

Preface

Though the field of multi-agent systems has been growing rapidly and markedly over a number of years, it perhaps became especially established with the first International Conference on Multi-Agent Systems in San Francisco in 1995. That was also where the idea for a UK Special Interest Group was formed, and shortly afterwards, in the late summer of 1995, Mark d’Inverno, Michael Fisher, Nick Jennings, Michael Luck, and Mike Wooldridge met for a research meeting at the University of Westminster, and began a series of meetings that eventually became the UK Workshops on Multi-Agent Systems (UKMAS).

The UKMAS workshops have now been running for five years, in 1996 and 1997 under the heading of FoMAS (Foundations of Multi-Agent Systems) both organized by Michael Luck at University of Warwick and then subsequently in its current incarnation, UKMAS, first by Michael Fisher at Manchester Metropolitan University, then by Chris Preist at Hewlett Packard Laboratories, Bristol, and finally by Mark d’Inverno at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford in 2000.

The UK has been particularly strong in this area, and the MAS community’s strength has been reflected by high rates of participation, high quality presentations and discussions, and by an impressive range of invited speakers. Though the workshops were always intended to provide a forum for discussion rather than more formal presentation or publication, we have sought to represent the discussions through summary papers that have been published in the Knowledge Engineering Review each year. After five years of very successful workshops, however, it seemed appropriate to provide a record of the more detailed and specific contributions from some of the speakers who have contributed over this time.

In consequence, we decided to produce an edited volume of selected papers representing the best of the first five years of UKMAS. As should be clear from the author list, we have been fortunate to welcome some of the most prestigious names in the field. Others who have contributed to the workshops include Aaron Sloman, Stan Franklin, Cristiano Castelfranchi, Ken Binmore, Ian Dickinson, and Craig Boutilier, and we thank them all for their input.

Over the years, numerous individuals have also contributed to the success of the workshops, most importantly the participants and speakers, but others must also be mentioned including Loretta Pletti, Serena Raffin, Chris Havill, Sam Akhtar, Ursula Brown, Anna Hemmings and Caroline Carpenter. We have been sponsored by BT Labs, FIPA, HP Labs, and more regularly by the UK’s Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and AgentLink II, the European Commission’s IST-funded Network of Excellence for Agent-Based Computing. We are immensely grateful to all for their support, which has enabled us to create a truly accessible and successful event.

May 2002

Mark d’Inverno
Michael Luck

Organization

UKMAS is organized by the UKMAS steering committee and runs effectively only through the contribution of the program committees.

Steering Committee

Mark d’Inverno	University of Westminster
Michael Fisher	University of Liverpool
Nick Jennings	University of Southampton
Michael Luck (Chair)	University of Southampton
Michael Wooldridge	University of Liverpool

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Sponsoring Institutions

AgentLink II, the European Network of Excellence for Agent-Based Computing
BT Laboratories, Ipswich
FIPA (The Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents)
Hewlett Packard Laboratories, Bristol
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