Posters: Design Basics

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Why a Poster?

• “Visual freedom”
  – A picture can…
    • “Tell a thousand words”
A GREAT POSTER IS...

readable

legible

well organized

succinct

Readable

• “Flow” of language from one topic to the next

• Grammatically correct, no misspellings
Legible

• Posters are read from 6-10 feet away -
  – The font must be readable from this distance.

Well organized

• If your audience has to figure out where the next piece of data is or how the data relate, you’ve lost them…
Succinct

• You have 11 seconds to catch their attention

• Most people will only remember the “punch line”
Effective Poster Design

To make a poster

- Decide what your message is
- Measure the space you have
- Lay out your elements crudely
- Eliminate all extraneous material
Decide what your message is

- Short and sweet
- This should be your title
- Active voice
  - “to be”
  - “-ing”

Investigating the effect on cell Y of adding chemical X
The effect of adding chemical X to cell Y
Chemical X disrupts DNA replication in cell Y

Measure the space you have

- Most meetings tell you what size the poster should be (SC LIFE 32” x 40”)
- Most printers have size limits as well. (42”)

Lay out your elements

- Use “actual size” pieces of paper on the floor or a table to design your elements.

Title Sizes

- Title banner and title
  - Should be readable from 25 feet
  - Title will lure viewers closer
- The rest of the title and body
  - Should be readable from 10 feet away
Title Sizes

• Size of letters in the title
  – Should be 1.5 - 2 inches tall
    • 96 point size
  – Authors names may be smaller
    – 72 points (1 - 1.5 inches)

Remember

• Normal fonts
  – 1 point = 1/72 inch
  – 72 point font = 1 inch
Poster Text

• All text should be...
  – Readable from at least 6 feet away
  – Avoid fonts <18

Poster Text

• Finally, be consistent
• Choose one font – use it throughout
Poster Text

- Add emphasis by using
  - **Boldface**
  - *Underlining*
  - Or *color*

- *Italics are difficult to read!!*

Recommended Fonts

- Avoid Seriffed Fonts and handwriting fonts
  - Times, Courier, *Handwriting, Marker felt*

- Use Sans Seriffed Fonts
  - Gill Sans
  - Trebuchet MS
  - Arial
  - Geneva
  - Helvetica
Poster elements/art

- Space is important
- Font/size to emphasize
  - 6 feet
  - Open a’s and e’s
- Headlines

Illustrations

- The success of a poster directly relates
  - To clarity of illustrations and tables
- **Self-explanatory** graphics should dominate the poster
Illustrations

- Use regions of empty space between poster elements to:
  - Differentiate, and
  - Accentuate
- Graphic materials – visible from 6 feet

Space & Pictures

- Break it up

- White is an element of design
Go
CHILDREN
Slow

Color

• Contrast
  – Dark on light vs. light on dark
  – Complements and opposites
• Ink
  – Large expanses of black
  – Dark background
• Print versus screen
  – RGB vs. CYMK
Poster elements

• Tracking-top/bottom, left right
• Reader shouldn’t have to guess next panel
Edit, Edit, Edit

• ALWAYS too much text in a poster
• Posters primarily are visual pres.
  – The text materials serve to support graphic

Edit, Edit, Edit

• Look critically at the layout
  – If there is about 20% text,
  – 40% graphics, and
  – 40% empty space,
  – You are doing well
Eliminate extraneous material

• 11 seconds to catch eye
• 10 minutes max spent at poster
• Title, Authors, Abstract, Introduction, Results, Materials & Methods, Conclusions
• References
• funding

Edit, Edit, Edit

• When in doubt, rephrase text or delete
• Use active voice when writing the text
• Delete all redundant references and filler phrases
The details of Powerpoint

• Slide size
  – Page set up

![Page Setup dialog box showing slide size and orientation settings.]

The details of Powerpoint

• Guides vs align/group

![Guides vs align/group diagram with a grid and arrows.]
The details of Powerpoint

Resolution (1) of your picture (2) of the printer

Image at 900 X 541 pixels.  Image at 166 X 100 pixels.
The details of Powerpoint

TIFF vs JPEG, GIF, PICT-Graphic Converter
- CMYK vs RGB
Give yourself time

• Premake figures & text first

• At least a day to design from completed figures & text.

Printing

• Printing
  – Draft-scale to fit
  – Final

NOTE-$100-500
Presenting Posters

“Remember that it is not the number of people who come to view your poster …
Presenting Posters

... but the quality of interactions with them that determines its success”

– Robert Anholt

http://www.clemson.edu/SCLife/HHMI%20UR/How%20to%20Create%20a%20Poster%20UR.pdf
Other websites

http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm

http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/NewSite/  (a poster!)

http://www.writing.engr.psu.edu/posters.html