Description

In the previous article, we focused on planning the poster, while here we'll discuss the designing. Designing not only talks about the look and feel of the poster but also "information design."

Designing

Well-designed posters catch your interest and communicate a clear message through pictures and only the most essential words.

Title

?? Use a short title. Highlight the study and not necessarily the conclusions.

Example

Average: *A Study on How to Design Effective Posters*

Better: *Designing Effective Posters*

? Don't use long, all-inclusive titles.

These might be appropriate for a journal article but not a poster. Titles with excess jargon or punctuation are tedious to read.

Author Credentials, References, and Acknowledgements

?? Give clear attribution to the names of the authors and affiliations—place this section below or next to the title.

References and Acknowledgements are auxiliary sections that can be placed in the lower left corner of a poster.

? Don't leave people to wonder about who did the work or omit References and Acknowledgements to save space.

Also, avoid excessive citations and footnotes.

Layout

?? Determine a logical sequence for the material. Sketch your layout by opting for either of the following:

- Arrange materials into columns (3–5 columns)
- Arrange materials vertically from top left corner to bottom right corner
- Organize material into sections and number to make the flow obvious

? Don't confuse your reader by segregating text, figure, and legends in separate areas and in a haphazard arrangement.

Tip 1!

Use arrows or numbers that lead the reader from one block to the next one to enable them to follow your sequence.

Type Size

?? Use a type size which is easily readable from a distance of about 5 feet:

- **Title** should be readable from 25–50 feet distance.
- **Author credentials** should be a type size smaller than the title but larger than poster text.
- **Poster text** should preferably be of the same type size throughout, except, headings, which can be larger, and references, which can be smaller.

? Don't make the type size too large or too small

Examples of type proportion

- Title: 96 pt
- Authors: 72 pt
- Affiliations: 36–48 pt
- Section headings: 36 pt
- Text: 24 pt
- Acknowledgements: 18 pt

Fonts

?? Use plain fonts, e.g., Times New Roman, Century, Palatino, with italics or bold for emphasis.

? Don't use many font [styles](). Shifting styles unnecessarily and using too creative styles can make reading your poster tedious, e.g., text written in Helvetica and Courier, as well as in uppercase are hard to read.

Tip 2!

Serif fonts help guide the eye along the line, thus improving readability and comprehension.

Color

?? Use colors in your poster in a way that they help convey additional meaning:

- Use contrast scheme—light color background and dark color text
- Use 2 or 3 colors—too many will distract and confuse viewers
- Use multiple colors in a consistent pattern—or else viewers will spend their time wondering about the pattern rather than the content

? Don't make the following errors when deciding the color:

- Avoid background colors that transition from light to dark—they will reduce the contrast between the text and the background
- Avoid gratuitous colors
- Avoid dark backgrounds with light letters—very tiring to read
- Avoid overly bright colors—they wear out readers' eyes
- Don't use red/green combinations—red/green colorblindness is common

Graphics

?? Use self-explanatory graphics

Good graphics—graphs, illustrations, photos, pictures—should be used to reinforce content and not solely as embellishments.

- Graphs should be large enough for viewing from a distance of at least 3 feet
- Use simple 2-D line graphs, bar charts, pie charts
- Use bright, contrasting lines, and symbols, e.g., avoid dark red lines against a dark blue background
- Use heavier lines in tables and graphs for easier viewing

? Don't use 3-D graphs unless you are displaying 3-D data, since these are difficult to interpret. Don't use too many pictures and photographs in your poster.

Examples

?? Example of a well-designed poster

The design in this poster follows a logical sequence. The text has been arranged in different columns and numbers have been used to make the flow obvious, making it an ideal poster!

? Example of a poorly designed poster

In this poster, more than 3 colors are used with too much text and many figures leading to a cluttered image.

Category

1. Career Corner
2. PhDs & Postdocs

Date Created
2016/09/23
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