

Foreword

Use of Internet technologies for the interest of individuals and organizations is becoming more context-related and the center of gravity is correctly placed to the utility and the value that all involved parties are getting from a business transaction, a business venture or a collaborative service.

Therefore, both aspects that are covered in this book are important: software agents and Web services are not treated as enabling technologies for the addressed field of virtual enterprises, but also as paradigms that can govern the organizational or/and social aspects of such constellations. It is expected that this to become a dominating pattern in the next years: the role of technology shall not limit in the realization of our ideas, but will more and more support us in shaping new ones.

Many of the chapters of this book report on first-hand experiences of the authors. The role of the lessons learned is extremely important when considering the combination of new and to great extent immature technologies on the one hand, and still-novel concepts like this of virtual organizations on the other.

Looking back in all the progress that was made in the last 10 years, I am confident that future technologists will integrate an understanding of the concept of virtual enterprises. Much of the work and the research undergone in this area are not related with technologies *per se*, but with several managerial and social aspects. This book therefore presents a valuable collection of articles worth reading that shed light on many different and complimentary issues in the field.

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Georgios I. Doukidis has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Thessaloniki (1980), a master's degree in operational research from the London School of Economics (1981), and a PhD in simulation/artificial intelligence from the London School of Economics (1985). From 1981-1991, he worked at LSE as a teaching assistant in operational research, a lecturer in computing, and an academic visitor in information systems. Currently he is a professor in the Department of Management Science and Technology at the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) and a visiting professor in the Department of Information Systems and Computing at Brunel University, UK. He teaches and researches in the areas of management and strategy of information systems, electronic commerce, and decision support systems. He is chairman of the Department of Management Science and Technology and scientific coordinator of the e-business specialization of the graduate program in decision sciences. He has an extensive 22 years experience with R&D in information systems and e-business. He is initiator and director of ELTRUN (ELectronic Trading Research UNit) and has collaborated with more than 30 research groups worldwide in R&D projects. He has successfully managed more than 35 R&D projects financed by the European Commission, the Greek government, and private organizations. He has participated in various R&D committees and acted as evaluator for the Greek General Secretariat of Research & Technology and DGIII of the European Commission (program ESPRIT). He has published or edited 14 books. He is a member of the editorial board in more than nine international scientific journals and he has presented various scientific papers in more than 120 international and national conferences in 21 different countries.