and keep running as the task you are trying to automate.
- Tasks that are being run on a regular basis (daily, weekly, or monthly) are good candidates for automation.
- Note the difference between automating the invocation of a task and the components of a task. The former involves having a task run at a specific time without intervention, which requires a task that is intelligent enough to know whether it should run, handle errors, log, and report on status. The latter involves automating a task that perhaps has dozens of steps by allowing the operator to invoke each step with a single mouse click.
- Documentation is essential. Infrastructures have the potential to have a large number of undocumented or even unknown tasks that are automated. While many still perform useful functions, the fact that they are completely unknown and do not usually survive infrastructure changes make them a cure worse than the disease.

Shukla says this allows your organization to become more proactive rather than reactive. “The speed at which organizations can move changes, and I tell people, if I just get this benefit for my organization, I would go for automation. Moving faster is worth a lot of money,” he says. **P**