**TREO**
Technology, Research, Education, Opinion

# Rethinking IT artifacts

## From desktop computers to transhumanism

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The Information Systems (IS) literature reflected on the concept of the IT artifact sporadically and superficially, until a seminal work (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001) took a stance to theorize directly about the concept of IT artifacts. In it, its authors argued that IT artifact tends to disappear from the view, ends up being taken for granted, or presumed to be unproblematic once the system is built and installed. Although this work still influences IS literature, a glimpse over the recent publications in the leading IS journals testifies that the IS community is not settled on the nature and properties potential emerging IT artifacts like artificial intelligence, human augmentations, transhumanism, brain-computer interfaces and etc.

To compound the problem, IT artifacts are still "desperately missing" from the current literature and IS as a field tends to bypass the emerging technologies that could be understood as IS/IT artifacts. I believe this situation stems from the obsolete understanding of the IT artifacts and its potentials. Despite the notion that IS field tends to neglect its core research artifact, or at least its central premises and potentials, novel research efforts (e.g. Faulkner & Runde, 2019) continue this discussion, albeit with a different focus.

With that in mind, I would like to use the ICIS TREO venue to candidate a new potential topic for future IS research – the topic of rethinking IT artifacts from the classical (mis)understanding to the levels where the theoretical instruments of the IS field integrate social, biological and technological artifacts into a comprehensive theoretical mechanism and nomenclature. This redesigned set of theoretical instruments could, ideally, allow the field to progress towards deepening our understanding and ability to understand phenomena taking place at the forefronts of artificial intelligence, human augmentations, brain-computer interfaces, transhumanism (Kurzweil, 2000, 2006) and potential technological singularity (Vinge, 1993).

**References**

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