

PREFACE

Enriching database models so as to allow the user to deal with fuzzy and uncertain information has been of scientists' concern for years. This resulted in numerous contributions, mainly with respect to the popular relational model or to some related form of it. The experience was instructive, although still far away from concrete applications.

Time has come that the advantages of object-oriented databases are acknowledged outside the research and academic worlds and a breakthrough of new commercial software is observed. Lately research has been devoted to the endowment of this type of databases with more real world reflecting semantics. It proved that the object-oriented paradigm lends itself extremely well to it. This is very promising and opens new perspectives for the availability of new generation database products in a near future.

The book presents the latest research results in dealing with fuzziness and uncertainty in object-oriented databases. The different chapters have been contributed by different authors. Each chapter is self-contained. However, an introductory chapter has been added to provide more background information.

I am very grateful for the spirit of kind cooperation and understanding which I experienced in my contacts with all the co-authors of the book. Among them I specially wish to mention Nancy VAN GYSEGHEM and Valerie CROSS, who have been collaborating with me also outside the frame of this book, Nancy already for many years. I am also indebted to Ronald YAGER for the kind foreword, which he accepted to write for the book. Finally I wish to acknowledge the valuable help of all the members of our research team, especially of Guy DE TRE and Patricia MAESFRANCKX, and of our former assistant Pieter MOERMAN, who all, with youthful enthusiasm, took care of numerous details like checking language, style and lay-out.

Rita DE CALUWE
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