As modern society becomes increasingly information driven, the capability and maturity of an organization to manage the quality of its information can mean the difference between success and failure. Information quality is becoming the competitive advantage for many companies. In banking and finance, even a small percentage improvement in data quality when applied to millions of transactions can add significantly to the bottom line. Unfortunately, experience has also shown that when critical decisions, such as launching a space vehicle or approving the safety of a drug, rely upon inaccurate, incomplete, outdated, or inconsistent information, bad things can happen.

From my perspective, I believe that information quality has finally reached a critical mass, and is rapidly maturing as a distinct and important discipline. Year by year, researchers and practitioners are adding to its theory and practice, and I see the documentation of this development through scholarly publication as particularly important. This book contributes to that effort and continues the legacy of Don Ballou, Shobha Chengular-Smith, Beverly Kahn, Yang Lee, Stu Madnick, Harold Pazer, Leo Pipino, Tom Redman, Diane Strong, Giri Tayi, Rich Wang, and other pioneering researchers whose early papers helped define information quality as we now understand it.

I think it is particularly auspicious that this book will be appearing in the same year that the first graduate degree in this area will be offered, a Master of Science in Information Quality at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, USA. I am honored to have had the opportunity share ideas with several of the contributing authors, many of whom I have met through the annual International Conference on Information Quality (ICIQ) at MIT. I hope that by reading this book you will benefit from their work as well.

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