Designing & Presenting Research Posters

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What is a Research Poster?

• A visual tool for communicating your work

• An effective poster will:
  • Engage visitors in conversation
  • Get your main points across to as many people as possible
Purposes of a Poster

- Source of information
- Conversation starter
- Summary of your work
- Advertisement of your work
The goal of a research poster is to have an organized visual display of your research project and findings.
What a Good Poster Should Be

• Self-explanatory
  • Tell a story
  • Full explainable in under 4 minutes

• Organized
  • Have an ordered, logical flow of information

• Concise
  • Use bullets when possible
  • Avoid long paragraphs
How Posters are Evaluated

- Overall effectiveness
- Research content
- Physical appearance and organization
- Speaking ability
- Ability to explain and answer questions
Tips for Effective Poster Presentations

- Tell readers why your work matters
- Overall appearance
  - graphics, text, colors
- Organization
  - objective, results, conclusion, etc.
- Minimize text & use appropriate graphics
- Sketch your poster layout on paper first
Tips for Effective Poster Presentations

- Text size should be readable from 4-6 feet
- Use color cautiously
  - Dark letters on light background are easiest to read
  - Avoid very bright colors
- Don’t make your audience work - people will read from top to bottom, left to right
Tips for Effective Poster Presentations

- Prepare a 2-3 minute verbal explanation – highlight the significance of your work

- Prepare a summary handout – a miniature version of your poster, which includes contact information
Elements of a Poster

All posters should include:

- Title
- Author(s) and Institution(s)
- Background or Introduction
- Hypothesis & Approach
- Figures
- Conclusions
- Future Directions
Elements of a Poster

- Optional elements:
  - Abstract
  - References
  - Acknowledgements
- Ask your mentor about his/her preferences
- Ask to see examples from your group
Title

- Brief and descriptive
- Identical to title on abstract
- Readable from 20 ft feet away
- Sans serif font (Arial, Helvetica, etc.)
- 72pt font or larger

This is 72 pt font.
Author(s) and Institution(s)

- Presenter should be first name
- Additional authors listed in order of contribution
- Last name should be faculty mentor
- Include department(s) and institution(s) below authors’ names
Abstract*

- If included, abstract should be identical to one submitted for the conference
Background or Introduction

- Present what is necessary for the reader to understand poster
- Start with a general introduction to field
- Be brief, but don’t leave out important points
- Use 20pt font or larger

This is 20 pt font.
Hypothesis & Approach

- State hypothesis/problem based on the background
- Include a model or diagram to help explain
- Briefly state approach to solving the problem
- Do not go into details about methods
Methods/Procedure

• **Briefly** describe how data were collected
• Include key details (e.g. sample size, concentrations, age/gender/ethnicity of survey participants, etc.)
• Explain any internally developed procedures
Results

- Briefly describe any analysis
- Include the most important results to date
- Present data in graphical form whenever possible or use bullets
Figures

• Present data to support or deny your hypothesis
• Make sure to number your figures, font >20pt
• Figures can include graphs, tables, photographs, illustrations, or diagrams
• All figures should have a title and legend
• Figures should be high quality
Graphics

- Use graphics that enhance/compliment your work (e.g. photos of instrument, experimental setup, field site, etc.)
- Use only high quality graphics
- Use pics from public domain or acknowledge source
- Do not use “cutesy” clipart or low res pics
- Avoid using background graphics that compete with text
Conclusions

- Use bullets to state conclusions for your data
- Be brief and to the point
- Mention any alternate explanations for your data or unexpected results
Future Work

- Explain what you plan to do next
- Do you plan on using new methods?
- Do you have new unanswered questions?
References*

- Cite all references in the poster text
- Use reference style from a major journal in your discipline
Acknowledgements*

- Acknowledge those who assisted or contributed to your research
- Include source(s) that funded your study
e.g. NSF, NIH, Dept. of Education
  - Include grant number if possible
- Include UF logo & logos for funding source(s) or research group/institution
Designing Your Poster

- Prepare text for each section (background, methods, results, conclusion, future work)
- Select graphics (graphs/tables of key results, photos relevant to research)
- Sketch layout on paper first using a logical arrangement
- 3 or 4 panel design typical, but not required
Creating in PowerPoint

- Start with a template or create from scratch
- Set slide to specified size (30” x 40”)
  - Design → Page Setup
  - Typically use landscape layout
- Adjust view (zoom in/out) to lay out poster
- Use text boxes for titles and text
- Insert figures and graphics
- Can create tables directly in PPT or import
Proof Your Poster

- Proof your poster for grammar and spelling, especially technical words
- Review with your mentor before printing
- As a courtesy, allow co-authors to view your poster before presenting it
Presenting Your Poster

- Dress professionally
- Smile and make eye contact
- Greet visitors and give them time to look over your poster before you start talking
- Be prepared for the typical question: “Tell me about your research.”
- Give 2-3 minute spill including the topic, significance, methods, results and future work
Presenting Your Poster

- Be upbeat, engaging and professional
- Don’t spend too much time with one person
- Be prepared to answer questions
- Admit when you don’t know – Don’t fake it!
- Prepare handouts covering key points with your contact info. *if desired*
  - Have 20-30 copies and offer to email if you run out
  - Don’t force handouts on people who don’t want them
Printing Your Poster

- You can print in specific CIRCA computer labs using your Gatorlink account
- Ask the CIRCA staff for help **before** printing
- Charges will be e-billed to your account at the end of the month
- You may need to trim to size after printing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Printers</th>
<th>Cost per Page</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Format Plotter</td>
<td>$3.00 per linear foot</td>
<td>Architecture 118, Weil 408, and CSE 211 Labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Format Plotter - High Quality Paper</td>
<td>$10.00 per linear foot</td>
<td>ASC - Hub 224</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Caring for Your Poster

- Handle your poster carefully after printing to avoid crinkling the paper.
- Roll it up carefully, secure with a rubber band and put somewhere to avoid damage.
- Laminate your poster and/or get a poster tube if desired.
Poster Resources

- http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/guides/bio/posters.html
- http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm