Letter from the Guest Editors

The first issue of the Journal of the Brazilian Computer Science was a special issue on Groupware. Thirteen years later, this special issue on Collaborative Systems again deals with the important topic of computer-mediated interaction. But since the first issue, new technologies have changed the way people mediate their collaboration using computers. Often users can stay connected over a network and thereby practice new ways of collaborative working. In a lot of companies, many employees collaborate with remote peers via the Internet instead of working face-to-face. This change can also be recognized in private life. Users increasingly participate in web-based communities to gather information or to enjoy their spare time.

The call for this special issue attracted 15 submissions. Each of the 15 papers was reviewed by at least three reviewers. Based on the reviewers' recommendations 4 papers were finally accepted which makes an acceptance rate of 26 percent. This acceptance rate stands for the high quality of the papers in this special issue.

The first paper is entitled "Negotiating and Enacting Contracts for Business Networks". Peter Rittgen observed that collaboration between organizations is more easily established and adapted than reorganization of internal company structures. He discusses how the flexibility in such a network can be managed without reducing the stability that is necessary for economic success. For that purpose, he suggests a method for coordinating interaction in a business network.

The second paper has the title "Empirical research in CSCW - a review of the ACM/CSCW conferences from 1998 to 2004". Jacques Wainer and Claudia Barsottini review 169 full papers published in the ACM/CSCW conferences from 1998 to 2004. They classify the papers according to the type of empirical research they report and show that the field is in constant change.

The third paper reviews web-based communication technologies to support virtual project teams. Its title is "Communication and Leadership Differences in Virtual Design Teams: Why some teams do better than others". Jerry Fjermestad and Rosalie J. Ocker analyze the transcripts of eight virtual design teams. Their results suggest that high performing teams had a significantly higher degree of communication than low performing virtual teams.

The last paper by Sandra A. Siebra, Ana Carolina Salgado, and Patrícia A. Tedesco is entitled "A Contextualized Learning Interaction Memory". The authors present a Learning Interaction Memory (LIM) which they use to understand the role of the interaction the process of knowledge building. For that purpose, the LIM takes the context of the interaction into account. The LIM is used to store the learning interactions which occurred in a CSCL environment. The feasibility of the LIM is demonstrated in a context-based analytical environment called SmartChat.

We like to thank all reviewers for their valuable evaluation of the papers. Last, but certainly not least, we thank you for your interest in this special issue.

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