

GUIDE TO DESIGNING A POSTER FOR A RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Purpose of a Poster

- Standard format for science conferences
 - Allows maximal number of researchers to present their work and get feedback
 - Most often used to present work in progress or recently completed research
- Role of the poster presenter:
 - Provide a “guided tour” through the poster
 - Answer questions about the research

Ways of Making a Poster

- Matte board:
 - Print out segments on a regular printer and cut/paste them onto matte board
 - Can use any software program (MS Word, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Plotter printing:
 - Design and print a large-scale poster (e.g. 36” high, 48” wide)
 - Software options: PowerPoint (easiest method), Adobe Illustrator, others

What a poster should include:

- Title: project title
- Authors: your name, faculty advisor’s name, names of collaborators, and department
- Purpose (or Objectives or Introduction)
- Methods and Materials
- Results or Findings
- Discussion
- Summary:
 - if the project is completed, this will be your research conclusions
 - if the project is on-going, this can include what remains to be done
- Acknowledgments: include any sources of funding you received

Making a Full-Size Poster with PowerPoint

- Start PowerPoint and open “new presentation”
- From the menu bar, select File > Page setup.
- In the box that appears, the first section is “size.”
- Next to the heading “slides sized for,” select “custom” from the pull-down menu
- Enter dimensions (e.g. width 48”, height 36”). Click “OK.”
- You will see this prompt: “the current page size exceeds the printable area of the paper in the printer.” It will offer three options: cancel, OK, and fix. Click “OK.”
- The slide layout should be blank. If it isn’t, you can change it from the menu bar: Format > Slide design, then click on “blank.”
- You can look at the poster from different resolutions. Using a smaller size (e.g. 25%) will allow you to see the whole poster at once. Using a larger size (e.g. 75%) will allow you to read your text more easily.
- If you find it difficult to keep track of what you are doing, create a second PowerPoint file, with a regular sized PowerPoint slide presentation. You can make a series of slides and then copy the text boxes and pictures from those slides into the custom poster file.

Tips for Designing a Poster: Keep it Simple!

- arrange your material in a logical progression
- arrange materials in columns
- don't try to cram too much on to the poster

Selecting Colors and Fonts

- Use only 2 or 3 colors in the poster: too many colors can be distracting
- Select font colors and background colors to maximize contrast
 - A dark font on a light background is more easily read than vice versa
 - White letters on a black background are particularly difficult to read
- Choose a font size and style that can be read easily from several feet away
- To emphasize a point, use **bold** or *italics* rather than underlining as underlined words can be more difficult to read

Text for the Poster

- To add text, click on “insert” on the menu bar and choose “text box.” Then click where you want the text box to be, and start typing.
- Text boxes can be resized by clicking on a corner and dragging.
- Avoid large blocks of text and limit or eliminate jargon and technical terms
- Organize and reduce text by using subheadings, key words, bullet points
- A figure or graph often convey information more efficiently than paragraphs of text

Pictures and Photos

- Pictures and photos can be added with copy and paste commands or by importing.
 - To import: select Insert on the menu bar, then choose Picture >From File, and select the file from wherever it is stored (folder, desktop, CD...)
 - Images should be at least 100dpi and the same size they will be on the poster.
 - Save the image as a “JPG” as this format is easier to insert into PowerPoint.
- Pictures and photos can edited using the picture tools. From menu bar, select View >Toolbars >Picture
 - Resizing: click on the corner of the picture/photo and slide the mouse to resize
 - Cropping: choose the crop tool from the Picture palette and crop from any side
 - Framing: From the menu bar, select Format > Colors and Lines. Leave the fill on “none.” Select a line color and width to add a border.

Graphs

- Graphs can be added with copy and paste commands or by importing (same as pictures)
- Keep graphs simple
 - Avoid “chart junk”: 3-d, shadowing, multiple grid lines, labeling every tick mark
 - With multiple graphs, combine information (e.g. share axis labels, titles, legends)

Printing the Poster

- There are a number of plotter printers on campus, including the Evans Map Room
- If you will be designing your poster on one type of computer and printing from another (e.g. Mac to PC), make a PDF of your poster and print from that rather than directly from your PowerPoint document. There are less likely to be problems with compatibility.
- If you use an unusual font or text character, you should make a PDF of your document (using the computer on which you made your poster) and print from that rather than directly from your PowerPoint document as otherwise fonts may not print correctly.

FAQ's for printing in the Evans Map Room

(Located on the second level of the Berry Library next to the Jones Media Center)

We have the ability to print large format posters with our plotter. However, there are things we can do, things we cannot do and things you should know before coming to print. Please know that this is not a printing service. We have a large format plotter on which we allow others to print documents.

1. We do not make appointments for printing. We print on a first come, first serve basis.
2. We are unable to provide software consultation help with your poster. We only print your posters. Please consult your department's computer support person for software help or the Computer Help Desk located on the first floor of Berry Library.
3. We have PC's available in the Evans Map room. If you created your poster using a Mac, open the file on a PC to make sure all the elements of your poster are visible.
4. We have the following software available from which to print: MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, Photoshop CS, Adobe Acrobat Reader and ArcGIS.
5. When creating your poster, make it the size you want it to print. If you make your poster smaller and then enlarge it, the software will not necessarily use all of the paper to print. You may have large, empty, white borders on your poster.
6. Our paper for the plotter is 36 inches wide. That means one dimension of your poster **cannot be larger than 36 inches**. To take full advantage of the space, we recommend you make one of your dimensions the full 36 inches.
7. We have 4 different types of paper. We charge for linear measurement only. The least expensive paper, **Coated Paper**, is \$3.00 for each 6 inches to the next 6 inches. The next paper in cost is **Heavyweight Coated Paper** which is \$5.00 for each 6 inches to the next 6 inches. The other 2 types are both **Photo Paper**. Both are \$7.00 for each 6 inches to the next. One type is a **Hi-Gloss** finish, the other is a **Matte** finish. If you choose the **Photo Paper**, you must allow at least 2 hours of drying time before moving the poster.
8. You have several options for payment. You can charge a department account. Bring the account number with you when you print. You can pay with cash, check or a credit card. However, the Map Room does not handle these types of payments. We will tell you the cost of your poster. You will then go down to the Circulation Desk on the first floor of Berry Library. You will purchase an equivalent number of Evans Map Room Printing cards and bring them back to the Map Room.
9. Printing is available these hours during the regular terms (Fall, Winter & Spring): Mondays through Wednesdays, 8 am-8:30 pm; Thursdays and Fridays, 8 am to 4:30 pm. During all intercessions, Mondays through Fridays, 8 am-4:30 pm. **There is no printing during the weekends**. Our Summer Term hours can vary, so please call (603) 646-2579 before coming to the Map Room.
10. To transport the file, you can email the file to yourself, use a USB drive key, or have the file on a CD.
11. Remember to bring something in which to carry your poster. We do not have tubes we can give away. We do sell 3 foot long tubes for \$3.00 each.
12. We do not make deliveries. You must come to the Map Room and pick up your poster.
13. If you have any other questions, which this FAQ does not answer, please call us at (603) 646-2579 or email us at map.room@dartmouth.edu.