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Michael J. Cuellar
North Carolina Central University, mcuellar@georgiasouthern.edu

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Michael J. Cuellar
North Carolina Central University
mcuellar@nccu.edu

ABSTRACT
The IT Artifact (ITA) has largely been implicitly conceptualized in IS research (Orlikowski and Iacono 2001). This paper proposes a theoretical conceptualization from a Critical Realist standpoint. First, it reviews the extant literature and identifies gaps. The, it defines the IT artifact as an assemblage of IT hardware, software and networking equipment designed to extend human capabilities in processing symbols situated in a particular work system. Further, it proposes that the IT artifact be considered as a real technological entity with limited malleability and interpretive flexibility. Furthermore, it proposes that the ITA is a non-reflexive actor which can act as a tool, proxy or novelty (Collins and Kusch 1998) in relationship to people. Additional work needs to be performed develop a theory of how this social integration is achieved. Additional implications are drawn for research and practice.

Keywords
IT Artifact, Critical Realism, Artifact as an actor,