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## Preface

The editors and authors dedicate this book to Bernhard Korte on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. We, the editors, are happy about the overwhelming feedback to our initiative to honor him with this book and with a workshop in Bonn on November 3–7, 2008. Although this would be a reason to look back, we would rather like to look forward and see what are the interesting research directions today.

This book is written by leading experts in combinatorial optimization. All papers were carefully reviewed, and eventually twenty-three of the invited papers were accepted for this book.

The breadth of topics is typical for the field: combinatorial optimization builds bridges between areas like combinatorics and graph theory, submodular functions and matroids, network flows and connectivity, approximation algorithms and mathematical programming, computational geometry and polyhedral combinatorics.

All these topics are related, and they are all addressed in this book. Combinatorial optimization is also known for its numerous applications. To limit the scope, however, this book is not primarily about applications, although some are mentioned at various places.

Most papers in this volume are surveys that provide an excellent overview of an active research area, but this book also contains many new results. Highlighting many of the currently most interesting research directions in combinatorial optimization, we hope that this book constitutes a good basis for future research in these areas.

We owe sincere thanks to all authors for their valuable contributions. We also thank all referees for carefully reviewing the papers and making many suggestions for improvements. Special thanks go to Ina Prinz for her portrait and cover design, and to Klaus Radke for technical help. Moreover, we thank Springer-Verlag for the efficient cooperation. Last, but not least, our most important thanks go to Bernhard Korte, without whom the field of combinatorial optimization would not be the same.

Atlanta, Budapest, and Bonn,  
June 2008

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<http://www.springer.com/978-3-540-76795-4>

Research Trends in Combinatorial Optimization

Bonn 2008

Cook, W.J.; Lovász, L.; Vygen, J. (Eds.)

2009, XIII, 562 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-540-76795-4