Traits of Highly Effective Posters

1 Focused content
Effective posters should connect you with colleagues and spark conversations about your research. Having a simple message is more effective for this than cramming in every detail about your data and methods.

- Pick one point to you want the reader to walk away with
- Make everything revolve around that point
- Clearly state the point (introduction) and repeat it at the end (summary)
- Use handouts for supplementary details like your abstract, references, etc…

Stick to the point:
If it doesn’t relate to your message, don’t use it!

2 Cohesive design
Effective posters are designed so that readers can easily find the main points and inherently know how to navigate through the information.

- Use visual elements that tie the poster together: borders, boxes, colors, header/footer bars
- Establish a grid so that readers easily know what to read first, second, last
- Align elements with the grid perfectly for a polished look
- Be creative, but use restraint in use of fonts, colors, backgrounds

3 Good graphics
Effective posters communicate mostly through graphics, using easy-to-understand images.

- Modify existing charts or graphs to match your focal point
- Simplify or change color scheme to match the poster
- Use photos that relate to your focal point
- Use high quality images (either vector-based or 300 dpi, not from web)
4 Easy to read
Effective posters have text that can be easily read at distance, but that does not detract from the design.

- Make text big enough
- Use bulleted text and short sentences
- Use no more than 2 fonts (one for headings, one for body text)
- Avoid over-emphasis (repeatedly bolding, italicizing, or underlining words).

5 Easy to understand
Effective posters can be understood by an educated lay-reader (or poster judge outside of your sub-specialty).

- Make titles simple and engaging
- Use plain language
- Avoid jargon and undefined acronyms
- Give a sense of context (map of study area, background info)

Size Matters:
Titles – 96 pts
Headings – 36 pts
Body Text – 24 pts

Bullets:
Make sure text wraps properly on lines of bulleted text.

Serif Fonts:
Have curlicues, use only for body text. Examples: Times New Roman, Palatino, Garamond.

Sans-Serif Fonts:
Lack curlicues, good for titles, headings, and body text (if large enough). Examples: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica

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