Message from the Organizing Chair

On behalf of National Institute of Informatics, I would like to express our gratitude for the efforts and the collaboration of those who participated in the fourth NII Test Collection for Information Retrieval (NTCIR-4) Workshop.

This volume is the formal record of research activities of NTCIR-4 meeting, 2-4 June, 2004, in which the final reports on the participants' research activities since January 2003 were presented. Based on three preceding successes of NTCIR-I in 1998-1999, NTCIR-II in 2000 and NTCIR-3 in 2001-2002, this fourth Workshop could have marked another milestone in the history of NII research activities.

Since the foundation of the National Institute of Informatics (NII) in 2000, it has steadily broadened in the number of research staff and the scope of research activities. In April 2004, NII was detached from the direct control of the government and has become an independent quasi-governmental agency under the Research Organization of Information and Systems (ROIS) as a result of National University Reform. Therefore, the NTCIR project is now regarded more important than ever as a collaborative project promoted by NII for the research community and academia.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the participants of the Workshop from 12 countries. The number of participating groups and countries for 5 tasks has increased and this shows that NTCIR has established its standing as the forum of researchers of cutting-edge information access technologies.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Ministry of Education (MEXT) and other organizations which have financially helped us and have given permission for the use of databases for the Workshop. The resultant test collections compiled through the Workshops are effectively utilized by many research groups both inside and outside Japan for many research applications.

For us, the Workshop organizers, the feedback we could get through the Workshop will greatly help us develop the next NTCIR activities. We sincerely hope many fruitful research results will soon be produced from the NTCIR-4 activities.

<div style="text-align: right">

Professor Jun Adachi
Organizing Chair
Director, Research Center for Information Resources
National Institute of Informatics

</div>