This is the fourth issue in the inaugural year of the International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking. This issue is a collection of five interesting articles that cover a variety of topics including network formation, privacy and security, practice-oriented toolkits, virtual communities of practice and virtual environments for social entrepreneurship.

The first article, Simulating social network formation: A case-based decision theoretic model, uses case-based decision theory to formulate a customizable model of information gathering in a social network. The authors provide results from computational experiments in which they test the growth and stability of social networks using the proposed model. The article describes how network structure impacts agent behavior in a social network and how network structures, agent behavior, and agent decisions influence impact each other. In the second article, Privacy and security for virtual communities and social networks, Michaelides and Hosszu examine the important security threats to virtual communities and social networks and suggest protection methods and counter measures. In third article in this issue, Datta and Jessup present a theoretical model that posits that the relationship between social networks and social entrepreneurship is moderated by Internet-based virtual environments.

The last two articles look at communities of practice. Akoumianakis in, Designing practice-oriented toolkits: A retrospective analysis of communities, new media and social practice, reviews the virtual communities literature and identifies the need for research into practice in virtual communities of practice. The author provides a guide for designing practice-oriented toolkits. In the last article, On the definition and impact of virtual communities of practice, Andreatos examines the contribution of communities of practice to informal and collaborative learning, and to knowledge and technology management.

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