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Johann van Reenen

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LibLink visits Fundacion Global Democracia y Desarrollo

Johann van Reenen, Director,
Library Linkages, ISTEC.

Johann van Reenen paid a consultation and training visit to one of ISTEC's new members, the *Fundacion Global Democracia y Desarrollo* in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from April 3 – 7, 2002.

He was immensely impressed by the quality, the commitment to improving IT, and the energy of the staff and the *Fundacion's* president, and ex-president of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernandez.

On the first day he toured the construction site of the new *Fundacion* headquarters and met with the architect. He also consulted with the Librarian and head of information services, Aida Montero, on the future library space. This space was planned perfectly to allow as much light into the public spaces while protecting the collection stacks from the bright Caribbean sunlight. It is at the center of the building, on the floor between the lecture halls and the headquarters offices. It will be wired for all services including wired meeting and study rooms. The building has a large auditorium and several other spaces for meetings, and will be equipped with distributed multimedia outlets so that meetings and events can be broadcast to any part of the building.

On the second day, Johann met with Dr. Fernandez, Natasha Despotovich, the *Fundacion's* International Relations Director, and other senior managers and gave a public talk to more than 150 people. The press and media were in attendance and participants comprised a cross section of local decision makers and government officials. His talk was entitled "*Managing complexity, ambiguity, and chaos*" in the information era. Natasha writes the following regarding their organization's mission and ISTEC's potential role:

"The Global Foundation for Democracy and Development is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to study, research and education on topics crucial to socio-economic and institutional development of the Dominican Republic and its region. It organizes international discussion forums, conferences, workshops and training programs.

It is our mission to look into vital issues and formulate proposals for the furthering of the socioeconomic development and the strengthening of democracy in the Dominican Republic, as well as help put in place necessary conditions and form highly qualified human resources, which are the basic prerequisite for the country's successful insertion in global markets and knowledge economy.

Although our work covers a number of areas ranging from democracy, socioeconomic development and environment, to globalization, regional integration and international relations, our special emphasis is on education, science, technology and communication, as we strongly believe that, if approached with deep understanding and developed with dedication, passion and vision, they constitute the most potent vehicles towards progress and well-being of our people.

We feel very excited and enthusiastic about our recent ISTEC membership and are looking forward to participating actively in Library Linkages, Advanced Continuing Education, R & D Laboratories and Los Libertadores initiatives. We are completely sure that with the help of all ISTEC members we can work with more depth, strength and shared experience in order to respond to our country and region's IT challenges.

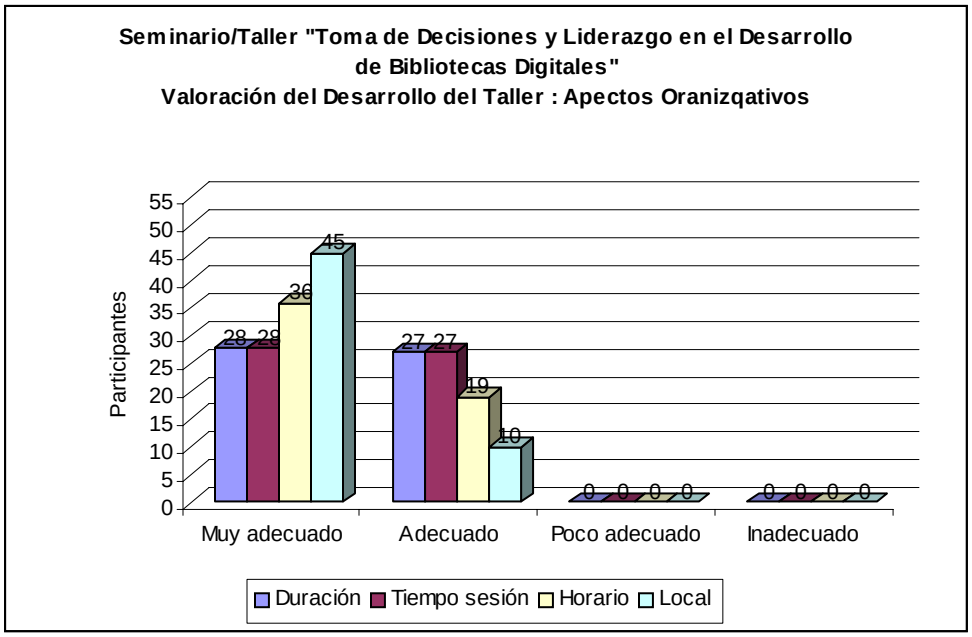
The Foundation is in the process of building its new offices that are expected to open in September 2002. In a five-floor building with the state of the art ITC facilities, meeting spaces for a total of 500 people and a 4000 square feet area dedicated exclusively to an Information Center and Library, we hope to provide excellent services to the national and international communities.
We would be very proud to host ISTEC events and hope to have the opportunity to be the home of the 2003 General Assembly."

The third day comprised of two lectures and a 4.5hour workshop for librarians and library systems persons. 62 persons that included the majority of academic librarians in Santo Domingo attended the sessions. The lectures addressed changes in scholarly publishing and initiatives to return control of research publishing to the researchers through initiatives such as the Open Archives Initiative http://www.openarchives.org/index.html. The workshop explored the leadership characteristics needed to develop and support digital library initiatives through leadership surveys, case histories and role-playing. An analysis of the evaluations of this day's events is attached below.

In the evening of the third day Johann visited the *Fundacion's* Electronic Newspaper Clippings Project and consulted with them on creating a standards-based system that can be used more broadly. He was very impressed with the work done so far. More information on this follows below.

Consultation follow-up:
Some of the ideas for continuing the work begun at these meetings are discussed below. The best way to capitalize on so many librarians coming together to learn about electronic publishing and DL projects is to create a subscription-based LISTServe for the participants from the *Fundacion's* server.
The use of Metadata for the Newspaper Clippings project is important as this will allow greater flexibility in distributing the information and in more efficient searching. Adding full text to the descriptive citations will also make the product more useful. Johann suggested that the project group obtain a week's worth of one of the local newspapers' electronic files to form a test database of full text information. This can then be used together with the existing citations and abstracts to add metadata to and to create an Open Archive. If such a pilot works the group can begin to look for a newspaper that will fund a full-scale project. The first steps are to understand the Open Archives concept and study the metadata primer (online course) at
http://metamanagement.comm.nsdlib.org/outline.html

Evaluation results of the lectures and workshop of the third day:


Seminario/Taller "Toma de Decisiones y Liderazgo en el Desarrollo de Bibliotecas Digitales"
Valoración del Desarrollo del Taller : Apectos Oranizqativos
Participantes
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Muy adecuado
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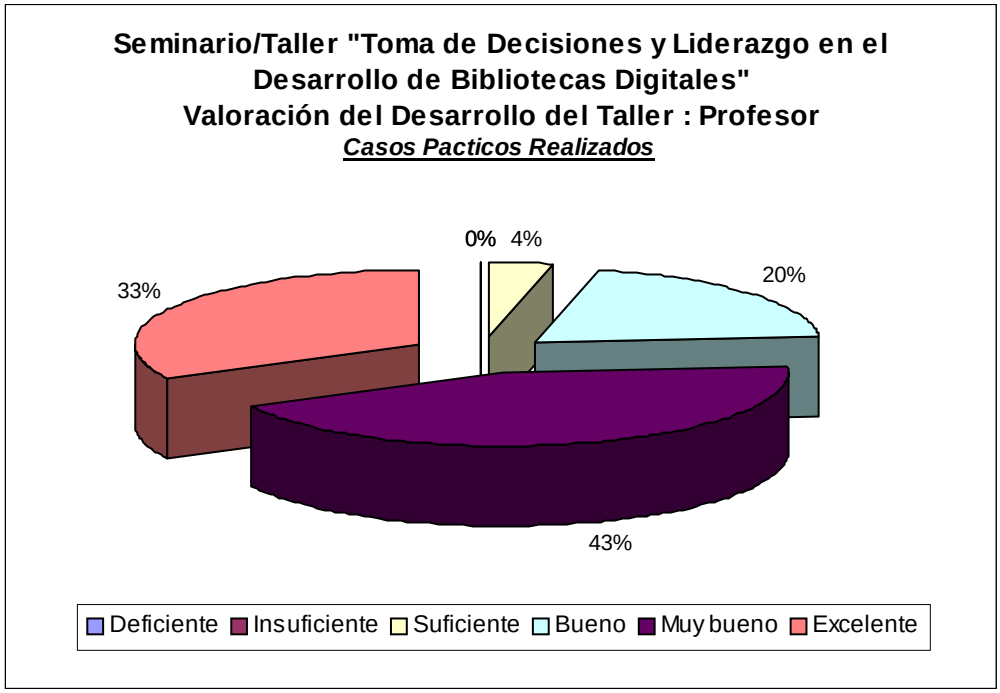
Seminario/Taller "Toma de Decisiones y Liderazgo en el Desarrollo de Bibliotecas Digitales"
Valoración del Desarrollo del Taller : Profesor
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Deficiente
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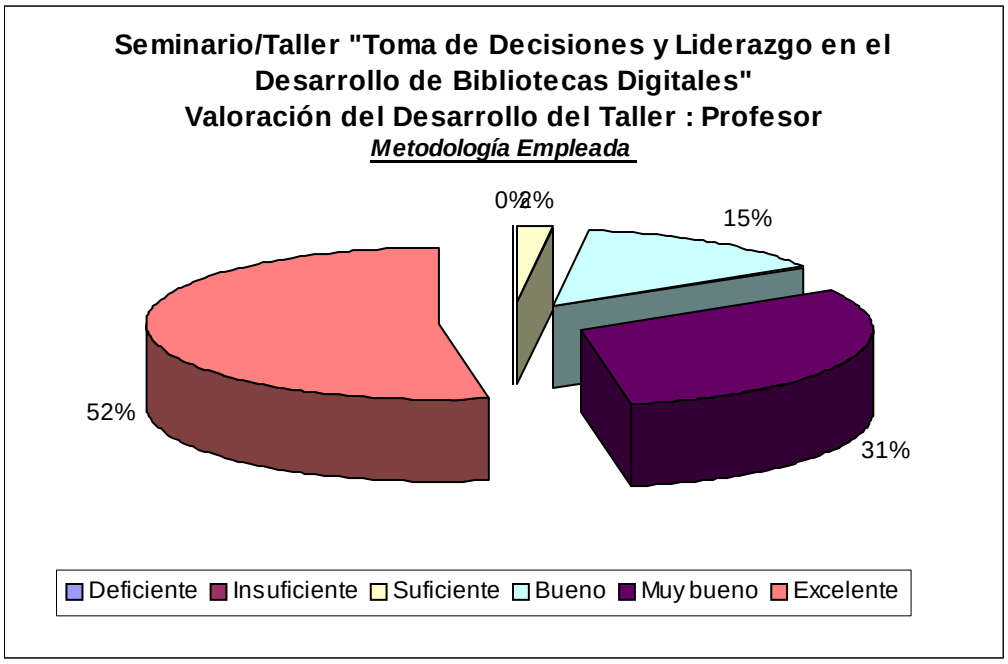
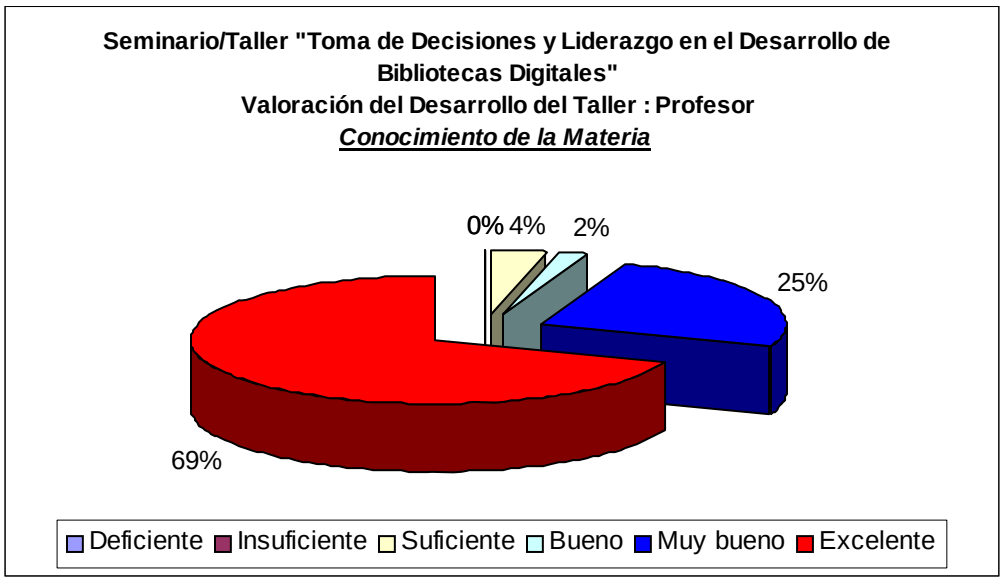
Bueno
Muy bueno
Excelente





Below are photos from the events. The first two shows Johann interacting with participants at the workshop on Leadership for Digital Libraries. The other two photos show the speakers at the public lecture on managing chaos and complexity in the electronic environment, from Left to Right: Natasha Despotovich, Johann, Dr. Fernandez (President of the Foundation), and Dr. Carlos Dore (research Director).

EXIT
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5 15:13

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