Preface

This book project started with an inquiry from Alexandra O'Connell, Senior Supervising Editor at Edward Elgar Publishing, as to whether we had any interest in putting together a *Handbook on the Economics of the Internet*. Both of us had researched advanced communications and the Internet for some time and both of us had taught courses in which the economics of the Internet figured prominently. It had often been difficult to find readings that were both up-to-date and comprehensive yet could be used in advanced undergraduate and graduate courses. We had worked together in Vienna, Austria during the late 1980s, intense days and long nights of writing – often concluded in the Café Alt Wien – which we both remember as some of the most energizing work experiences. After one of us moved to the United States and the other to Switzerland, our collaboration became more sporadic. A visiting professorship for Johannes at the University of Zurich, made possible by a generous invitation to teach and research at the Institute for Mass Communication and Media Research (IPMZ), offered a perfect opportunity to revive our collaboration.

Nearly three years later the book project has taken shape. It was by orders of magnitude more time-consuming than anticipated. Coordinating and synchronizing 49 authors was sometimes challenging, often took longer than hoped, but ultimately was always rewarding. Our sincere gratitude goes to all contributors who have volunteered their time and effort to write original chapters. We highly appreciate everybody's willingness to respond to multiple requests for revisions, often with a short timeline. Moreover, we are humbled by the patience of authors who delivered early in the process but then had to wait until contributions with a longer gestation were finalized (sometimes necessitating updates to earlier versions of chapters). As is to be expected in a large project like this, some envisioned contributions did not materialize, but we trust that the 27 chapters in the *Handbook* provide an original map of the current state of research in the field of Internet Economics that will provide a durable resource to students, researchers, and practitioners seeking a comprehensive understanding of the many economic and management challenges related to the Internet.

In addition to the authors, our work was facilitated by numerous people and organizations, and we would like to acknowledge a few who have been particularly supportive. Able editorial assistance was provided by Seven Bryant and Jessica McLeod at Michigan State University as well as David Westacott at the University of Zurich. Charles Felker at Michigan State University helped improve figures. At the University of Zurich, Katharina Hollnbuchner and Noemi Festic contributed logistical support to the project. Alexandra O'Connell and Matthew Pitman at Edward Elgar Publishing provided unwavering assistance on overarching editorial issues and advice on strategic decisions that had to be made along the way. Meticulous copy-editing by Dee Compson and Chloe Mitchell greatly improved the quality of the *Handbook*.

Big thanks also go to our families and friends. Johannes could not have dedicated the amount of time and intellectual energy needed to the book project without the boundless

patience and understanding of his soulmate Susan W. Woods. Tatia and Max Bauer generously put up with requests for solitary periods of writing, especially during family vacations and holidays. Several times over the past years Johannes's parents Herbert and Adelinde Bauer (1927–2015) have kindly offered their home in the foothills of the Austrian Alps as a refuge to focus on writing and editorial tasks. He would like to dedicate the book to all of them. Michael promises neglected family members and friends that work–life balance will be immediately restored after the publication of this book and would like to thank them for always smilingly pretending to believe him.

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