

PREFACE

In our January 2003 call for papers we sought contributions to the book that would present new and unconventional applications in data mining. We sought contributions from a diverse body of authors, including the leading scientists and practitioners in the field, to stimulate a new wave of knowledge in the application area of data mining. The envisioned readers of the book are scientists and practitioners who perform research in this area and/or implement the discoveries.

After spending almost two years on the book's preparation, we are delighted to see it appearing on the market. We believe that this book will inspire academics, practitioners, and senior graduate students alike to engage in this new field that is so important to academia and business. We hope that this book may also be useful to a broader audience of readers who are not necessarily experts in data mining, but would like to learn about the current developments in the application field and gain some experience in the use of the data-mining tools.

This book contains a collection of 25 chapters written by a truly international team of 79 experts representing nine countries: Brazil, Canada, Finland, Germany, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. The authors are affiliated with universities, research, government, and health institutions, and scientific laboratories, as well as business firms offering data-mining solutions to their customers. Many of the authors who contributed to the book have worked and published extensively in the applications area of data mining.

We extend our gratitude to a group of about 100 anonymous reviewers whose work greatly enhanced each chapter in the book, and we also thank two IEEE

reviewers whose comments improved the content and structure of the book. Finally, we also would like to express our sincere thanks to Kenneth Moore, Catherine Faduska, and Christine Kuhnen, IEEE Press/Wiley, for their help and enthusiastic encouragement throughout the entire project.

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