

GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on Advances in Customer Relationships and Management in Manufacturing Systems from the International Conference on CAD/CCAM, Roboticsa Factories of the Future (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 26-28, 2011)

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Meeting the future needs for improving the quality of life of an exponentially growing world population are important challenges for all manufacturing industries. Furthermore, the increased sophistication of the customers, demand for customised products and services, quality levels and speed of delivery as well as fierce competition from global sources require excellence from product conceptualisation, design and development through to product use and obsolescence. Thus manufacturing engineering plays a crucial role in the current and future demands of society, in that it impacts

us in all conceivable ways through integrating technologies, strategies and resources to create new products, and to enhance productivity, competitiveness and thereby improve the quality and standard of life. One way of achieving these aims is to unite, on a common platform, policy makers, researchers from academia, engineers and users of CAD/CAM, Robotics, Automation, and Advanced Manufacturing Technologies to create factories of the future.

The *International Conference on CAD/CAM, Robotics and Factories of the Future* (CARs&FOF), has been organised annually for

over two and half decades by The International Society for Productivity Enhancement (ISPE) with the goal to accelerate and augment the international exchange of ideas and scientific knowledge in the field of manufacturing. The 26th CARs&FOF 2011 Conference was jointly organised in July 2011 by ISPE, The University of Bradford (UK), and INTI International University (Malaysia), with the host being INTI in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The call for papers stimulated a vigorous response (more than 140 abstracts were received) from which over 110 high-quality submissions were reviewed and accepted. We are also happy to report that papers from over 30 countries were received and over 80 delegates attended the Conference, reflecting the global aspects of manufacturing.

From the 110 papers accepted for the conference proceedings, the review panel selected 12 relevant papers, to be extended by the authors,

for submission to this special issue of IJCRMM. These papers then followed the rigorous reviewing process of IJCRMM, and nine papers were finally accepted. This special issue includes nine contributions from the event that cover relevant themes of IJCRMM, and represent researchers/universities from over five different countries, with three papers having collaboration across two countries. On behalf of the Organising Committee for CARs&FOF 2011, the authors of the selected papers, and the reviewers, we would like to sincerely thank IJCRMM for its support of the Conference through the publication of this special issue.

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Guest Editors
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Chanan S. Syan graduated from the University of Bradford, UK in 1983 with a BEng (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering. In 1988 he obtained a doctorate from the University of Hull, UK in Artificial Intelligence in Design for manufacture. He has over 12 years of industrial experience and over 25 years in academia at all levels. Presently, he is head of Production Engineering and Management Office (Postgraduate office), Leader of Graduate programmes and Professor at the University of the West Indies. His research specialisations include Brain Computer Interface (BCI), Manufacturing, Design and Manufacture and Asset Management. He is heading the BCI and Robotics and Automation research Groups.

M. Khurshid Khan received his BEng, PhD and MBA degrees from the University of Bradford in 1983, 1987 and 1997, respectively. His PhD area of research was experimental and theoretical (CFD) study of air turbulence. During 1987 to 1990, he worked for Pepsi-Cola International as a Technical Services Manager in the Middle East, Far East and Africa Regions. In 1990, he joined the School of Engineering, University of Bradford, where he is currently the designate Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching) and a Senior Lecturer in Manufacturing Systems. His research interests are in the area of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Knowledge-Based Systems and their applications to Manufacturing & Quality Systems, Strategy, Planning, Control, Scheduling, and Supply Chain Management. He has published over 100 journal/conference papers, and has supervised over 14 PhD/6 MPhil in these areas. He has also had research collaboration with local, national and international manufacturing organisations.