Foreword

Whilst the substantial contribution that tourism makes to many economies is now well known, there is less recognition of the fact that the tourism industry has been the catalyst for many of the advances in information technology since the 1980s. The early advances related largely to booking and reservation systems particularly through the activities of airlines, travel agencies and hotels. In more recent times, advances in informatics have influenced, if not determined, not only how tourists access information pertinent to their needs, but also how they engage with and record the tourist experience. Research in this field has advanced at a rapid rate. In Australia’s national Cooperative Research Centre in Sustainable Tourism (STCRC), which is probably the largest tourism research organisation in the world, one of the major research programs related specifically to tourism informatics as this was seen by industry partners to be the area of tourism that had most potential for competitive advantage. Dr. Nalin Sharda was one of the STCRC’s key researchers in this field who applied his expertise in informatics to tourism. It is pleasing to see that Dr Sharda has continued his interest in this field with the production of this text on tourism informatics.

In this text, Dr. Sharda has brought together a range of well credentialed academics with expertise in informatics to provide a comprehensive coverage of advances that have been made in tourism informatics as well as indications of future research and development opportunities in this fast moving field. This text, which has been written in a most accessible form, will be a valuable asset for developers and researchers as well as those with simply an interest in this exciting field.

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Dr. Leo Jago is a Professor in Tourism and Director of the Centre for Tourism and Services Research at Victoria University. He was formerly the Deputy CEO and Director of Research for the national Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre. Leo has researched and published in a range of fields including event evaluation, small enterprise management and volunteers. He is a Director for a range of public and private organizations and on the Editorial Board of six journals.