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Advances in Learning Software Organizations

Third International Workshop, LSO 2001
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Preface

The importance of production and use of high-quality software is still growing, as more and more businesses depend on information technology. Well-educated, highly skilled, and experienced employees characterize the situation in most companies in the developed countries. Increasingly they work together in temporary networks with geographically distributed offices. Using and developing their knowledge is a key issue in gaining competitive advantages. We have learned during recent years that the exchange and development of knowledge (which we call learning) demands a great deal of human interaction. However, it is widely recognized that information systems will, in many cases, enable the sharing of experience across distributed organizations and act as a knowledge repository. A Learning Software Organization (LSO) will turn Intellectual Capital into market shares and profit, as it establishes the means to manage its knowledge.

The LSO workshop series was created in 1999 to provide a communication forum that addresses the questions of organizational learning from a software point of view and builds upon existing work on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning. It aims at bringing together practitioners and researchers for an open exchange of experience with successes and failures in organizational learning. Right from the beginning, fostering interdisciplinary approaches and providing an opportunity to learn about new ideas has been a central issue of the workshop series. The feedback that we have obtained in recent years has encouraged us to continue our work for a better understanding of the setup and running of Learning Software Organizations.

The discussion today is centered around the establishment of the right culture to promote continuous learning and foster the exchange of experience and the appropriate support with information systems. Should such a culture be introduced first or will it grow with the technological possibilities? Is there a single successful culture or is it something each company has to create on its own? Does the technological support depend on the type of business and products? Is there a general description of knowledge? To all these questions no final answer has been found so far.

In 2000 we held the workshop in conjunction with the International Conference on Product Focused Software Process Improvement (PROFES) because we felt that software process improvement is a key strategy to secure a competitive market position and needs to be closely connected to organizational learning to keep pace in a fast changing business. As the discussions during the workshop underlined this point of view, we decided to combine this year's workshop with the PROFES conference too. Again, the workshop brought together experts from computer science, business, and organization science as well as from cognitive science.

This year the number of submitted papers again increased by 50%. From these, the program committee finally selected 12 for oral presentation and 3 for poster presen-

tation. Additionally, the LSO 2001 program included two keynote talks as well as a panel session.

Many people “behind the scene” helped us to successfully prepare the workshop. As the workshop chairs, we would like to thank all these people. First of all, we have to mention the authors and presenters for their willingness to share their expertise and the members of the program committee who did a great job reviewing the submitted papers. We would especially like to thank our keynote speakers, Scott Henninger and Franz Lehner. Last but not least our gratitude is extended to Dietmar Janetzko for organizing the panel on Knowledge Creating Communities.

We are convinced that LSO 2001 offered a good communication forum both for practitioners and researchers with vital discussions, an exchange of new ideas, and the possibility to establish valuable contacts.

July 2001

Klaus-Dieter Althoff
Raimund L. Feldmann
Wolfgang Müller

Workshop Organization

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In addition to the PC members Ljiljana Stojanovic and Koji Kida helped in reviewing the technical papers.

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