Preparing an Effective Poster Presentation

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Purpose of a Poster

• Summarize information or research **concisely and attractively**
• Help publicize it and **generate discussion**
• Mixture of a **brief text** mixed with **tables, graphs, pictures**

An academic poster is judged on the basis of
• **Content**
• **Structure**
• **Visual Impact**
• **Clarity**
Where to begin... CONTENT

• Define your audience: specialists/generalists/general public

• Distill your message: What is the most important/interesting/astounding finding from your research?
  a. Identify key point(s)
  b. Rough draft:
    i. Decide on title (you can change later)
    ii. Organize information: Jot down key points in logical order to tell a story

• Prepare graphics: How can you visually share my research?
  a. Graphics needed to convey key points (4 maybe 5)
  b. Identify what doesn’t need to be there
Poster structure: your choice

Note: there is no abstract in a poster, a poster is an abstract, albeit, one with graphics

• Title
• Introduction
• Methods: short
• Results
• Discussion
• Conclusions
  • Acknowledgements
  • References

• Title
• Motivation
• Objectives
• Results
• Implications
  • Acknowledgements
  • References

• Atmospheric N supply to the surface gyre
• Sources of atmospheric N
• N isotopes as tracer of source
• Ocean source of atmospheric N
• Implications for ocean N budget
  • Acknowledgements
  • References
Software for poster design

• **PowerPoint:** A popular, easy-to-use

• **Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign:** Feature-rich professional software with high-resolution images, but more complex

• **Open-source Alternatives:** I’m sure they exist...
Typical poster sizes

• Determine the size of the space provided at conference
  • Typical academic poster sizes
    A0 118.9 cm x 84.1 cm
    A1 84.1 cm x 59.4 cm
    A2 59.4 cm x 42.0 cm
    A3 42.0 cm x 29.7 cm

In Power Point:
  • File → Page Setup
    • Custom or AO – A3
      • Specify width and height in cm or inches (check)
      • Portrait or landscape
  • Or: Download template online
  • Save finished poster as pdf (mac to pc problems)
• 3 seconds to determine whether to stay

• 30 seconds to secure attention

• Use space and margins to give your content room to breathe
Backgrounds and colors

• Colors and backgrounds should be **subtle**
  • Color should highlight, separate, define and associate information – **and remain coherent**
  • Color should **not compete** with your information
• Colors may look different on your screen than they will in your print
• Color-blindness: need high **contrast** bars on graphs, lines on charts and backgrounds and text. Most common is red and green blindness
• Less is more
Rules of Thumb

• Should be legible from about 1 meter, and attract interest from about 5 meters

• Aim for a word count of about $\leq 800$ words

• Sans-serif font like Arial or Helvetica

  • Not like this; or like that; or even this

• Main title should be 70-100 pts, subheadings around 36-40 pts, body text around 24 pts, captions 18 pts

• Format headings and subheadings consistently
Use of graphics

- Use diagrams, graphs or flowcharts to help explain complex information visually.
- If your topic has a central statement, graphic or diagram, make this prominent in your design. Don't hide it in a corner!
- Every graphic should have a purpose.
Graphics

• Font size = 20 – 24 pts
• Large symbols
• No title on the top
• Figure caption on the bottom 18-20 pts
• Prominent legend (not lodged in captions)
• Judicious use of colour