

Jornadas de Bioinformática JB2009 - November 3rd-6th 2009



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More than a year ago, the portuguese and spanish bioinformatics communities decided that they should organize a common conference with the aim of reinforcing existing links and creating new ones. Geographical reasons justify it fully, as the costs of doing things together is reasonably low since they mostly concern rather short travels. The Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência, with the longest record of bioinformatics activities in Portugal, and host to the Portuguese Node of EMBnet since 1990, organized the event. It took place at the headquarters of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisboa.

The meeting was physically attended by about 130 participants, more or less half from Portugal and the other half from Spain. The underlying theme was 'Challenges in Bioinformatics' and that justified the choice of the four keynote speakers: Tanja Kortemme (Molecular Design



Figure 1. Pedro Fernandes introduces Pooja Jain to James Watson.

of Multi-Specific and Selective Protein-Protein Interactions), Can Alkan (Structural Variation Discovery and Characterization of Segmental Duplications with Next-Gen Sequencing



Figure 2. JB2009 Group Photo.

Technologies), Paul Scheet (Making sense out of 1000 Genome) and Erin Halperin (Computational Challenges in the Analysis of Genetic Variation). In total there were 23 oral presentations and 53 posters. Two discussion panels were set-up, one on 'New Sequencing Technologies: Opportunities and Challenges' and the other on 'Spanish / Portuguese cooperation in Bioinformatics'.

The conference ended on November 6th, just before the start of a talk by James Watson, that happened to be organized in the same place. He was photographed while he was being introduced by the local organizer to Pooja Jain of the University of Nottingham, presenter and co-author of the poster entitled Constrained Protein Topology Determination, that won the best poster award.

Several collaborations have started during this event, as expected. The value of organizing conference together was restressed, and plans have been laid to do it on a yearly basis.



Figure 3. Presentation in one of the parallel sessions, JB2009.