

## Preface

Starting at the ECAI 2000 and continuing at the German AI conferences in the years 2001 to 2003 we have now established a little series with our international MASHO workshops.

In developing agents and multi-agent systems, computer scientists typically bring their work to bear on theories and methods from social sciences. Examples include computational and agent-based approaches to the study of negotiation, social interaction, contracts, agreement, organisation, cohesion, social order, and collaboration. This has played an influential role in the development of an interdisciplinary area called "Socionics". In the last few years researchers in such areas as Artificial Intelligence, Sociology, Organisation Theory, Social Networks, Evolution Theory and Self-Organizing Principles have increasingly shown interest in research problems connected to artificial and hybrid societies.

There have been a number of attempts at designing distributed systems by drawing on agent-oriented concepts. However, the impact on human behaviour exerted by interactions with artificial agents within hybrid societies still remains to be addressed. The workshop aims at exchanging and intergrating ideas from different aspects of agent-oriented approaches in connection with such topics as organizational knowledge, structure and behaviour.

The contributions of the actual MASHO'03 workshop comprise papers based on sociological theories and their application to agents behaviour and artificial societies. One paper deals with social behaviour and organizational structures and their description in terms of Petri nets. Two papers are dedicated to the question of modelling negotiations and the negotiation object in itself. And, last but not least, we have one paper in which it is investigated how genetic algorithms could be used to search for robust multi-agent systems representing different organizational forms.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all that contributed to the success of this workshop: the authors, the members of the Programme Committee, the workshop organizers of the KI 2003 and all colleagues who gave helpful and valuable comments in preparing the workshop as a whole.

September 2003

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