Creating an Effective Poster
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WHAT SHOULD A POSTER DO?
- Tell a story
- Provide an overview of your work
- Start discussion with attendees
- Stand alone if you aren’t there to provide an explanation

DESIGNING YOUR POSTER
Sketch out your poster on paper, so you will know what you are thinking of doing before you sit down at a computer. Remember that a simple design is usually better than complicated one. While you want it to be visually interesting, don’t use too many bells and whistles that might distract from your content.

Think about your audience. For the URS, many people will not have in-depth knowledge of your topic, so you want to use terminology that a lay-person will understand. Avoid jargon as much as possible.

Your poster should be divided into numerous sections:
- Title, Author and Affiliation
- Abstract (~50-100 words)
- Introduction (~200 words): Give a brief picture of the main issue, the previous work relevant to your project and what your project is specifically addressing. (This should not be a full lit review, obviously.) This should be followed by your hypothesis or specific research question(s).
- Methods (~200 words): You don’t need to explain all of the nuances of your methods as you will be there, most of the time, to provide additional explanation. Use bulleted lists to summarize the information instead of presenting it in paragraph form.
- Results (~200 words): You will want to focus on how your hypothesis fared in light of your results (or what information your research question revealed). Remember you don’t need to explain every aspect of your results. You may also want to include figures/tables to explain your results.
- Discussion and Conclusions (~300-400 words): This is your chance to interpret your results as well as discuss future research. What is the take-away from your research? What have you added to the conversation/body of knowledge?
- References: list any sources cited on the poster
MAKING YOUR POSTER

Probably the easiest, and most common, method for making a poster is using PowerPoint. You can make ONE slide in PowerPoint, setting the size to 36” x 48” (Design > Page Setup. Under Slides Sized for: choose Custom. Choose Landscape and set the Width: 48, the Height: 36, and the Number of slides from: 1)

Make sure you set the page size first, or you may have to go back and make a lot of changes to your layout. You will use text boxes (Insert > Text Box) to create paragraphs, boxes and borders. You can type directly into the PowerPoint slide or cut and paste from a word processor.

You can also use Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign or Word to create your poster, depending on your familiarity.

Font choices
Fonts play an important role in people being able to read your content and have a general feel for your research.

Common fonts and sizes
- Title: Arial, Arial Black, Tahoma or Verdana (most often a sans-serif font); 72-120 point
- Subtitle: Use the same font as title; 48-80 point
- Section headers: Same font as title; 36-72 point (50% larger than the body text)
- Body: Garamond, Georgia, Book Antiqua (most often a serif font); 24-48 point; make sure to make all of the body text is the same size throughout the poster

Images
Images should be scanned at 300dpi at 100% size of use in the poster (e.g. if you want it to be 10x12, that is the size you should scan it to be). Unless you can get a high resolution image, don’t use images from the web as they will appear very pixelated once printed.
**Design Tips**

The top priority for your poster should be readability, so you want to make sure you choose background and text colors that do not make it difficult to read (e.g. yellow text on a red background); contrasting colors are a good idea with a light background and a darker text. Coordinate the text with any images you are using as well. Most posters will be divided into 3-4 columns with some use of images or graphs to increase visual interest.

Do not use gradient fill. If you do, you will end up with lines running through the finished product.

Do not use all caps.

If you would like to use the UMM logo on your poster, you can find the files at http://www.morris.umn.edu/urelations/downloads/. (You will need to log in using your x.500 information.)

**PRODUCING YOUR POSTER**

UMM's Duplicating Services Dept. has a printer that will print posters 40" high by whatever width you want (for $12 per foot). For the URS we ask that you keep the poster to 4-feet wide or smaller. The price is the same for color or black and white printing. Talk to your advisor about how to pay for a poster and contact the URS committee if needed.

Be aware that these posters take time to print and dry. Duplicating Services can produce approximately 5 per day, so you must **PLAN AHEAD: Aim at having your posters ready 5-7 working days in advance of the time you need it.** NOTE: Bring an 8.5 X 11 copy of your poster with you to Duplicating so they have an idea of what you think the poster should look like. This can be black and white. You will need to provide them with an electronic version, preferably a PDF, as well.

**OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES**

http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/speaking/poster/index.cfm
http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/NewSite/
http://www.waspacegrant.org/for_students/student_internships/wsgc_internships/posterdesign.html
http://www.tltc.ttu.edu/posters/How_to_Make_a_Poster_Using_PowerPoint.pdf
http://www.unh.edu/urc/poster-presentation-help
http://undergradresearch.missouri.edu/resources/powerpoint-video.php

**Resources Consulted**

www.morris.umn.edu/urs/posters-keith.html
http://www.ctss.colostate.edu/plotterclass1.pdf
http://www.unh.edu/urc/poster-presentation-help

Tips for Making a URS poster by Mark J. Logan