

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-format 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.”
- As you develop the poster, look at it 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 material so reader's eye flows in a progression from left to right, top to bottom
- Arrange materials in columns or some other easily discernable grid
- Don't try to cram too much on to the poster; keep "big picture" in mind.

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
 - Dark text 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.