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Preface

Software plays an ever-increasing role in today's society. People's lives are affected by software on a daily basis, as used, for example, in the smartphone plus its mobile applications, the e-mail client at work, or online shopping conducted from home. The pervasive nature of software increases its potential to change business models and value propositions, within the phenomenon summarized as digitalization. In fact, software works as a key enabler of digitalization, providing opportunities to create innovative business models that would have been impossible even a decade ago. AirBnB and Uber are good examples of such new software-based firms, highlighting how software businesses can disrupt entire industries. A more recent example can be observed in *G-cluster* – a small software business that started to market a digitalized game console in Japan. The game console can be embedded in various devices, including set-top boxes, TVs, tablets, and mobile phones. These three examples illustrate how software facilitates the digitization of products in such a way as to compete with large and well-established firms.

For the Eighth International Conference on Software Business (June 2017) we received thirty submissions. The papers went through a competitive review process, with two or three experts in the field reviewing each paper. On the basis of the reviewers' evaluations, and consideration by the Track Chairs, eleven full papers and five short papers were selected for the proceedings. We have here organized the papers according to the following themes: *Software Startups and Platform Governance, Software Business Development,* and *Software Ecosystems and App Stores*.

The contributions address three research areas, investigating different phases in the lifecycle of a software business. The phases of a software business start with its *inception* as a software startup, continuing with the *development* of the software business, leading thereafter to a thriving software *ecosystem*. Overall, three challenges can be seen as meriting particular attention. The first challenge relates to software startups and platform governance. The contributions here provide data on the

acquisition and growth of software startups as influenced by venture capital. Another paper provides guidance on the process of moving towards validated product ideas within software startups. A third paper explains how we can govern software ecosystems in such a way as to implement an *Internet of Things*. The second challenge relates to software business development. Two papers discuss the pricing of data products, and explore business models for software-defined networks. In addition, we learn about firm performance within the Finnish software industry, and the modelling of competitive relationships. The third research challenge relates to software ecosystems and app stores. The papers presented explain how software ecosystems co-evolve, and shed light on competition in software firms. In addition, one paper addresses mobile security threats in software ecosystems, while another paper focuses on the health measurement of data-scarce software ecosystems. The contributions make it clear that the scope of software businesses is expanding out from traditional software firms, towards firms that develop software specifically to advance their business in the form of digital services.

As Program Committee Chairs, we would like to thank the members of the Program Committee and the external scholars for their efforts in evaluating the submissions and ensuring the high quality of the conference. The efforts of the Steering Committee and all the Chairs were of enormous value in building a successful ICSOB 2017 conference. Finally, special thanks are due to all the scholars who submitted papers to the conference, all the authors who presented papers, and to the audience, who participated in much interesting discussion during the conference.

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