Foreword

E-collaboration is about sharing information within and between organizations for the purposes of planning, coordinating, decision making, process integration, improving efficiency and effectiveness. These technologies include Web-based chat tools, Web-based asynchronous conferencing tools, e-mail, listservs, collaborative writing tools, group decision support systems, teleconferencing suites, social networking platforms, and Web 2.0 technologies.

Organizations exchange information through people, process and technology, and increasingly rely on e-collaboration technologies to make that happen. The connectivity being made possible by the nature of the digital space offers much potential for becoming engaged in a joint activity. Regardless of the benefit of these technologies offered to employees, be it socializing, networking, or support, much remains to be explored about these places in terms of learning and development.

This book fills an important gap by focusing on all forms of e-collaboration whether it be through email, online communities of practices, social networks, Web 2.0 tools or virtual teams in organizational settings.

Topics covered include:

- **Theory that informs practice**: Emerging models and understanding from academia;
- **Research**: New understandings of learning, collaborative sense-making, and learning preferences;
- **The Practitioner view**: Real examples from around the world of ground-breaking developments in e-collaboration that are transforming education, adult learning and corporate training;
- **Guidance for designers and producers**: Pedagogical advice and skills for a range of people who may have had little exposure to the body of knowledge surrounding collaboration design;
- **Looking to the future**: What to expect in the next 5 to 10 years and how to prepare to take full advantage of the opportunities that an increasingly connected society will provide for computer-supported collaboration.

“Cultural, Behavioral, and Social Considerations in Electronic Collaboration” has been written with the intent of providing practical advice from academics, researchers, practitioners and designers who are currently engaged in defining, creating and delivering the increasingly important world of electronic collaboration. By leaving aside trends in technology, this book instead focuses on the articulation and development of the computer-supported collaboration theories that underpin the use of technology.

This book addresses key gaps in the available literature including the inequality of access to technologically enabled learning and cutting-edge design issues and pedagogies that will take us into the next decade of e-collaboration and future Web 3.0+ approaches.
The challenges in e-collaboration are both difficult and interesting. People are working on them with enthusiasm, tenacity, and dedication to develop new methods of analysis and provide new solutions to keep up with the ever-changing threats. In this new age of global interconnectivity and interdependence, it is necessary to provide practitioners, both professionals and students, with state-of-the-art knowledge on the frontiers in e-collaboration. This book is a good step in that direction.

The Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w) said ‘Seek knowledge even unto China’. To gain the academic knowledge on e-collaboration, we tried to collaborate with scholars across the world, whose efforts the editors of this book very much appreciate.

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