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Internet-Related Socio-Economic Issues

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Foreword

During the past several years, the world has entered the first phase of the Internet Revolution. Investors showed confidence and faith in the prospects of the Internet-driven economy. In the US alone, some 30,000 dot com companies have sprung up to support electronic commerce with a wide variety of business models, technologies, and/or items or services to sell or even give away. Traditional businesses, so-called brick and mortar, or offline, businesses, have started to respond to challenges by Internet-based new competitors by augmenting their own businesses with Internet-based, or online, businesses and/or filing lawsuits against them. The initial business-to-consumer orientation of electronic commerce is giving way to business-to-business commerce, with large corporations forming electronic exchanges or consortia to conduct commerce among members.

Government, industry, and civic groups have started addressing social issues related to the Internet, such as taxation on electronic commerce, privacy, intellectual property rights, security, hacking, cyber crimes, digital divide, etc. Governments have started legitimizing electronic signatures and stepping up efforts to track down perpetrators of cyber crimes. The courts have started to wrestle with issues of privacy, intellectual property rights, crimes, and impediments to Internet-driven economy.

Although most of the innovations in Internet technology and business models are being created in the United States by hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs funded by tens of billions of dollars of venture investment, both Europe and Pacific Asia have adopted these innovations remarkably fast, and have used them to fuel Internet-based economies.

With the above "Internet scenery" as backdrop, the First International Conference on Human.Society@Internet aims to provide a forum for meeting, holding discussions, and exchanging ideas and information for researchers, students, Internet-related business people, and government policy makers from Pacific Asia countries on the socio-economic issues and changes brought on by Internet technology. The conference technical sessions are organized around the following major themes: digital divide, law and regulations, contents control, culture, cyber education, digital governance, human computing, e-commerce/digital economy, and medical computing. The technical sessions include presentations of refereed research and position papers and invited talks by leading experts, tutorials, panel discussions, and product exhibits.

Total of 85 research papers were submitted from 14 countries and were reviewed through 11 country/regional program committees. Each paper was refereed by three experts chosen from the respective areas. Thirty-two papers were selected to be presented at the conference, based upon their technical quality and relevance to the conference. There were also 22 invited talks. Among the 54 contributions, 32 regular and 4 invited papers are included in the proceedings.

Many people deserve special thanks for their efforts to make the Human.Society@Internet 2001 a success. We express our appreciation to all the organizers and committee members of the participating countries for their tireless work. We are also grateful to all the sponsors for the financial support. Last not least, we thank Springer-Verlag for publishing the conference proceedings as a volume in its Lecture Notes in Computer Science series.

May 2001

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