AACPS plus Workflow/RPA: When "Convergence" Creates New Islands of Automation

By Eric E Cohen

In my previous [blog entry](#), I brought up a topic with an acronym I coined, AACPS: "AI + Apps + Collaboration + Platform as a Service." I had not expected to have to expand on it so quickly. However, starting a Zoom meeting as a host today, I was notified of a new function in Zoom, or at least new to me: *Workflow Automation*. I haven't had the chance to do much with it yet, but it raises a number of questions in my mind.

What Was AACPS Again?

AACPS, in brief, was about a new "convergence" we are seeing, with generative AI (GenAI) as a catalyst. Let's begin with the "AI + Apps."

The AI tools are adding application-like functionality to their platforms, such as ChatGPT's Canvas for writing and coding, or Claude's Artefacts. With these in-solution applications, you are performing your writing or coding within the GenAI, rather than taking the results of your GenAI chat thread and copying it into Word or your coding tool. Likewise, the traditional word processor, spreadsheet or presentation tool is adding GenAI functionality directly into the product or, in the case of Copilot Chat for Microsoft 365, putting the applications under the control of the chatbot. The latter is perhaps starting to lead to the "Platform as a service" part.

Then we add "collaboration"; that's where Zoom or Microsoft Teams or one of the other screen sharing/voice/video tools and shared whiteboard becomes part of the mix. As a long-term user of Zoom, I've seen Zoom expand from the basic collaboration I've used it for to an increasingly weighed down environment. Third-party apps began the swelling, but now there are Notes, Docs and an environment that persists outside of sessions with channels, ongoing chats, scheduling and much more. This seems like they are trying to compete with project management tools such as Asana, Trello, Monday and the like. Is it competition though? Asana has a partnership with Zoom – https://asana.com/apps/zoom – so some kind of delineation must be maintained.

Back to Workflows

As I noted, I noticed Zoom added a feature called "Workflows" (or Workflow Automation), designed to bring automation directly into the Zoom platform. With a simple drag-and-drop interface and a starting library of templates, you can automate activities within the Zoom ecosystem and related third-party applications. As someone who teaches robotic process automation (RPA) with low code/no code solutions using UiPath StudioX, I found this intriguing.

From my initial exploration, Workflows could be a game changer for environments focused on Zoom as their centralized tool, simplifying tasks such as creating collaborative documents from the automated but static meeting summaries, or coordinating *ad hoc* activities within chat. While I'm still diving in, it's interesting to think about how this could streamline workflows for financial professionals that already use Zoom for much of their work.

It is a free trial (I am a paid user of Zoom; I don't know if it is accessible to free users) at the present time. I don't know what it might eventually cost, although nothing in Zoom is very expensive. While the functionality is meant to extend beyond the Zoom platform itself to third

party applications, I don't know how it will compare with Studio, Blue Prism, Power Automate or Automation Anywhere in flexibility, if there are plans beyond the no/low code managerial single use to more enterprise functionality, or the broader roadmap.

Have you had a chance to experiment with Zoom Workflows? What are your initial thoughts? Let's explore this new feature together!

More on Zoom's workflow automation at https://www.zoom.com/en/blog/workflow-automation-tips/ and https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0076049 .