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Preface

Trial and error is likely to be the learning method I have become most accustomed to. Some trials in my life turned out to be rather successful, while others led to regrettable errors. I am very grateful to the people that allowed me to explore and find my way. My parents, Wil and Mariette, have been doing this from the day I was born. After several trials I still can't find the words to express my gratitude for the freedom by which they let me go and the unconditional love by which they keep me close. My other family members, in particular my sister Nanouk and my grandmother Jans, are the perfect complement to this warm and playful environment.

During my PhD research, others took the effort and patience to guide me in my explorations. I had the luxury that eventually three (co-)promoters were actively involved with my supervision. It is to Lynda that I can now call my self a researcher. Whenever I walked into her office (or her house) she took the time to understand what I was trying to explain and then create the conditions under which I could collect the required insights myself. Jacco probably walked as many times into my office, as I walked into his. Our transparent relationship made the day to day work a joy and a difficult moment never last too long. At the same time, he managed to put me to work when I was slacking and continuously push me steps forward. In the background, Guus was giving tactical directions, providing the right contacts and eventually helping me with the nitty gritty details of thesis writing.

On the work floor, Alia was my companion in exploring our scientific aspirations: sharpening our discussion skills and training our patience. Off the work floor (beaches, bars and discos of PhD events), she also makes a good companion. I still do not know if it was me or her that always made us go home so late. The other INS2'ers at CWI also turned out to be professionally as well as socially an acquisition to my ongoing explorations. As can be seen in the bibliography, a certain "Wielemaker, J" had quite an impact on this thesis as well. The computational tools provided by Jan enabled me to rapidly explore ideas, his insights helped me

to spot the ideas not to explore, and his instant responses helped me greatly with the errors I made. The members of the MultimediaN E-Culture project created a research environment that gave my explorations a head start. I owe it to Geertje Jacobs and the employes of the print room from the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, that I could apply and test these explorations in a realistic and inspiring setting.

The long days and weekends with my text editor had an inverse increased effect on my presence with friends. Luckily, Daniel is worth a thousand friends and a single weekend *cookin' with jazz* is intense enough for a year. Finally, *nha kretxeu* Andra makes me the man that I want to be, and confronts me with myself when I am not. Her love and that of her family makes me realise what is important. May we keep exploring the endless flavours of the world together.

Michiel Hildebrand

March 2010