

Preface

A history of this book

This book describes research work done at Westfield College, King's College and Imperial College, all in the University of London. The work was begun in about 1985, and its first written incarnation was as the author's Ph.D. thesis of the same title, examined at the end of 1987. This version is a complete rewrite. It covers the same research material, but is more introductory in nature. The literature review chapters which make Ph.D. theses so turgid has been shortened and relegated to "Pointers to the Literature" sections at the end of each major chapter.

The thesis was written under the guidance of two supervisors, both of whom I can count as good friends. Hugh Glaser was the ideal supervisor to the beginning research student, being a continuous source of ideas while always encouraging me to follow my own. In the diaspora that accompanied the destruction of the Department of Computer Science at Westfield College, Hugh left to manage the Flagship project at Imperial College, and Peter Osmon (now Professor of Computer Systems at City University) bravely stepped in as I started to write up. Peter's influence is present on almost every page—he has a special talent to help clarify one's ideas by demanding a special attention to explanations. Hugh has since moved on to Southampton University.

Chris Hankin, also originally at Westfield College but now at Imperial College, must take the credit for much of my more profound understanding of much of the material. He also played no small part in providing a stimulating environment at Imperial College where much of the thesis and book were written. Special thanks must go to Chris for being so understanding when the book got in the way of work I should have been doing for him.

Acknowledgements and thanks

More than most, this work is the fruit of many collaborations and conversations. Some quite brief discussions have had a profound influence on the nature and presentation of material presented herein. Individuals deserving particular recognition include

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My apologies must go to all those—especially Judy, Rebecca and Wayne and my family—whom I have neglected in writing this book. I dread the thought that you might read it and decide whether it's all been worthwhile!

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Jokes

There are no jokes in this book.