

Designing a Poster Presentation

What you need to know

Presentation overview

- Getting all the facts
- Writing and editing
- Organizing content
- Designing your poster
- Producing your poster

Before you begin ...

... Get all the facts.

Define your purpose

- The purpose of your poster must be defined *before* you begin.

Define your purpose cont'd

- Is your purpose to:
 - Provide an accurate snapshot of your research?
 - Communicate your findings to colleagues or industry professionals?
 - Attract positive attention for research, researcher, and institution?

Define your audience

- Who is the poster for?
- What does your research mean to them?
- Will your content appeal to individuals in other disciplines? Does it need to?

Know how much space you have

You need to know:

- The amount of space you are allotted.
- The minimum and/or maximum size of the poster.
- How the poster will be displayed.
- How the poster be transported.

Writing and editing your content

Write for the genre

- Write with brevity in mind.
- Edit, edit, edit.
- Edit during:
 - Writing stage
 - Design stage
 - Final proofing stage

Tip: *Get a friend or colleague to help.*

Chunk your content

- Break your content up into manageable pieces.
- Use bullets.
- Write short paragraphs.
- Include salient information.
 - Want to say more? Use a handout.



Use plain language

- Write clear, concise, direct content that does not obscure meaning.
- The intent of plain language is to make information accessible for your intended audience.

"A man who uses a great many words to express his meaning is like a bad marksman who, instead of aiming a single stone at an object, takes up a handful and throws in hopes he may hit."

-- Samuel Johnson, English lexicographer



"Easy reading is damned hard writing."
-- Nathaniel Hawthorne

Organizing your content



Clarify content with headings

- Headings help readers:
 - Locate information.
 - Skim content.
 - Retrieve information.

Note: Headings should be larger than your body text.

Possible heading combinations

Combination 1

- Objectives
- Data Sources /Study Setting
- Study Design
- Data Collection
- Principal Findings
- Conclusions
- Funding Source

Combination 2

- Objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Funding Source

Possible heading combinations

Combination 3

- Aims
- Methods
- Descriptive Issues
- Statistical Analysis
- Conclusions
- Funding Source

Combination 4

- Research Objectives
- Background
- Study Design
- Results
- Conclusion
- Future Research
- Funding Source

Designing your poster

Using computers for poster design

- For faculty, choose an application that is supported by the college.
 - PowerPoint
 - Word
- Determine your poster size.
- Change your page setup to reflect your actual poster size.



Design your page layout

- Provide white space to help with reader comprehension and legibility.
- Use left alignment for headings and body text.
- Display your content vertically.
- Be consistent.



Select appropriate fonts

- Keep it simple.
- Rule of 3:
 - No more than 3 typefaces on your poster.
 - No more than three font styles.
 - No more than three font sizes.



Choose fonts for legibility

- Use san serif fonts
 - Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Verdana
- San Serif fonts are good display fonts
- Select a large enough font size
 - Print a sample of your chosen font.

Pick font styles carefully

- Use **bold** and *italic* sparingly.
 - These styles can add interest, if used artfully.
- AVOID ALL CAPS FOR EMPHASIS.
- Avoid underlining text.



Consider word and line spacing

- Include only one space between sentences.
- Use 1.5 or double spacing to facilitate reading.
- Use no more than 11 words per line. Shorter lines make for easier reading.

Be wise when using colour

- Provide contrast between the text and its background.
- You need to strike a balance between colour and visual purpose.

Use good contrast: the legibility test

Can you read this?

Can you read this?

Can you read this?

An Example of Good Contrast

Can you read this?

Can you read this?

Sample Page Layout “The Good”

Title/ Name/Institution

Background

Objectives

Methods



Fig 1: Alpha

Findings

Findings

Conclusions

Funder/Sponsor

Producing your poster

Producing a student poster

- Visit an office supply store
 - Foam core presentation display boards.
 - Poster boards
 - Cost: under \$20
- Use their in-house printing services
 - Send a JPG or PDF file
 - Cost: from \$14.99 and up (dependant on size)

Producing a student poster cont'd

- Use your home computer
 - Office 2007 has many design tools
 - Print sections of your poster
- Take your own pictures. Use clipart.
- Visit a craft or scrapbooking store
 - Paper for backgrounds and foregrounds
 - Lettering

Resources

- **Plain Language**

<http://plainlanguagenetwork.org/>

- **Free Stock Photo Website**

<http://www.freerangestock.com/>

- **Microsoft Clip Art**

<http://office.microsoft.com/clipart/>