Foreword

Aldo Romano

The underlying idea of this book is related to research work of the e-Business Management Section of Scuola Superiore ISUFI. The e-Business Management Section is actively engaged with the scientific and industry communities on such topics as the management of the internet-worked enterprise, new product development in complex production domains, and innovative technological architecture of Mediterranean extra-EU countries.

Within its activities, the e-Business Management Section organizes an International Summer School whose aim is to create a forum for a systematic updating of new theories and managerial approaches in the networked economy. Each year the Summer School represents a gathering of world-renowned speakers from Europe, the United States, Japan, Australia and Middle Eastern and North African Countries. The 7th session of the International Summer School, held in Ostuni in July 2005, was devoted to ‘The Emergence of Novel Organisational Forms in the Globalising Planet: Toward the Business Ecosystem?’ The results of the discussions in Ostuni have been collected in this book, which opens the debate on the Digital Business Ecosystem concept. The book explores four topics:

- **Business ecosystems**: modern organizations can be described as massively interconnected networks of groups, departments, alliances, peripheral organizations, suppliers or collaborative joint ventures. In this context organizational fitness is both a property of the single organization and of the ecosystem. This loose web constitutes a business ecosystem, that is, an interconnected ‘network of networks’ of co-evolving organizations, with a specific relationship with a dominant organization.

- **Individualism and communitarianism**: the dramatic expansion of the business frontier in South East Asia is giving rise to an unprecedented social and economic experiment: The Asian Tigers, followed by China and India, have mixed traditional values with Western entrepreneurialism, giving rise to new organizational forms blending Asian communitarianism with entrepreneurial individualism.
Organizational models: organizations are being increasingly structured as portfolios of projects, in which modules and competencies can be reconfigured around emergent needs. At the same time we are witnessing the emergence of temporary networks that swarm and dissolve around specific projects. Transient networks and organizations as project portfolios constitute new organizational species that match connectivity, flexibility and adaptiveness.

Diversity and business ecosystems: globalization of markets and industry generate powerful forces towards on the one hand increasing homogeneity and on the other hand, by opening new markets and cultures, towards increasing heterogeneity. These two trends cross through business ecosystems. We can conceptualize business ecosystems as meta-organizational structures that manage the tension between on the one hand heterogeneity of resources leading to innovation and potentially to chaos and, on the other hand, to homogeneity of actors and behaviours which leads to higher coherence and focus.

I must congratulate the editors for the scientific depth, rigorousness and multidisciplinary nature of the papers presented in this book. These features are the foundations of our International Summer School. Preparing a book like this one has been a team effort. I would like to thank the researchers who participated in the 7th International Summer School and contributed with their valuable work to this editorial effort.