

# Preface

Mass customization increasingly attracts the attention of academia and practice. It is a business strategy that aims to join the benefits of custom manufacturing and efficiency. The successful implementation of mass customization largely depends on the perfect understanding of customer needs and preferences. Therefore, the IMCM in 2006 seeks to advance the scientific discussion in the fields of customer interaction and integration. The scope of the customer involvement generally goes beyond the fulfillment of individual customer requirements within a given mass customization framework. Customer input should be exploited in order to support critical decisions concerning the design and adaptation of future frameworks. The goal-oriented use of customer knowledge makes it possible for companies to continuously align their capabilities with changing customer requirements.

The cost pressures and the high relevance of the interaction phase in mass customization make it necessary for companies to automate the order acquisition process and also to offer customers with convenient ways so that they can find the optimal product alternative in a fast-paced manner. To achieve these objectives, product configuration systems are of paramount importance. The main topic of PETO (International Conference on Economic, Technical and Organizational Aspects of Product Configuration Systems) in 2006 is how to build and implement product configuration systems effectively and efficiently. Not only technological but also economical and organizational aspects are of high relevance in order for companies to put successfully these systems into practice. Many original contributions which are included in these proceedings tackle important issues with respect to configuration systems such as product architecture redesign, modeling techniques, business process analysis, etc.

Thus, this scientific event is the result of the cooperation of both prestigious conferences IMCM'06 and PETO'06 which collaborate for the first time in order to drive forward the research on mass customization and to close the gap between theory and practice. The Joint Conference of IMCM'06 and PETO'06 comprises 33 high quality presentations and articles. The contributions in the proceedings have been sequenced alphabetically according to the first author's name. The organizers appreciate that the joint conference excellently reflects the current research and implementation efforts in the field of mass customization. In particular, this international event achieved the necessary broadness of the spectrum of contributions in order to give a comprehensive view of activities in mass customization with respect to customer interaction, customer integration and product configuration systems. Therefore, the first thank of the organizers goes to the authors of these excellent contributions who helped to advance the field of mass customization. In addition, a conference depends very strongly on the commitment of the program committee. We would like to thank Dr. Gerhard Fleischanderl, Dr. Albert Haag, Prof. Dr. Cornelius Herstatt, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Kersten, Ass. Prof. Dr. Frank T. Piller, Dr. Martin Sonnenschein, Prof. Dr. Markus Stumptner, and Prof. Dr. Franz Wotawa for their valuable support and great collaboration. However, the basis of a successful conference is the organization. Thus, very special thanks also go to Dipl.-Ing. Dipl.-Wirtsch.-Ing. Nizar Abdelkafi for his continuous support. Once again he did a great job in preparing and managing the event.

Last but not least we would like to thank the sponsors and partners of the Joint Conference of IMCM'06 and PETO'06: Airbus Germany, Hamburg School of Logistics, tts Global Logistics GmbH, and Wachstumsinitiative Suederelbe GmbH.

Thorsten Blecker, Gerhard Friedrich, Lars Hvam, Kasper Edwards  
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