What Is a Poster?

A visual communication tool!

- No magic formula for success
- Rather, tried-and-true methods to make the process easier
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poster vs. Talk</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less intimidating</td>
<td>More intimidating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less weight on CV</td>
<td>More weight on CV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time for preparation</td>
<td>Less time for preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time for discussion</td>
<td>Less time for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster vs. Talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time for interaction</td>
<td>Less time for interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good way to meet people</td>
<td>Not a good way to meet people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More relaxed atmosphere</td>
<td>Less relaxed atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy and cramped</td>
<td>Not!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poster vs. Talk</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetitive and tiring!</td>
<td>Not!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Play”, “forward” and “rewind”</td>
<td>Just “play” baby!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewable when you’re day-dreamin’</td>
<td>Not!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable</td>
<td>Not!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Posters

1. Arts-and-crafts poster
   - Cut-and-paste onto panels on a matte board

2. Software-generated poster
   - Adobe PageMaker
   - Adobe Illustrator
   - Microsoft PowerPoint
Dress Code?

What do y’all think about these shirts?

Dress Code?

 Coordinate your poster and wardrobe!

Where to Start?

First, address these questions

- 1. Who is your target audience?
- 2. What is your core message?
Important Guidelines

Remember the KISS Principle!

The poster is NOT a manuscript!
- It should be as concise as possible

Convey the Big Picture!
- NOT the details
Important Guidelines

Posters are primarily visual presentations!
- Graphics, not text, should dominate!

Don’t overload your poster
- Keep some empty space between sections
Let’s Get it Started, HA!

Title
Abstract??
Introduction
Methodology
Results
Conclusions
References
Acknowledgements
Title

- Typically across the top of the poster
- Should be eye-catching but not too cute!
- Never more than two lines long
- Use 72-font (~1” in height)
- Include author(s) and affiliation(s)
  - Use smaller font
Don’t use all CAPS

- TOWN OFFICIAL TAKES STAND ON MANURE PILE
- Town official takes stand on manure pile

Headlines – The Tonight Show with Jay Leno
It’s OK to use a “sentence case” format instead of “title case”

- Winery says it was a mouse, not a rat, that was found in sandwich
- Winery Says It Was a Mouse, Not a Rat, that Was Found in Sandwich

Headlines – The Tonight Show with Jay Leno
It’s OK to use a “sentence case” format instead of “title case”

- Winery says it was a *Mus musculus*, not a *Rattus rattus*, that was found in sandwich
- Winery says it was a *Mus Musculus*, not a *Rattus Rattus*, that was found in sandwich
Layout A

START

1

2

3

4

5

6

FINISH
Note: Layout A is far more superior than layout B

- It accommodates multiple visitors to your poster!
Use large type and **boldface** for subject headings

- 40-60 type

Use smaller type for body text

- 20-28

Never use less than 14-pt!

- And if possible, not less than 16-pt or even 18-pt
Text

Use a serif font for body text

- Illustrate
  - Times New Roman
  - Palatino

- Illustrate
  - Arial
  - Helvetica
Don’t include very large blocks of text

Use sentence lists whenever possible

Use *italics* and *boldface* instead of *underlining*

Don’t vary excessively the types, *type sizes* and *typefaces*
Introduction

- Offer some background information
  - Avoid excessive definitions
- “Hook” viewers by piquing their interest
  - Use photographs, if possible
Methodology

Be brief

Use of explicit subject headings is a plus!
Results

- Typically the largest section of the poster
- Use of explicit subject headings is a plus!
- Illustrate in graphs and tables what you found!
Conclusions

Discuss your results

- Highlight their significance

Use of explicit subject headings is a plus!

You can also address future prospects
Acknowledgements

Your chance to thank the people who have made important contributions to the project
References

- List the most relevant journal articles to your work
  - Limit yourself to only a few!
Graphics

http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/GoodGraphs/
Graphics

Should be as clear and simple as possible
- All distractions should be removed

Avoid colored backgrounds for graphs

Align y-axis labels horizontally, if space permits
Graphics

http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/GoodGraphs/
Graphics

Don’t display 2-D data in 3-D

Use clipart only if it

- 1. adds interest to the display
- 2. complements the subject matter

Addition of a thin colored border to a photograph may enhance its visual appeal
Colors are a two-edged sword

- They attract attention
- They detract from message
Colors

Do use colors in your poster, but with the following caveats

- Avoid garish colors
- Stick to 2-4 colors
- Be mindful of color contrast between background and foreground
- Remember that a few viewers could be color-blind
You should consider having a handout for viewers

- It can include
  - Your contact information
  - A miniature copy of the poster
  - Detailed methodology
  - An annotated list of references
  - Relevant websites
Final Touches

Make sure that the poster is devoid of mechanical errors

- Look for
  - spelling mistakes
  - the use of of repeated words
  - grammatical errors you might have made
Final Touches

- Make sure that the poster is **legible**
- Make sure that the poster has a **consistent style**
Presenting Your Poster

- Dress conservatively
  - Try to choose clothes that do not clash with your poster 😊

- No hats!

- Wear comfortable shoes

- Arrive to the poster session early
Presenting Your Poster

- Don’t chew gum/tobacco
- Make yourself readily identifiable
- Don’t stand too close to your poster
- Don’t put your hands in your pocket
Presenting Your Poster

Be able to give a 2-4 minute verbal explanation of your work

When explaining your poster
- Don’t use notes
- Do refer to the figures
- Don’t turn your back to the viewer
Presenting Your Poster

Don’t engage in *prolonged* conversation with a single individual

Try to circulate to view other posters

Stick around for the entire duration!

Have fun!!!
Printing Your Poster

http://www.sgcs.usf.edu/poster_entry.php
- 2ft x 3ft poster printed for free

http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/ur_symposium/2011/
- Office of Undergraduate research
- Link to PDF with poster printing prices
Useful Websites

http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/NewSite/index.html
  - Arguably, the best resource about poster presentations

http://www.bio.miami.edu/ktosney/file/PosterHome.html
  - Offers positive and negative examples of posters

http://www.stanford.edu/group/blocklab/dos%20and%20dons%20of%20poster%20presentation.pdf
  - The Do’s and Don’ts of Poster Presentation