

# Preface

I take the central task of *theoretical computing science* (TCS) to be the construction of mathematical models of computational phenomena. Such models provide us with a deeper understanding of the nature of *computation* and *representation*. For example, the early work on computability theory provided a mathematical model of computation. Later work on the semantics of programming languages enabled a precise articulation of the underlying differences among programming languages and led to a clearer understanding of the distinction between semantic representation and implementation. Early work in complexity theory supplied us with abstract notions that formally articulated informal ideas about the resources used during computation. Such mathematical modeling provides the means of exploring the properties and limitations of languages and tools that would otherwise be unavailable.

The aim of this book is to contribute to this fundamental activity. Here we have two interrelated goals. One is to provide a logical framework and foundation for the process of specification and the design of specification languages. The second is to employ this framework to introduce and study *computable models*. These extend the notion of specification to the more general arena of mathematical modeling where our aim is to build mathematical models that are constructed from specifications.

During the preparation of this book, every proper computer scientist at the University of Essex provided valuable feedback. Some provided quite detailed comments. I will not single out any of you; you know who you are. But to all who contributed, thank you. Referees on the various journal papers that led to the book also provided valuable advice and criticism. But my greatest debt is to my wife, Rosana. Over the years, she has read draft after draft and made innumerable (not literally) suggestions for change and improvement. Without her, the size of the set of errors that remains would be much greater than it is.



<http://www.springer.com/978-1-84882-051-7>

Computable Models

Turner, R.

2009, XII, 240 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-84882-051-7