



HOW TO DESIGN A

Research Poster

Research posters are an increasingly popular way for scholars to disseminate their research. When presented in an effective visual format academic posters are an excellent vehicle to communicate messages in a unique and distinctive way, and have the potential to create a platform for informal discourse.

The most effective posters combine text, charts, and images to summarise information concisely and present findings in a visually stimulating way that is easy to understand. However often, because of poor design practices, ideas and concepts are not always conveyed successfully and as a result opportunities for effective dissemination are lost.

Before you begin the first thing to be very clear about is to know why you have chosen to share your research as a poster. This is really important because it will help you to focus on the key messages and information that you are seeking to convey. You also need to identify your intended or 'target' audience as this will influence the aesthetics of your poster design.

The purpose of this poster is two-fold. The first is to share key considerations related to effective poster design. The second is to model aspects of those considerations.

WHAT MAKES A

Good Poster?

The effective use of graphics, colour and fonts to create an appealing visual design. An engaging title and headings that draw interest, and convey ideas in a concise and effective way. The use of clear legible text. Whilst text is important, using too much defeats the purpose of presenting ideas as a poster. Use images to help keep text to a minimum and consider the formal elements of design.

A GOOD POSTER

is a balance between design and content

THE FORMAL ELEMENTS

of Design

Line, Shape, Form, Tone, Texture, Pattern, Colour, Space and Composition

Do ask about the display location, and ascertain the required size and format (portrait or landscape) of the poster.

Don't be afraid to use space to enhance your poster design.

Space

Do's & Don'ts

A SPLASH OF COLOUR

Colour!

Colour pallets can help you to coordinate hues that work well together but you do need to consider colour theory. Colours may hold cultural or psychological social significance with regard to the meanings people may associate with them, which you may be able to utilise to visually support the effective dissemination of your work.

T Y P O G R A P H Y

Remember you are designing a poster and not attempting to fit an academic research paper onto a single piece of paper. Aim to use between 300-800 words. Ensure the text is legible so avoid using anything less than 14pt and don't use too many different fonts. Perhaps use a 'fancy' hand drawn or script style for headings or key points, but otherwise stick to type faces that are easy to read. San-serif styles like Arial, Calibri or Helvetica work well.

Be concise. Every word needs to earn its place and contribute to the readers understanding of the message you are conveying.

VISUAL AESTHETICS

A picture is worth a 1,000 words. Using images to help convey your message. These may include photographs, infographics, charts, graphs, illustrations and diagrams.

DESIGN AND PRINT

If you aren't familiar with design software, for example Photoshop, one of the simplest and most effective package to use to design your poster is Power Point.

Some conferences utilise digital presentations but if your event is 'old school' when you send your design to print you will need to check the format reprographics require (PDF, JPEG etc.) and specify the size (typically AO or A1). Also consider the quality and finish of the paper or board (i.e.: matt or gloss).

Copyright Concerns?

Before using any text, images or data please ensure you have permission and are not in breach of copyright law. Seek permission direct from the source or utilise images that are distributed under a Creative Commons license.