Making Research Posters
Some Tips and Stuff

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And thanks to Jim McCabe of www.umnposters.com
"I know so much that I don't know where to begin."
Research Poster Background

- Research posters are a way to present your work at scientific/academic conferences.

- Seems like all major conferences have one or more poster sessions (sometimes with >100 posters), some have 6-10 sessions.

- Many like to present posters, and view them, because unlike a conventional talk, there is ample opportunity to meet and discuss issues one-on-one in a poster presentation format; posters are more social.
One typically submits an “abstract” to a particular conference, via website. Abstracts are like 150-300 words describing your research.

Conference organizers review abstracts and select some for presentation as “talks”… a 15 minute presentation in front of podium and seated audience.

Other abstracts are selected for poster presentation.

Posters are viewed as less prestigious than talks, but frankly there are too many good abstracts to have everyone “talk”
Researchers Posters Should…

- Be attractive if not fun to look at…
- Be easy to “get”… from 6 feet away
- Advertise, the name and affiliation of author(s)
- Be simple and precise
- Be well organized, 2 or 3 “areas” or so
- Have easily identifiable and readable conclusions
Researchers Posters Should NOT…

- Be made 1 hour before conference
- Be filled with text
- Use HUGE or teeny-weeny font
- Use CAPS for title… use sentence case
- Overwhelm viewers
- Be incorrectly sized for space
How to Make a Poster

- Conferences have various size (L*H) poster requirements

- PAY ATTENTION to the requirements because the “corkboard” where you’ll be hanging your poster will only be this big. It can be really embarrassing to show up with a poster too big for the space!

- I say make your poster smaller than allotted space

- Remember, some viewers will be short, others tall; tall people are better ;)
How to Make a Poster

- Use PowerPoint or similar software, Pagemaker is great too; open-source freeware is good option – ask printer what format they prefer

- Think about “blocks” or “chunks” of space, empty space is good; design with viewer in mind

- Use proper citations (key ones only)

- Make sure your conclusion is easy to find and read; summarize point of poster and set it apart for viewers; many will simply read conclusion

- There are plenty of PowerPoint “templates” on web
How to Make a Poster

- Presume it will take you 15 – 20+ hours to make poster and get it to (email?) printer; first one may take much more time

- You’ll also need time to review printer “proofs” and then have it printed.

- Start poster work 2+ weeks before conference

- You cannot expect to make and have your poster printed last minute
PowerPoint Tips  (thanks Jim!)

- Make a small version of the poster that is \( \frac{1}{2} \) as tall and \( \frac{1}{2} \) as wide as the final poster size, as printing doubles dimensions. Example: if you want a 4’ x 6’ poster, go into page setup and make the dimensions 24” wide by 36” long)

- Type your text into textboxes that you make on the PowerPoint slide

- Important note: for images and/or graphs, it is best to use *uncompressed tiff files*
How to get poster to site

- Roll up and rubberband (not good idea)
- Purchase/borrow and use paper tube
  (you can leave at conf!)
- Purchase/borrow and use plastic tube
- Ship it (why?)
- Have it printed “locally” (too risky for me!)
- Bring quality thumbtacks (perhaps long and short ones); double stick mounting tape may also be good to have
Printing costs

- Poster printing costs between $50 and $200

- Costs vary by printer-store, paper type, and size

- Local UMN options included but are not limited to

  (approx ordered from high-cost to low)

- Kinkos
- Albinson Reprographics/ProColor
- Biomedical Imaging Processing Lab (BIPL) UMN
- Jim McCabe and UMNPosters*
- Computer Lab in Basement of Coffman Union
Other stuff

- Put your poster up on time
- Be ready to “present” at start of session
- Wear professional clothing, brush teeth, smile
- Let viewers browse without assaulting them
- Have 8.5*11 (or smaller) color copies of posters (or summary) available for passing out to interested viewers; have your email address on handout
- Export PowerPoint (or whatever) into PDF format for archiving and emailing to the (potentially) interested
Some online resources

- www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm
  (superb)

- http://undergradresearch.missouri.edu/resources/powerpoint-video.php
  (a video tutorial for PowerPoint poster making)

- http://depts.washington.edu/mphpract/ppposter.html#top
  (UW SPH)

- www.umnposters.com

- Search Google for “Research Poster” and/or “Scientific Poster”