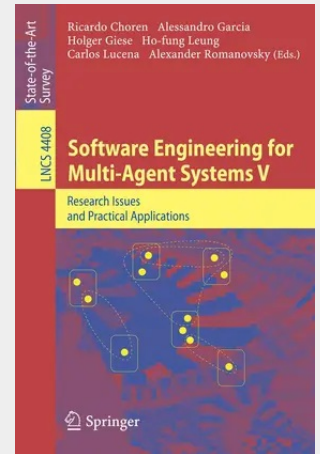


Software Engineering for Multi-Agent Systems V

Research Issues and Practical Applications

Software is present in every aspect of our lives, pushing us inevitably towards a world of distributed computing systems. Agent concepts hold great promise for responding to the new realities of large-scale distributed systems. Multi-agent systems (MASs) and their underlying theories provide a more natural support for ensuring important agent properties, such as autonomy, environment heterogeneity, organization and openness. Nevertheless, a software agent is an inherently more complex abstraction, posing new challenges to software engineering. Without adequate development techniques and methods, MASs will not be sufficiently dependable, thus making their wide adoption by the industry more difficult. The dependability of a computing system is its ability to deliver a service that can be justifiably trusted. It is a singular time for dependable distributed systems, since the traditional models we use to express the relationships between a computational process and its environment are changing from the standard deterministic types into ones that are more distributed and dynamic. This served as a guiding principle for planning the Software Engineering for Large-Scale Multi-Agent Systems (SELMAS 2006) workshop, starting with selecting the theme, "building dependable multi-agent systems." It acknowledges our belief in the increasingly vital role dependability plays as an essential element of MAS development.

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