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## Editorial

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**Biographical Notes:** Stéphanie Minel is an Associate Professor in the research team of the Superior School for Advanced Industrial Technologies (ESTIA). As an ergonomist, she worked for an industrial car supplier to improve collaboration. She received her PhD from the Art et Métiers ParisTech 'School in 2003. This PhD dissertation dealt with the modelling of user 'data for automotive seat design and the development of the related computer-aided environment. She has been integrated in ESTIA in 2004. Her research axes focus product and service analysis to improve Innovation and actors in collaborative design.

Marc Zolghadri is a Professor at IMS – LAPS Laboratory, University Bordeaux 1, France. He received his PhD in 2005. His research interests include coordination of engineering design, human factors in design coordination and performance evaluation of collaborative design process.

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This special issue titled 'Innovation: a key to improve business processes' is based on the selection of the best contributions to ERIMA Symposiums dealing with industrial applications.

European Research on Innovation and Management (ERIMA) is a 'network of European excellence' in the field of innovation and industrial management (I&IM). ERIMA is composed of highly-qualified European universities and research centres from different countries in Europe as well as business leaders of SMEs and large companies, public sector representatives and practitioners focused on innovation management. The aim of this network is to promote new theories, methods and techniques in I&IM issues. The papers selected in this special issue focus on different aspect of the Innovation paradigm.

In the first paper titled 'Continuous improvement processes in manufacturing enterprises as an enabler of process innovation' and written by E. Kirner, H. Armbruster, S. Kinkel and O. Som, innovation is seen as the implementation of continuous improvement processes. Such process innovations can be considered as a competitive

advantage. This organisational concept of 'continuous improvement process' has been diffused and analysed in German manufacturing industry.

After this general introduction, next three-papers focus on the tools and methods for problem definition and creativity. In the second paper titled 'An information system to support problems definition based on technological frames and organisational routines', J.J. Aguilar-Zambrano and M. Gardoni, discuss an approach for supporting collaborative activities during the first stages of collaborative process between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and academic research organisations.

In the third paper, 'The TRIZ-CBR synergy: a knowledge-based innovation process', G.C. Robles and Á.M. Rodríguez, S. Negny and J.M. LeLann analyse the synergy between two-tools: the theory of inventive problem solving (TRIZ) and the case-based reasoning (CBR) process.

The paper 'CoCa: a tool for analysing collaborative practices to improve design process management' from G. Jared, C. Merlo, J. Legardeur and G. Pol, propose a new tool to analyse collaborative event in order to improve the project management. Four different projects have been analysed in depth and more than one hundred collaborative events have been stored.

The paper 'A second look at the complex innovation phenomenon through a 'dialogical' principle' from S. Kerri Gati and A. Amezketa de la Fuente is a qualitative study. This research is based on data collected from in-depth individual interviews conducted with several experienced project managers and admits our inability to cover the whole field of investigation around the innovation phenomenon.

In the sixth paper, 'A model for cultural change', from J.K. Roddy describes a methodology which put the human interaction between managers, individuals and groups at the heart of the change process, rather than as something that needs to be analysed and controlled.