Poster Presentation Guidance

A good poster works in many ways. It can be a good advertisement for your area of work, an effective way to start a debate, and a great way to raise awareness of an issue. This piece outlines the general principles and best practice of what makes a good poster. The principles can be used with the software of your choice.

Planning your Poster Communicate

A poster is not a wall mounted essay, more a colourful abstract. The aim of the poster is to grab the attention of your audience which in turn will generate interest in your area of research. Everything within the poster, including all graphics and text, must relate to the research project you are trying to communicate.

All of your main points and conclusions must be clear and concise. Only use project details which are absolutely essential for getting your point across. Try to express your main points graphically.

Requirements

- Portrait Orientation
- A1 size

Who is your Audience?

Create your poster for your audience. When planning your poster, it is important to know who is going to be looking at it. Your poster is there to get your message across, and it is of no use if the person looking at the poster doesn't understand what they're looking at.

The three main type of audience are:

Specialist: Audience has a high level of knowledge within your discipline. There is a good understanding of unique terminology and practices used within the field. You may go into detail regarding you research without fear of it being misunderstood.

The Wider Field: The audience are in a field of research related to your own but may not be familiar with the more specialist terms and practices within your area.

General: Little or no familiarity with the subject, explanations must be given in the most basic terms.

Engaging the Audience

Your audience will not approach your poster if its subject is not clear from metres away. All elements should be visible from at least 1.5m. In the first three seconds of looking at your poster, the reader is

deciding whether to stay and explore the poster or move on. Make the main heading large and to the point, try to avoid a long main title, you have a whole poster to get your message across.

Layout

• Title: should be in large fonts (e.g. Arial) and attract potential viewers. If possible, institute logos or affiliations should be minimised in size and put in the lower corner of the poster, or, alternatively, next to the title.

• Names: should state your name and institution and the name and institution of your supervisor

• Introduction: Get your viewer interested about the issue or question while using the absolute minimum of background information and definitions. Put the objectives of your study at the end of your introduction.

• Methods: Be short, but precise. State what study design you used and define your study population. Provide a case definition, if applicable. Mention statistical, themes and other methods that were used.

• Results and findings: Briefly provide descriptive results (response rate, age and sex distribution). Present data that more specifically addresses the hypothesis and refer to supporting charts or images. Tables and graphs should stand on their own. – A minimal amount of text materials should supplement the graphic materials. – Use regions of empty space between poster elements to differentiate and accentuate these elements. – Graphic materials should be readable. Lines in illustrations should be larger than normal. – Use colours for emphasis, but do not overuse (2-3 colours are usually enough). Avoid using patterns or open bars in histograms. – Remove all non-essential information from graphs and tables (data curves not discussed by the poster; excess grid lines in tables). – Graphics and tables should have a complete title and legend.

• Conclusion and recommendations: Comment on main results and discuss why they are conclusive and interesting. Discuss potential biases. What are your recommendations?

• Acknowledgments/further information: Thank individuals for specific contributions to project; mention who has provided funding. Provide your e-mail address for further information.

Software:

Posters can be generated using PowerPoint, In Design, QuarkXpress and Word

Useful websites:

Colinpurrington.com

Betterposters.blogspot.ie

www.reads.ie

Title

No full stops in heading, 96 point size, don't make it too long – short and snappy to draw people in.

Never use all caps

Use bold or italics but not both together

Don't bold and underline together

Never use Comic Sans font

Main Text

Try to think if the information could be absorbed in 3-5 minutes

Use graphics where possible instead of too much text

Headers should be 36-44 point size

Light background with dark text may be easier to read than dark background with light text

Leave enough white space at the edges and between sections so that the poster isn't too cluttered

The main text should be readable from about two metres away

Don't use grid lines on graphs

Put any logos at the bottom

Only put in a few references

Think of key messages and keep the poster visually appealing

Remember

Title is short and draws interest

Word count of 400 to 800 approximately

Text is clear and to the point

Use of bullets, numbering, and headlines make it easy to read

Effective use of graphics, colour and fonts

Consistent and clean layout