Description

Whether you love or dread them, conference presentations are a crucial part of any research-oriented career. Sharing and exchanging findings and information with others in your field is important. It helps to stay up to date on the latest developments, network with fellow professionals, and identify potential collaborators or new directions for your own research. Presentation methods continue to evolve as technology offers new ways to make research more exciting and accessible. Digital interactive poster presentations are the latest innovation sweeping the conference circuit.

From Paper to Digital

Visual accompaniment to presentations is a time-honored way to enhance or add depth to the research results being shown to an audience. In the past, students or young researchers who presented academic and scientific work created paper posters that featured the highlights of their work. With the advent of technology, e-posters began to grow in popularity in the 1990s. Also known as "digital posters", these come in a variety of formats. Some may include stand-alone single elements such as a video, chart, photo, game, slideshow, while some may include a combination of several videos, charts, etc.

E-posters, as their name implies, are hosted online rather than in physical space. Their integration into conference poster sessions has highlighted the advantages of digital over traditional paper posters, including:

- E-posters may be interactive and facilitate learning without the presenter nearby
- These posters can present a great deal of information in a condensed format. [Unlike paper posters](), they don't look crowded and messy
- Addition of video, voice, slideshows, and photos provides a more interactive and enhanced experience for the audience
- E-posters widen the audience as they are available online to anyone, not only to conference attendees
- As they are available online, digital posters also facilitate discussions or "communities of interest" around the presented work
- E-poster sessions mitigate the busyness of live poster sessions, allowing participants to learn more from sessions they attend

With these numerous factors in favor of digital posters, it's no wonder that they have become the norm over the past decade in many academic disciplines.

From E- or Digital Posters to Digital Interactive Poster Presentations

During the 14th Meeting of the European Association of Cardiothoracic Surgery in 2001, a new type of digital poster presentation was made, named [digital interactive poster presentation](). First proposed by De Simone et al. (2001), the digital interactive poster presentation, or DIPP, aimed to make poster sessions even more effective in communicating important data and discoveries by using an interactive format. The DIPP lets presenters project their posters on a screen or wall and give a brief, 3-5 minute presentation while highlighting important figures and charts. The popularity that the concept of DIPP had received at this very first session has grown ever since.

[DIPPs are actually just soft copy or pdf versions]() of traditional posters that will be projected in the session followed. However, there are some advantages of DIPP over traditional posters. It allows the presenter to magnify or emphasize the portions of the presentation they find most interesting or relevant. It also provides opportunities for interaction between the presenters and audience in ways that traditional posters often do not. Traditional posters might end up in a trash can following a presentation. On the other hand, DIPPs can be preserved online, and later obtained in pen-drives if allowed.

Interactive Features of DIPPs

When a DIPP is created for viewing online or display on a screen or wall, the presenter can add different features to make it easier for the audience to interact more with the material and presentation. Hyperlinks and email addresses are one easy way to share contact information with interested audience members. For those of you who are more tech-savvy, you can include a QR code on your DIPP. That way, people who have a specific app installed on their smartphones or tablets can scan the QR code. It would direct them automatically to a website or receive contact information or text. Some people also include links that allow viewers to directly send their comments and feedback on the poster or presentation. With these new innovative presenting methods, scientific and scholarly community will be able to reach a much larger audience. This will, in turn, lead science and research to flourish.

Have you encountered DIPPs before? What are your thoughts on interactive conference presentations? What other interesting presentation innovations have you seen? Please share your thoughts with us in the comments section below!

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