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## Preface

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**Biographical notes:** Saad Alqithami is a PhD candidate in the Computer Science Department at the Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, IL. He holds a faculty position at the AlBaha University, Saudi Arabia since 2009. His research interests encompass: adaptive multi-agent systems, organisational theory, cognitive models and computational social behaviours. He is the author of many research papers published at international journals, conference proceedings as well as a book chapter. He was involved in organising multiple academic events and most recently is the ‘collaborative online organisations’ workshop held in conjunction with AAMAS for three consecutive years and has led to this special issue.

Henry Hexmoor received his MS degree from Georgia Tech, Atlanta, and PhD in Computer Science from the State University of New York, Buffalo in 1996. He taught at the University of North Dakota before a stint at the University of Arkansas. Currently, he is an Associate Professor with the Computer Science Department, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. He has published widely in artificial intelligence and multi-agent systems. His research interests include multi-agent systems, artificial intelligence, cognitive science, and mobile robotics. He is an IEEE senior member.

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There is a strong ongoing trend for traditional organisations to adapt to the socially networked nature of the human population. This trend allows organisations to be transformed from bricks and mortar to a more online form. In this special issue, we aim to understand the current range of nascent network-centric organisations. At one end of the spectrum, this includes human efforts to form collaborative units. On the other end of the spectrum, we seek to understand techniques and methodologies for constructing online agent organisations that represent the interests of their human counterparts and take actions autonomously.

The issue will reflect the impacts of social network proliferation and the beginnings of agent systems that exploit and explore opportunities heralded by social media and the ever-faster pace of interconnectivity. Agents must multitask; thus, beyond performing their design tasks, they must be aware of the social climate of their environment. They must account for interactions with other agents and humans so as to perform social acts in order to complement their physical and speech acts. A substantial amount of research work is advancing distributed knowledge management. Therefore, this special issue will emphasise the operational elements of social networks that facilitate elements of online organisations. Social as well as cognitive foundations surrounding organisations

including the nature of interactions among individuals engaged in meaningful exchange are of special interest and the focal theme.

Sociality is a central attribute in functioning of organisations. Perception and prediction of social prejudice is a skill that provides individuals capacities for more purpose driven interaction. This is the theme covered by Rino Falcone, Alessandro Sapienza and Cristiano Castelfranchi in their article in this volume. Interactions and individuals vary. Herein, Milad Vadoodparast and Fattaneh Taghiyareh report on how influence can be maximised for social impact. Nader Hanna and Deborah Richards extend interaction to mixed teams of humans and agents. Personality and compatibility in social interactions is discussed. Our collection is capped by articles covering knowledge management and software agents. Mariusz Żytniewski cover business process models in organisations as well as markets and knowledge transfer within organisations. The system architecture is evaluated in a follow up article from Mariusz Żytniewski and Bartosz Kopka. With the proliferation of contextually aware and autonomous decision-making devices purported in the coming age of the *Internet of Things*, many other facets of online organisations are worthy of investigation.

The issue carries revised and substantially extended versions of selected papers presented at the *collaborative online organisations* workshop. However, encouraged researchers who were unable to participate in the workshop have contributed articles for this special issue. Articles in this issue have undergone a rigorous multiple stage review process. Extended papers from the workshop have entered the same review process as the new submitted ones despite previous reviews from the workshop committee. We congratulate the authors for their great work and their patience throughout the process. Our sincerest thanks goes to our auxiliary reviewers who have provided tremendous comments toward the success of this issue. We would like to highlight their names here and thank them for their valuable contributions: Diego Noble, Echu Liu, Elefelious Getachew, Haifeng Zhang, Mariusz Żytniewski, Mahbubul Khan, and Pablo H-Leal. Finally, we wish to thank *IJCISudies* Editor-in-Chief, George Tsihrintzis, for his unwavering support and assistance as well as the rest of the staff at Inderscience for their professional support.