

# AI and Automation in HR

## Short Stories from Veran's Vanguard Research



# Introduction

Human Resources, a department traditionally associated with high-volume administrative processes has become for some organisations a strategic and data-driven partner to the business. The introduction of smart technology such as Machine Learning, Robotic Process Automation and Chatbots has facilitated this evolution of HR for those who are up for the challenge.

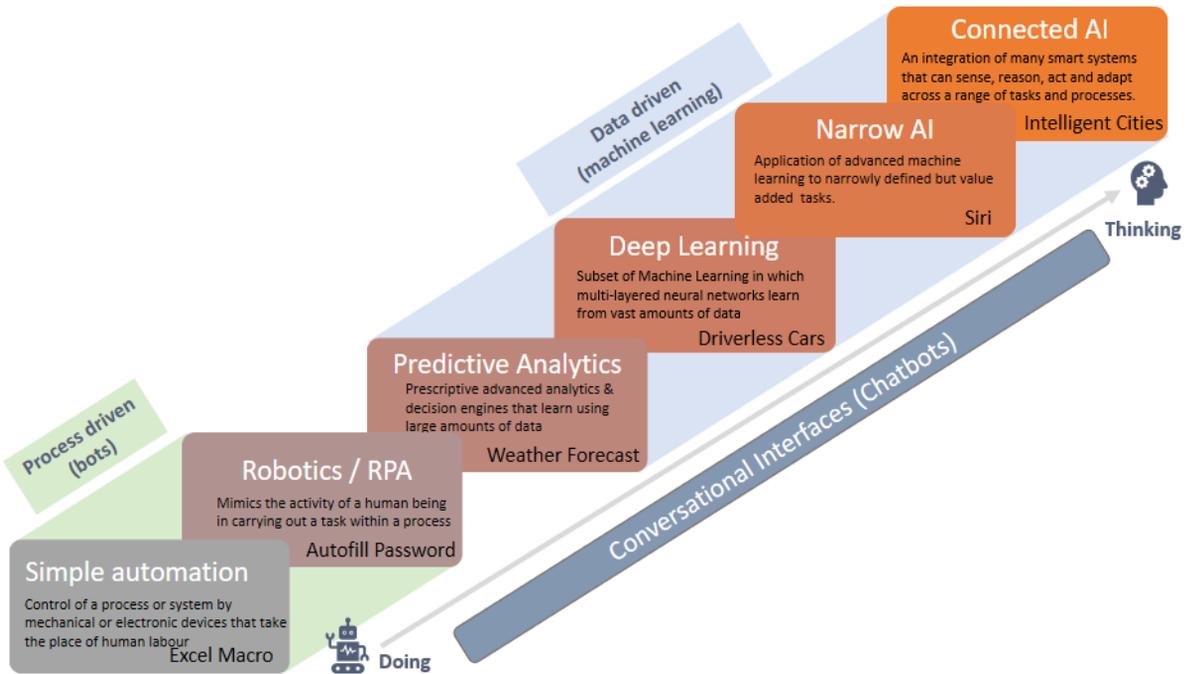
We have interviewed a range of innovative and inspiring leaders in Technology, HR, IT and beyond who we refer to as ‘the vanguard’; organisations who are making progressive steps towards leveraging emergent technology in the HR space. In true agile style, we’ll be publishing short stories [here](#) on our website, through a series of sprints every 2-4 weeks and we’d love to hear your comments and thoughts. Today we set the scene by explaining what we mean by AI, the key benefits realised by our vanguards, and the most common challenges our vanguards faced which we offer solutions for throughout our research.

## Who are our vanguards?



## What do we mean by AI?

There are many definitions and categorisations of AI but we see it as an umbrella term referring to the development of computer systems that are able to simulate intelligent behaviours. For the purpose of our upcoming short stories and to demystify the term 'AI', we've developed a 6-part definition;



The early stages of AI tend to focus on 'doing' *process-driven automation* where machines can be programmed to follow a specific set of instructions on a single data point or field. The next step Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is slightly more sophisticated and where we are seeing a lot of firms starting their AI in HR journey. RPA possesses an enhanced capability to complete rule-based and repetitive digital tasks in a way similar to how humans operate and can apply some logic and smarts to doing this.

The more advanced forms of AI can 'think' through *machine learning* by making inferences from data. In the most basic form, predictive analytics uses data to suggest future outcomes, trends, risks and opportunities. Deep learning builds on this by being able to learn from vast quantities or structured and unstructured data to expand its understanding and predictive capability.

The upper end of the scale involves Narrow and Connected AI which reflect a vision for the future more than anything, although there are pockets of truly intelligent software more commonly seen in academic research rather than everyday life. These systems can complete certain tasks at a level superior to humans and possess sensory functions to see, hear, make judgement and interact with society and with other smart systems. Finally, Chatbots, which are becoming popular within HR to answer FAQs or recruitment questions, provide a user-friendly interface or virtual HR team member as a front end to underlying machine learning and automation.

Our research found that the most commonly leveraged AI in HR is RPA, Predictive Analytics and Chatbots and where we refer to Automation in our short stories, we are referring to RPA.

## The Benefits of AI-powered HR

Although many of our vanguard organisations are relatively early in their AI journey, the benefits are already becoming clear. Here are some of our favourites and a taste of what's to come:



## The challenge of implementing Automation and AI in HR

As you can imagine, these benefits don't come easy and during our research and daily conversations with HR professionals, we identified 7 common challenges to getting started, embedding and scaling emergent technology. These are:

1. "Lack the budget"
2. "Lack of relevant knowledge and experience"
3. "We don't want to go first"
4. "AI & Automation aren't seen as essential"
5. "We are risk averse and worried about data security"
6. "Procurement won't allow us to buy new products from start-up vendors"
7. "We lack senior buy in and sponsorship"

We tackle all of these challenges in our short stories and hope you'll find inspiration and practical tips that you can leverage to get started on your own AI journey.

## Our unique experience combining HR Transformation with AI & Automation

Veran Performance is the largest independent HR and Finance transformation consultancy in the UK. We were founded in 2013 to close the gap between the expectations of a business transformation and the reality of what is delivered, through process, technology and people change. Being technology agnostic, we have a unique ability to deliver outcomes which where relevant are enabled by Cloud software, Robotic Process Automation and Chatbots. We work client side to upskill and support your team from strategy, technology selection, design, deployment and benefits realisation.

We also run two networks; [MyHRCareers](#) which connects 20,000 aspiring and inspiring HR Professionals through networking parties and workshops throughout the year, and [Financial Services HR & Compliance \(FSHRC\)](#); the largest and only HR and Compliance network for Financial Services. Through seminars and our benchmarking service, we connect over 200 regulated businesses and provide regulatory updates, advice and a forum for agreeing a consistent approach to regulation across the industry.

We'd love to hear what you think of our vanguard stories, so please get in touch with Becky at [becky@veranperformance.com](mailto:becky@veranperformance.com) or +44 7867 423662.