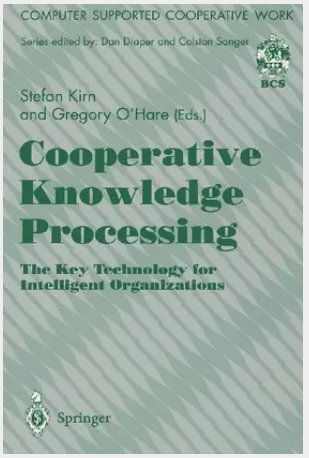
Kirn / O'Hare

Cooperative Knowledge Processing

The Key Technology for Intelligent Organizations



In the light of the challenges that face today's organizations, there is a grow ing recognition that future market success and long term' survival of enter prises will increasingly depend upon the effective usage of information technology. Of late, a new generation of terminology has emerged to describe enterprises. This terminology draws heavily upon the virtual concep- virtual reality, virtual organization, virtual (working) environment, and indeed virtual product. However, developing computerized organisations for the 21st century demands serious thought with regard to the judicious integration of organizational theory, design and practice with research tools and methods from within information processing technology. Within this book, we approach this aim from the perspective of a radically decentralized (possibly virtual) enterprise. We assume that organizations are becoming increasingly process-orientated, rather than adhering to the former more traditional organizational structures based upon task oriented models. This approach has proved illuminating in that, due to the inherent autonomy of organizational subunits any approach to coordinating decentralized activ ities (including workflows and business processes) necessitates a cooperative style of problem solving. This book introduces the reader to a stimulating new field of interdiscipli nary research in cooperative problem solving. In Chapter 1 Kim presents a view of three central discip14tes, namely those of Organizational Theory, Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) and Distributed Artificial Intelligence (DAI). The applications given here demonstrate how future enterprises will benefit from recent advances in the technological arena of cooperative knowledge processing.

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106,99 €
99,99 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9783540199519
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-3-540-19951-9
Verlag: Springer
Erscheinungstermin: 26.11.1996
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: 1. Auflage. 1996
Serie: Computer Supported Cooperative Work
Produktform: Kartoniert
Gewicht: 493 g
Seiten: 296
Format (B x H): 155 x 235 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)