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Preface

Since our first CompLife symposium last year, we have seen the predicted trends in the life and computer science areas continue with ever-increasing production of high-quality data mated to novel analysis methods. The integration of the most advanced computational methods into experimental design and in particular the validation of these methods will remain a challenge. However, there is increasing appreciation between the different scientific communities in computer science and biology that each has substantial goals in common and much to gain by collaboration on complex problems. Providing a forum for an open and lively exchange between computer scientists, biologists, and chemists remains our goal. To encourage precisely this type of exchange, crossing the borders of the sciences, we organized the First Symposium on Computational Life Science in Konstanz, Germany in September 2005 (the proceedings were published in this series as LNBI 3695). Due to the success of the symposium, especially in bringing together scientists with diverse backgrounds, a second symposium was held in Cambridge (September 27-29, 2006).

The conference program shows that the scientific mix worked out very well again. We received higher quality submissions (56 this time) and selected 23 for oral presentation. As a supplement to the normal conference program we arranged for a "Free Software Session," where a dozen open source tools and toolkits were presented. Due to the nature of such software projects it seemed inappropriate to cover them in printed form but the conference Web site will continue to link to the respective pages (www.complife.org). Adding this session to the symposium also educated attendees on how to use some of the methods presented and shed some light on the wealth of free tools available already.

Selecting the papers included in this volume would not have been possible without the help of our Area Chairs and an international Program Committee that put in countless hours to create a minimum of three detailed reviews for each paper! And, of course, a successful conference relies on many individuals working hard behind the scenes. We would like to thank first and foremost Susan Begg and Heather Fyson for conference and local organization and keeping everybody on track. Peter Burger worked on the Web pages promoting the conference and Thorsten Meinl was the man behind the free software session and, together with Andreas Bender, also took care of publicity. Last, but certainly not least, thanks go to Ingrid Fischer and Richard van de Stadt for putting together this volume!

July 2006

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