Skan wants to “x-ray” your organization to present the telemetry of work

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The Situation: Process intelligence adoption continues to ramp up as enterprises hope to tackle both technical and process debt. Many vendors are coming to the market armed with process mining and discovery solutions to help, but Skan believes their approach to collecting data sets them apart from their peers.

The need for enterprises to understand their processes has never been greater, as the adoption of emerging technologies continues to grow. Redesigning and streamlining business processes and addressing organizational siloes are top of mind for many businesses today. Process intelligence continues to emerge as a key set of technologies in this space, bridging the divide of siloed initiatives to improve business operations. To that end, many startups have emerged to provide clients with better quality business process data and insights. Skan, a HFS Hot Vendor, is one such startup that takes a slightly different approach to helping their clients understand their processes.

Skan hopes to help clients 'X-Ray' their processes to provide actionable insights

Skan uses computer vision and data science to map, model, and manage hidden nuances of business processes – in fact their own leadership describe it as getting an X-Ray before surgery, and then using a smart watch for continuous monitoring post-surgery. In real terms, Skan leverages computer vision and deep learning to closely follow the digital footprint of the individuals in an organization, acting as a human auditor, observing, and recording every action. Once the initial data collection process has been completed, usually after 45 days, Skan provides enterprises with actionable insights at scale they can leverage to underpin their process optimization efforts. If we look at Exhibit 1, we can see the full suite of Skan's offerings, ranging from data capture all the way to deployment.

Further, adoption of Skan is intended to have zero disruptions, with zero-change integration on target systems and securities. It can operate on top of other existing software and is technology agnostic and can be used with any application. This is a simpler approach compared to many other process intelligence vendors in the market that often require lengthy implementation processes involving external consultants.

Exhibit 1: Skan's Process Intelligence offering spans 7 key areas

1. Data Capture

- UI-based process discovery using computer vision
- No requirement for any system

2. Process Insights

- Signature of work
- Real Time Analytics
- Detailed As-Is Process Maps (including long running processes, hierarchical process understanding, and detailed process variants)

3. Operational Insights

- Process Efficiency Metrics (utilization and throughput)
- Self Serve BI (combine Skan process data with business metrics and KPIs)
- Embedded PowerBI and Industry Dashboards

4. Advanced Analytics

- Opportunity Estimator
- Process Attributes Analytics
- Scenario simulation
- What/if analysis
- Predictive analytics/forecasting
- Conformance Analysis

5. Taking Action

- Automation Suitability Analysis
- RPA Export
- BPMN

6. Security and Privacy

- On-Prem deployment (No sensitive data leaves customer servers)
- Application white-listing
- Redaction controls
- Network Isolation (Outbound connections only)

7. Deployment

- Enterprise Scalability (Up to 10K users on a single server)
- Centralized agent deployment via SCCM

Source: Skan.ai, 2022

Skan looks to further differentiate itself through its approach to collecting data

While traditional process discovery solutions do a great job of helping clients drill-down and develop a deep understanding of specific processes or tasks through computer vision, they are not without limitations. These tools sometimes have difficulty scaling, assessing processes over a long period of time, and analysing the 'bigger picture' of the larger processes or process groups.

To tackle these challenges, Skan's product combs through the entire series of tasks being performed on a screen; every click, application opened, event logged, and links them together as sequence of events. It does this by monitoring screen recordings, as opposed to the traditional screenshot method favoured by some peers. By leveraging Natural Language Processing (NLP) it is able to assign each screen a signature, allowing their AI to tie tasks together across multiple different screens, ensuring enterprises get 100% visibility, and developing an understanding of what the user was actually trying to do end-to-end across screens, activities, applications and days. Finally, Skan can even identify and cluster smaller similar activities into tasks, pooling multiple tasks together into 'meta tasks' – helping enterprises understand the 'bigger picture' of their organizations processes.

But Skan doesn't stop there – continuous monitoring allows enterprises to see the impact of their changes and continually improve

Another differentiator for Skan is their focus on continuous monitoring and continuous improvement. While many process discovery products have an initial monitoring period to collect data, which is then used to implement change to drive process improvement, their scope often end there. But this is where the "smart watch" element of Skan comes in to play. Thanks to its un-invasive nature, Skan will continue to monitor an organization's task flow, even post-improvement insights into post-change value and ROI calculations, to identify any future opportunities for further process improvement, re-engineering, automation and even training initiatives. For clients, this means they can be confident their organization made the right changes to processes, procedures and technologies and will continue to receive quantifiable insights into variations of work being performed, leading to further enhancements where necessary.

The Bottom Line: Skan's pitch of presenting the "telemetry of work" is an interesting proposition that will have an impact on the future development and use of process intelligence technologies.

Skan is working hard to further develop a process intelligence tool that goes beyond point-in-time projects – and there are early signs of success. However, they need to ensure their people and technology are equipped to handle the most complex of processes at scale as they continue to grow their engagements with sizable clients like Citi, Optum, and AXA. Whether its visuals of x-rays, smart watches, or telemetry, this much is true - the average Global 2000 organization needs all the help it can get when it comes to un-complicating workflows to make it easier to do business.

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Sam Duncan is a Practice Leader at HFS, based in Cambridge UK. He graduated from Bournemouth University with a degree in economics, throughout which he took a particular interest in macroeconomics, mainly how the evolution of technology accelerated globalization. Throughout his education he also spent some time studying law, accounting and investment management.

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