

Preface

Research in the telecommunications field suggests that future network infrastructures will be composed of sensors, wireless devices, personal digital assistants, networked appliances and numerous types of services. This brings up key issues such as unfamiliar users and service interfaces, discovering services that match user's needs, finding and tracking people and resources, establishing useful contacts and appropriate associations between resources and users, and managing a large number of dynamic network entities all of which must be performed in an automated and proactive manner with a certain degree of autonomy and mobility. These are the main characteristics exhibited by mobile software agent behavior, making the technology more suitable for future telecommunication applications and services. It also reveals the tremendous potential for the mobile agent paradigm.

The potential complexity of mobile agent operation requires that mechanisms exist on several levels to coordinate its activities. For this purpose research and development on various forms of mobile agents continues to grow in a staggering fashion. Agent-based applications and services such as network management, e-commerce, information gathering on the Internet, mobile communications, active networking, and most recently ad hoc communications are becoming increasingly popular and continue to contribute to the development and to the success of mobile agent technology. In addition it is well established that mobile agents is an ideal sister technology for mobile ad hoc networks where users, applications, services, devices and networks are mobile and dynamically configurable.

The papers in this volume discuss issues from models, platforms, and architecture for mobile agents to security, communication, mobility, implementation, applications and management. They cover both practical experience and novel research ideas and concepts.

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