

# *Foreword*

**T**his book is the culmination of 4 years work by approximately 120 people working in an international collaborative project. Operating in this mode is technically demanding, and the project participants must foster an understanding of a developing and complex area of study, as well as applying this understanding through the use of advanced and evolving technologies. However, the social and organisational issues also present a significant challenge, and this book would not have been possible without meeting these challenges, too.

As the main part of the book reports the project's technical achievements, I feel justified using a small amount of space to identify some of the non-technical achievements of the project. Perhaps here, too, is material for a book!

A number of barriers to smooth operation of international collaborative research projects exist:

- different work cultures,
- different social cultures,
- different language backgrounds (and the developing "European" language),
- different personal and organisation objectives,
- evolving communications and tools infrastructure,
- the need for concertation in parallel with the implementation process.

Despite these barriers, ICM has produced very concrete results of a high quality. This has been achieved as a result of the qualities shown by the project team, including:

- technical skill,
- high motivation and enthusiasm,
- complete commitment to achievement of results,
- totally professional attitude.

Personally, I have found participation in the project to be very rewarding, and I believe I can speak for all team members, both past and present, in saying that the project has provided three main benefits to its participants:

- experience in a range of technological disciplines,
- experience in the operation of complex projects, as advanced teleworkers,

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- establishment of good working and social relationships crossing cultural boundaries.

On a wider front, the project therefore makes two main contributions to the global information society - increased understanding of the technical issues relating to its management, and increased understanding of the human factors relating to its use. I look forward to seeing these contributions being enhanced in ACTS and beyond, as well as in commercial products and services.

Finally, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all members of the ICM team, and everybody associated with the project, for their professional and willing contributions to the project's success. I especially thank David Griffin for the technical skill, hard work and long hours which he has devoted to this book. I am sure you will find it to be a valuable addition to your bookshelf.

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