Guide to Scientific Posters

Overview

A scientific poster is a large-format document meant to communicate key points related to your current research. The Basic Sciences Communication Studio offers extensive support in poster creation using PowerPoint.

Planning

Many conferences will provide you with a list of requirements for your submission. Some will not. Whether there are guidelines or not, you need to let the uniqueness of your research guide the content of your poster. Follow these steps in planning your document:

- Identify key & required sections.
- Identify appropriate illustrations.
- Create a storyboard of the above information. Pay attention both to narrative flow and symmetric appeal.

A poster is rarely meant to encompass the entirety of a research project. Instead, its aim is to provide a quick background and to zero in on the uniqueness of YOUR work.

Layout

When designing your layout it is crucial that you remember the limitations of presenting your research in this format. Scientific conferences often house 1000 poster presentations in a single room. This means the competition for attention to your work is enormous. Keep the following tips in mind to maximize the appeal of your poster.

Text: A reader should be able to read your poster from 6 feet away and should be able to read it in its entirety within 10 minutes. To accomplish this, avoid big blocks of text. Instead use bulleted or numbered list when possible, and use sentence breaks instead of paragraph breaks.

- Title: @ 78 pt font
- Headings: @ 44 pt font
- Body Text: @ 26 pt font
- Captions: @16 pt font

Use a compelling and informative title. A title that directly speaks to the uniqueness of your research is more likely to grab attention. Be creative with the order of your sections. Put compelling text and visuals in a central location. Place graphics throughout your poster, not clumped within a single section. Place supplementary information at the bottom of the poster (resources, acknowledgements, etc).

Design

Your design scheme should be clean and visually appealing.
- Parallel structure: consistent font type, size, and alignment for all headings, body text, and captions
- Dark text on light background
- Colors that complement unchangeable graphics
- Use high resolution photographs (800 dpi or higher)

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