Designing Effective Poster Presentations

Presentation slides

The potential poster presentation atmosphere.
How can one stand out?

The Good Poster

What makes a good poster presentation?
- One part billboard, one part research paper
- Should be memorable
- Should be concise
- Should be self-sustaining
- Posters speak, but you speak better
- Know your audience
Typical scientific posters use **hypothesis** and experimentation to prove or disprove the research and lends itself well to a narrative arc structure. But here are other ways to structure a narrative through argument or examination.

In building **Evidence by Example** you give concrete illustrations that provide a convincing argument supporting a thesis.

**Process Analysis** is a demonstration either of how something works, for example, cell mitosis, or of how to do something, like edit a Wikipedia article.
Cause and Effect focuses on what creates a particular outcome.

Compare and Contrast uses a comparison of like and unlike things to explore an idea and how it fits into a bigger construct.

Classification can help the audience sort through and understand detailed information or ideas by grouping them.
Slide x

With a **Deductive** process you accumulate evidence to make a useful generalization.

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Slide xi

**Definition** is used when a subject requires the understanding of terms, ideas, or phenomena, while **Redefinition** gives new understanding or new meaning to a topic.

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Slide xii

**Sections to Include**

- Title
- *(Abstract?)*
- Intro
- Materials/methods
- Results
- Conclusion
  
  - Citations
  - Acknowledgements
Design Considerations

Two main concepts while designing centered on:

Consistency

Being consistent with the design in your presentation adds 2 qualities to your presentation;
It gives the sense of a branded presentation which can make it memorable
And craftsmanship makes it clear and professional.
First, let’s talk about branding consideration which is where the creativity lies. It all starts with establishing design “rules” in your presentation.
Branding is important to keep the look of the poster consistent and memorable.

You can choose a variety of elements but make sure you don't lose sight of the big picture.

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**Slide 5**

**Good**
- Consistent headers
- Consistent colors
- Consistent font choice

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**Slide 6**

**Bad**
- Not much consistency
- Layout is jumbled or cluttered
This is an example of a poster that uses memorable elements. But the use of memorable elements has to be used wisely. Here you can see that the Overview section is a little hidden.

With poster presentations, you only have one very large display so you have to make it look professional, which brings us back to craftsmanship. Good craftsmanship shows that you care about presenting your subject in the best light and that you should be taken seriously.

The design principles that I will describe can be used in a variety of other mediums, from PowerPoint presentations, to brochures and beyond.
In a poster presentation you will have designated sections that orient your reader to your content.

The sections of the poster (abstract, intro, results, conclusion, etc) act as a way for a viewer to be guided through your presentation sequentially.

The traditional column or grid layout is a universal approach that can bring a sense of flow for your viewers.

Viewers can start from the left and progress thru your content by reading to the right.

Sometimes a vertical layout is required for an event.

You can still make use of a column layout but perhaps you can use an additional row or two to add supplemental content.
This can be an eye catching unique approach but it depends on your subject matter.

This less orthodox format/layout can see use for humanities subject matter that lends itself to a sequential approach.

The grid doesn’t have to be visible

Setting your layout to have a focal point can be useful in giving the most space for your main points.

In this case, center view is the prime real estate for your main analysis 2nd is the intro, conclusions, materials, etc.

The acknowledgements and logos can be placed out of the way on the bottom.
Slide 16

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Slide 17

Visual cues can help guide a viewer through the content.

If you find that your content doesn’t happen to be balanced enough to fit within a perfect grid, then using numbers or letters can help keep the viewer from getting lost in your research.

Slide 18

Be mindful of the empty space between content items to ensure that your sections align well in your poster. This adds to a poster by giving it a clean and organized look.

Here the vertical space units size are all the same. That unit size is reused for the top and bottom margin giving us a frame for the slide.

Here we see ½ of the unit size used to separate the content items vertically. We can also see that smaller spacing unit reused to separate two images.

Content that is close in proximity to other content, makes it appear that the content should be related.

By using more space to separate the content items, you can make subsections or new sections altogether. **Visual Hierarchy** plays a role here.
Slide 19

Layout Example (bad)

What's wrong here?
- Horizontal grid doesn't work well
- No visual hierarchy
- No focal point

Slide 20

Layout Example (good?)

Good or bad?
Mostly good

Slide 21

Graphics

Use as many interesting images you can get your hands on.

Despite how interesting your research is, images will always be the first thing that is seen by a passerby.
A picture is worth a 1000 words.

Your graphics will attract attention.

Altho images should be large enough to decipher from 6 feet away.

What’s missing here?

You can use tricks if the image is too detailed to be as large as you want it.

This will help maximize your space for more materials.
Edges of an image can blend into the background.

To clearly define the edges of an image, add a border or shadows will also work well.

Images with clearly defined edges, whether it has a border or not, look nicer and will align better within your layout.

Slide 26

Infographic Types

Distribution

- Histogram
- Box & Whisker

Parts to a whole

- Pie Chart
- Donut Chart
- Treemap

Relationship

- Venn Diagram
- Scatter Plot

Spatial

- Choropleth
- Contour Line

Time Comparison

- Line Chart
- Timeline

System

- Flowchart
- Schematic
Showing too much data with charts, graphs, and infographics will obscure the message and may confuse the viewer. Simplify the message and choose an appropriate way to display that message.

3d graphs can confuse the data being presented. It is better to use simple 2d graphs because they can be easier to read.

Considering graphs, the y-axis text should be rotated, not stacked.
Slide 30

What when wrong

Slide 31

What's good here?
What might not be so good.

Slide 32

Just as with powerpoint, the type treatment can help bring emphasis to your content.
Slide 33

2 main types of font faces Sarif and San-sarif.
San-sarif fonts are easier to read at a distance and should be used a majority of the time in PowerPoint presentations.
Sarif fonts have little graphic shapes.
Sarif font could still be used in titles.
Sarif fonts most of the time have thick and thin elements which again makes it harder to read at a distance (some San-sarif fonts do too). Script fonts are notorious with thin elements of a letter.

Slide 34

San-sarif fonts have a more modern look to them, but a sarif font can be easier to read in large amounts.
That’s why novels and most newspapers use a sarif font.

Slide 35

All caps and capitalizing the first letter in titles make the titles a little hard to read.
In a poster presentation, typically the audience will glance at a title and it using capital letters in a line of text, takes the viewer slightly longer to read.

Titles: CAPS vs. no caps

WHICH TEXT IS EASIER TO READ?
Is This Text Easier To Read?
Sentence case is easier to read.
Use emphatic type treatments to attract your audience to content. It helps to add to the visual hierarchy for headers and titles.

- varied use of font makes sense here because of the layout theme/style that was used.
- font choice for “BIOBLITZES” is hard to read but its treatment is interesting enough to elicit attention.
- title is short and sweet

- nice vertical layout that mimics its subject
- eye catching title (short and sweet)
- the columns aren’t consistent tho.
Slide 39 - This example has a nice header that uses different type treatments to generate a hierarchy of info that effectively breaks the header down into bit-size piece.

Slide 40 - Just as with type treatment, color can help attract attention to your content.

Slide 41 - Dark colored backgrounds use a lot of ink when printing and can slightly bleed if printed on lower quality paper. Not too much a concern.
Light background are more common. Be sure to keep the contrast high between for the text and the background. If you squint your eyes and content is hard to see (like Left and Middle boxes here) then it is time choose more contrasted colors. Use more muted (less vivid) colors in your presentation because it can work well for design elements, such as text backgrounds, borders, etc. and looks more sophisticated most times.

There are two main methods for creating posters; large printouts, and the modular form. With either method there may be a different set of tool that you may need to bring with you, as well at ways to transport the posters safely.

This is the modular form which can be a useful approach. In the case of a live experiment that may be ongoing, you can quickly swap out panels to update the information on the status of the current experiment. This method gives you a little less options for designing and usually takes up more space.
The large print out method has a nice unified look and usually allows you full creative freedom in laying out your content. Altho, you are not able to edit any portion of the poster without it becoming less professional looking.

### Slide 52

**Presenting your Poster**

- Appearance
- Dress
- Name tag
- Demeanor

- Prepare a one-sentence overview.
- Do not refer to notes.
- Speak to your viewers.

Bring business cards, copies of papers or manuscripts and shrunken version of poster. If you must leave your poster, affix a note alerting any viewers to your expected time of return. Thank your viewers for visiting. If they have stayed more than 4 minutes, you have succeeded.

### Slide 53

Parting image: memorable poster and presenter.