Preface

We are pleased to publish *Simulating Interacting Agents and Social Phenomena: The Second World Congress* as the post-proceedings of the Second World Congress on Social Simulation (WCSS ’08) held at George Mason University in the United States, 14–17 July 2008.

As the papers selected for this volume testify, computational social science continues to grow as a dynamic scientific interdisciplinary field driven by the medium of computing. The innovations in the field include new concepts, theories, models, and methodologies across a broad variety of approaches, including social simulation, complexity-theoretic research, social network analysis, automated information extraction algorithms, and related information-processing approaches to understanding and explaining human and social dynamics. Moreover, the contributions span the five classical disciplines of social science—anthropology, economics, sociology, political science, and social psychology—because no social science today lacks significant advances brought about by the computational approach.

In addition, the presence of computational social science and social simulation is also contributing new knowledge in interdisciplinary areas, such as management science, organization theory, social geography, communication, archaeology, and the policy sciences. Quite often, what unites these diverse investigations is precisely the computational approach, typified but not exclusively represented by social simulation and agent-based modeling.

From the perspective of just how deep computational approaches have penetrated the investigation of social phenomena at all levels, it is significant to note that practically all areas or subfields of specialization in social science by now have witnessed some computational contributions. For example, as demonstrated by chapters in this volume, economics is witnessing computational social simulation contributions in specialized areas as diverse as finance, markets, and microeconomics, as well as international trade and development. Similarly, in political science computational contributions now cover comparative politics as well as international relations, among other subfields. In anthropology, both cultural anthropology and anthropological archaeology are also witnessing significant computational advances. In other words, the penetration of computational approaches is deep and lasting, to the benefit of scientific progress.

The papers included in this volume were selected by a rigorous process of double peer review. First, all papers accepted for presentation at the Second World
Congress on Social Simulation were selected by a peer-review system whereby the selected papers were revised based on reviewers’ feedback. Second, following the congress, an additional review of selected papers was conducted, resulting in further revisions that finally led to the chapters included in this volume. We are very grateful to the members of the Program Committee who dedicated time and talent to this rigorous process.

The Second World Congress on Social Simulation held at George Mason University, near Washington DC, followed the excellent international tradition established by the First World Congress held at Kyoto University two years earlier, by hosting scholars from many countries. These included Australia, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Rumania, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, among many others. This vast international participation was due to the hard work of the regional associations that have jointly sponsored the World Congress series, namely, the Pacific Area Association for Agent-based Social Systems Science (PAAA), the European Social Simulation Association (ESSA), and the North American Association for Computational Social and Organizational Sciences (NAACSOS), which has now been reorganized as the Computational Social Science Society (CSSS, or C-Triple-S). Already the next international conference, the Third World Congress on Social Simulation (WCSS ’10) at Kaasel University, Germany, 6–9 September 2010, is being organized as this volume is being published.

As editors, we wish to express deep appreciation to Professor Hiroshi Deguchi, Tokyo Institute of Technology, and the editorial staff at Springer Japan, who facilitated the publication of this volume in the ABSS Series. Besides the many academic faculty and professionals who contributed to the success of the Second World Congress, we are grateful to the many students from around the world who participated with papers and posters. Students added a vibrant and meritorious representation of the next generation of future computational social scientists and social simulation experts. Finally, a word of sincere gratitude to the administrative staff that supported the local committee at the Mason Center for Social Complexity, especially Christina Bishop and Beth Gronke, as well as the conference web site developer, Nicolas Dumoulin, from Laboratoire d’Ingénierie des Systèmes Complexes (Cemagref, France), who worked many hours beyond the call of duty to ensure an excellent international congress.

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