

Effective Posters— Presenting your Results Clearly and Persuasively



Courtesy Carlos A. Alvarez Zarbián

Celia M. Elliott
Department of
Physics
cm Elliott@uiuc.edu

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Scientists present posters for a variety of reasons

- Disseminate results in an interactive, non-time-limited forum
- Get immediate feedback from other researchers
- Establish future collaborations
- Gain the respect of the community
- Teach the audience something
- Learn something themselves



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Your poster must be tailored to your audience to be effective

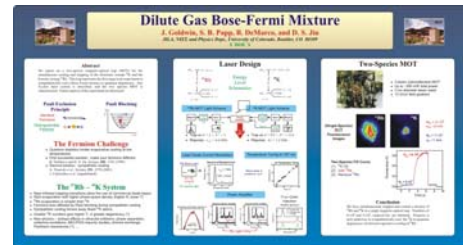
- Who is your audience?
- What do they need to know?
- What is their level of understanding?
- What one idea or image do you want them to take with them when they walk away?



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A good poster has four key characteristics

- Eye-catching
- Well-organized
- Readable
- Succinct

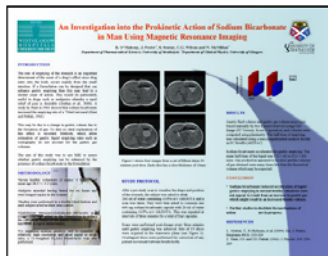


Courtesy B. DeMarco

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Every poster should have a “headline” and a “byline”

- Title—
in 120-pt font
< 10 words
- Your name and
affiliation—
in 80 pt
- No abstract



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Remember
that people
will be looking
at your poster
while standing,
not sitting



Don't put important points or
tiny print at the bottom



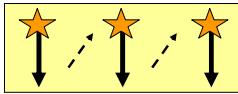
6

Use “reader training” to guide the organization of your poster

Most viewers will read from upper left down and across

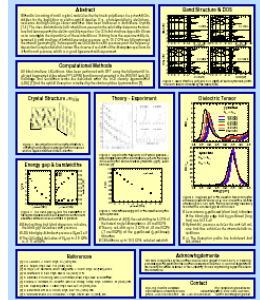
Break up your story into “columns” (think “newspaper”)

Put important points at the top of each column



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How is the viewer going to navigate through this poster?



8

Poster styles have evolved over time...



think outside the “boxform”



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The body of the poster should feature the methods and results

Problem statement, motivation, objectives

Previous or related work

Methods

Results

Applications or future work

Source(s) of additional information

Acknowledgments



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Use headings to guide the viewer through the poster

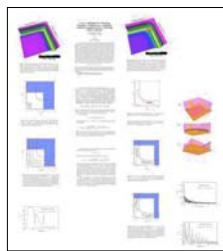
Descriptive

Concise

Parallel

Logical

Hierarchical



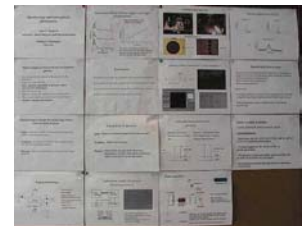
11

Position your important points strategically

At eye level

At the top of columns

In the center

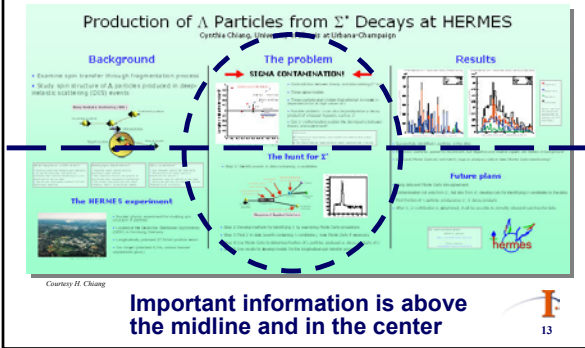


From 3 m away, how does the viewer know what is important?



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A good example...



Use the visual elements of the poster to tell the story

Emphasize main points

Illustrate experimental apparatus, schematics, samples, photographs or simulations of results

Summarize numerical data to show trends or reveal relationships

Use printed handouts to:
Convey complicated information
Provide additional details

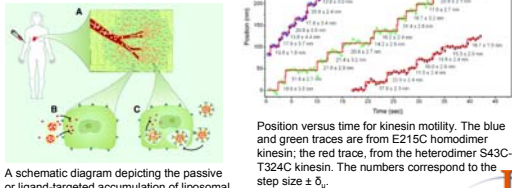
Label all elements in a figure and point out important features

Simplify—omit overly complex details

Label both axes of graphs, show units

Provide a caption

Give credit



Keep text to a minimum

Use short phrases and bulleted lists

Use pictures

To illustrate key points

To convey results

To spark audience interest

Present numerical data in tables or graphs

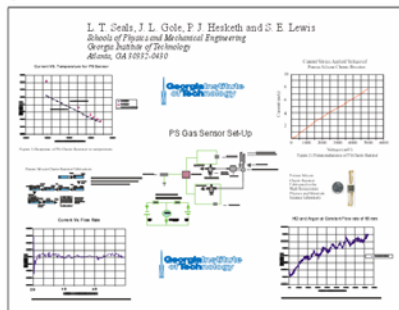
Choose an easy-to-read font

DO NOT PUT TEXT IN ALL CAPS

Avoid long lists, too

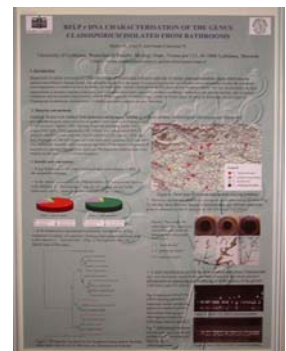


But you have to have some text...

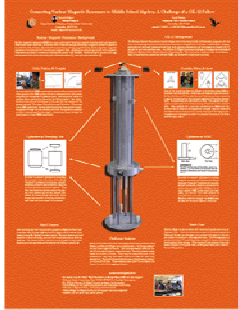


A software presentation program (PowerPoint, Illustrator, Canvas) can combine text and graphics easily on one "page"

In PowerPoint, go to "Page Set Up"—"Custom"
Set Height and Width
Title—120 pt Author—48 pt Headings—80 pt



Critique these posters



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Make a timetable for preparing your poster, and stick to it!

- Decide on your objectives
- Analyze your audience
- Make an outline
- Assemble graphics
- Decide on text
- Eliminate 50–80 percent of the text
- Prepare handouts
- Proofread everything three times



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Have hand-outs available for interested viewers

- A miniature version of your poster
- The abstract or a summary of the project
- Reprints or preprints
- Include complete contact information on all handouts



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For further guidance...



Edward R. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, Graphics Press (2001)

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/IndexStart.html>

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/epurrin1/posteradvice.htm>

<http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~utsurge/Resources/Posters101Article.htm>

<http://www.biology.eku.edu/RITCHISO/posterpres.html>

Don't forget to turn in your headsets!



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