

Preface

Autonomous agents and multiagent systems are computational systems in which several (semi-)autonomous agents interact with each other or work together to perform some set of tasks or satisfy some set of goals. These systems may involve computational agents that are homogeneous or heterogeneous, they may involve activities on the part of agents having common or distinct goals, and they may involve participation on the part of humans and intelligent agents. The increase of agent research activities can be observed in the ICMAS (International Conference of Multi-Agent Systems) series. Two hundred and nine participants attended ICMAS'95. At ICMAS'96, the number increased to 282, and at ICMAS'98, there were 552 participants. Though we already have several workshops in Asia Pacific countries, such as MACC (Multiagent Systems and Cooperative Computation) in Japan from 1991 and the Australian Workshop on Distributed Artificial Intelligence from 1995, there is not enough interaction so far among the countries compared to Europe and the Americas.

PRIMA'98 is the First Pacific Rim International Workshop related to autonomous agents and multiagent systems. The aim of this workshop is to encourage activities in this field, and to bring together Pacific Rim researchers concerned with agents and multiagent issues. Unlike usual conferences, however, since this is the first agent-related international workshop in Asia Pacific countries, participation is by invitation only and is limited to professionals who have made significant contributions to the topics of the workshop. The contributions include technical presentations, progress reports and so on. We have received a reasonable number of papers in a short period: twenty-one papers including three invited presentations from nine countries, i.e., Australia, China, France, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States. The workshop also included discussion on future workshops: PRIMA'99 will be held in Japan, and PRIMA'00 in Australia.

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