OCSA — Ontario Community Support Association

LEADING THE SHIFT:
The Power of Thinking Differently

2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 21 & 22
MARKHAM HILTON SUITES

Poster Development Tips

Practical Considerations

The following information is provided to help presenters prepare their poster.

1. Posters will be mounted on poster boards that will be provided by the OCSA 2015 Conference. Maximum poster size is 45" x 45". Posters do not have to be this exact size but must fit in this allocated space.
2. When mounting your poster on the poster display board it is important to **only** use push pins or velcro hook attachments, making sure they can take the weight of your poster.
3. Mounting material (velcro and push pins) will be provided onsite. Please do not attempt to use any other type of adhesive materials, as poster boards are only velcro or push pin receptive.
4. All care will be taken with poster displays during display hours, however security cannot be guaranteed. You should ensure that the poster is not the only record of your work, and that you will set up and take down the poster as scheduled.

Preparation Advice

Below are some tips to help you plan and prepare your poster, ensuring that it is accessible to delegates. They are presented for guidance only and the responsibility for the finished poster rests with the presenter.

While each poster has its own display area and you have a designated time in the programme to be at your poster, it will be in competition with others. Delegates with limited time will be attracted to posters that catch their eye and are easy to read from a distance.

Content

- In terms of presenting your poster you should consider using the headings given in the guidance for abstracts for research and special interest papers. However, many presenters simplify this to introduction, methods / materials, results, discussion / conclusions and recommendations. Many times, conclusions are very brief, as the poster covers only a portion of the research.
- References should be included, if used, but try to keep them to a minimum. Give credit where it is due. Have an acknowledgments section, in smaller size font (e.g. 14-18 point), where you acknowledge contributors and funding organisations.
- Ethics approval if appropriate should be mentioned and the appropriate committee / body acknowledged.
- Provide information about where / how you can be contacted on the poster.

- Be prepared to edit ruthlessly – there is invariably always too much text on posters. Look critically at the content when it is laid out. If there is a balance of approximately 1/3rd text, 1/3rd graphics and 1/3rd empty space, you are doing well.
- Title / Heading: The title of the poster should the same as on your abstract. The heading should include the authors' names and affiliations.
- Text: Your poster should be understandable without you being there to explain it to delegates.
- Words should be spelled out, avoiding abbreviations / acronyms / jargon.
- **Illustrations** *Graphs/ Tables / Figures / Photos / Drawings:*
  - Tables are preferable to graphics for small data sets.
  - Tables also work well when data presentation requires many localised comparisons.
  - Little messages help explain data. Labels should be placed on the graphics itself, no legend is required.
  - Lines in data graphics should be thin.
  - Graphics should tend toward the horizontal, greater in length than height, ideally 50 percent wider than tall.
  - Explanations should be used to enhance access to the richness of data and make graphics more attractive to the viewer.
  - Elaborately coded shadings, crosshatching and colours should be avoided.
  - Photographs also help, if relevant, and are a good way of providing colour. They should be of sufficient size to be visible from a distance – 7.6cm x 7.6cm (3in x 3in) photos are probably the smallest to use, and 10.2cm x 15.2cm (4in x 6in) photos are a good size.
  - Remove all nonessential information from graphs and tables.
  - Use colours to distinguish different data groups in graphs and avoid using patterns or open bars in histograms.

Layout

- Don't simply use a wall of text – it is not attractive or readable. Use small blocks for the text that can stand alone. That way, if someone comes up to your poster and reads only a small portion of it, it will still make sense.
- Give your poster sections and allow space around your work light and empty space attracts the eye (and the reader). It sometimes helps to lay your poster out in columns as this keeps the flow of people moving past your poster.
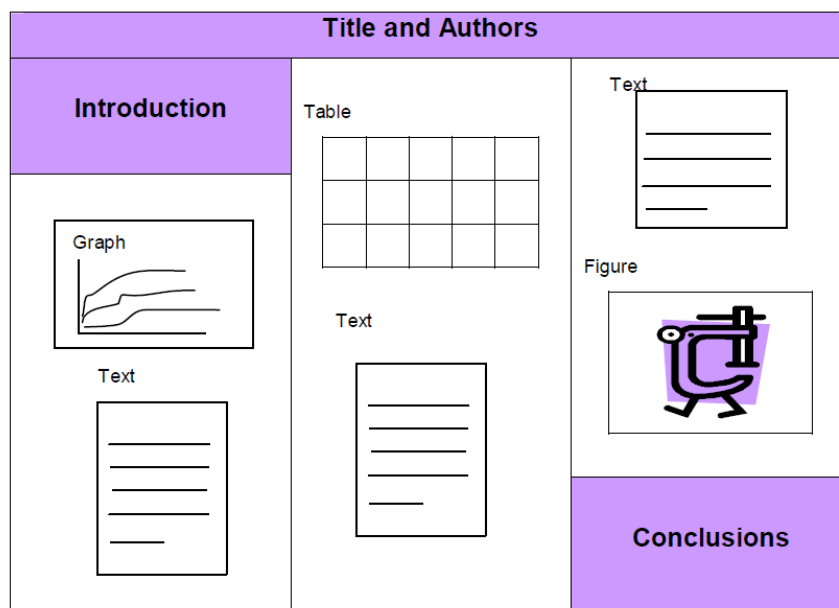
- The text, tables and graphics should look integrated. Words and illustrations should go together tables and graphics should be integrated within the text whenever possible, avoiding clumsy diverting segregation.
- Consider using a flow chart, arrows, numbering or some other method of providing the reader with a guide around your display.
- The same typeface should be used for all and ruled lines separating different types of information should be avoided.
- Lines of text should contain about 10 to 12 words and should run from left to right. It is best to have your text left justified, with the right side ragged, as this is easier to read.
- Start by doing a sketch of your poster layout and then move onto setting it out in actual size – a white board is a convenient place to work. At this stage it is still an illustration of the finished product to give you ideas for presentation. This is a good time to seek advice from colleagues.

- *Background*:
  - Many people simply use a white background with black text. This is easy to read, but some colour will make your poster attractive to the reader.
  - Try to use primary colours rather than shocking bright colours.
  - Consider what colour you want to use for text / illustrations and make sure it complements the background e.g. blue background with yellow / orange text.

- *Font*:
  - Your poster title should be readable from at least 1.8m (6ft) away. Use something like 72 point font (2cm / 3/4in tall) for the title.
  - Use large fonts for the headings and for key points that focus on some of the central ideas presented. Use at least 48 point font (1.3cm / 1/2in tall).
  - Ensure the main body of the text can be read from at least 1.2m (4ft) away. Use something like 24 point font (0.6cm / 1/4in tall) for the text.
  - Use only one type of font such as a sans serif face (e.g. Arial) that is clear and precise.
  - Use upper and lower case and avoid using too many style changes e.g. shadow, bold, italics, etc.

- *Final layout*:
  - However you are producing the final poster, whether you are doing it yourself or using a graphic designer, here are some questions to help you check the layout before final production.
    - Is the message clear?
    - Do the key points stand out?
    - Is there a good balance between text and illustrations?
    - Is the sequence of your poster clear?
    - Is the level of space around your poster appropriate?
    - Do the colours you've chosen work together?
  - Again, seeking advice from colleagues and asking them these questions will help you make any final adjustments before production.

Helpful Online Resources for Poster Development

www.siam.org/meetings/guidelines/poster.php

For a useful guide to producing posters with PowerPoint 2007 see
https://admin.kuleuven.be/icts/services/plotter/PPT2007_ProducingPoster.pdf

For a useful guide to producing posters with PowerPoint 2010 see:
http://www.emich.edu/apc/guides/apcposterpowerpoint2010.pdf

Poster Design and Layout: from font sizes to color contrast see:
http://www.makesigns.com/tutorials/poster-design-layout.aspx

Websites offering printing services for posters:
http://printingpeach.ca/ (Burlington)
http://www.mercuryblueprinting.com/index.php (London, ON)
http://www.copyritetoronto.ca/ (Toronto)
http://www.utposter.com/ (Toronto)
http://www.researchposterprint.ca/ (Mississauga)
http://www.studentprintingtoronto.com/ (Toronto)
http://www.gibsonprinting.ca/contact.asp (Markham)

Handouts
Additional information about the topic presented in the poster can be provided in the form of a pamphlet or some other handout for delegates to take away. Presenters are responsible for the production and display of these.