Acknowledgments

Editing a book is a hard but compensating and enriching task, as it involves an array of different activities like contacts with authors and reviewers, exchange of ideas and experiences, process management, organization and integration of contents, and many others, with the permanent objective of creating a book that meets the public expectations. And this task cannot be accomplished without a great deal of help and support from many sources. The authors would like to acknowledge the help, support, and belief of all who made possible this creation.

First of all, this book would not have been possible without the ongoing professional support of the team of professionals at Idea Group Inc. We are most grateful to Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, senior academic editor, and to Jan Travers, managing director, for the opportunity. A special word of gratitude is due to Kristin Roth, development editor, for her guidance and friendly words of advise, encouragement, and prompt help.

Special thanks go also to all the staff at Idea Group Inc., whose contributions throughout the process of making this book available all over the world was invaluable.

We are grateful to all authors, who simultaneously served as referees for chapters written by other authors, for their insights, valuable contributions, prompt collaboration, and constructive comments. The communication and exchange of views within this truly global group of recognized individualities from the scientific domain and from industry was an enriching and exciting experience for us, the editors. We wish to thank all the authors for their insights and excellent contributions to this book, which made of this book the book we wanted.

The authors would like to acknowledge the support of the Network of Excellence I*PROMS —Innovative Production Machines and Systems, http://www.iproms.org/, an EU FP6 project, Nº NMP2-CT-2004-500273, whose partner is University of Minho.

A special thanks to our institutions, the University of Minho and the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave, in Portugal, for providing the material resources and all the necessary logistics.

Thank you.

The Editors