# Foreword

Adaptive hypermedia (Brusilovsky, 2001) is a research area at the crossroads of hypermedia and user modelling. Adaptive hypermedia systems (AHS) offer an alternative to the traditional "one-size-fits-all" hypermedia and Web systems by adapting to the goals, interests, and knowledge of individual users represented in the individual *user models*.

For the sake of this foreword, I will risk separating adaptive hypermedia research into "classic" and "modern" streams. The classic stream can be traced back to the early 1990s. At that time, a number of research teams had begun to explore various ways to adapt the output and behaviour of hypertext systems to individual users. The first workshop on adaptive hypermedia (Brusilovsky & Beaumont, 1994) helped them to meet each other and recognize the similarity between their works. The workshop has opened the way to the first special issue on adaptive hypermedia that was published by *User Modeling and User-Adapted Interaction* journal in 1996. By that time, several innovative adaptive hypermedia techniques had been developed, and several research-level adaptive hypermedia systems had been built and evaluated. A collection of classic papers on adaptive hypermedia was published as a separate book (Brusilovsky, Kobsa, & Vassileva, 1998).

The modern stream of adaptive hypermedia research started around 1996-1998. Since that time, adaptive hypermedia has gone through a period of rapid growth. We think that the main factor accounting for this growth of research activity is the rapid increase in the use of the Word Wide Web. The Web, with its clear demand for adaptivity, served to boost adaptive hypermedia research, providing both a challenge and a practical application platform. While classic works investigated traditional pre-Web hypertext and hypermedia, and were mainly research-oriented and demonstrated and explored innovative ideas, modern research efforts focus on Web-based adaptive hypermedia systems and have a strong connection with practical needs. Modern research efforts also deal with a much larger variety of topics, application areas, ideas, and techniques than a classic stream of research.

Unfortunately, until now there was no book that can capture a snapshot of modern adaptive hypermedia research in a way that the earlier book (Brusilovsky et al., 1998) captured the state of the art of classic adaptive hypermedia. The proceedings of two

international conferences on adaptive hypermedia and adaptive Web-based systems (Brusilovsky, Stock, & Strapparava, 2000; De Bra, Brusilovsky, & Conejo, 2002) provided some reasonable overview, but they could not replace a good edited book. The editors of this book braved to fix this problem by collecting and organizing papers for this book, the first edited book dedicated to adaptive hypermedia since 1998. I believe this book does a very good job of capturing the spirit of modern research on adaptive hypermedia with all its variety of topics, subjects, and application areas, as well as related research on adaptable hypermedia systems. I hope it will serve as good reading for the researchers who are now working on adaptive and adaptable hypermedia, as well as for those who are interested in entering this exciting research field.

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# References

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