Making Research Posters
Some Tips and Stuff

J. Michael Oakes, PhD
McKnight Presidential Fellow
Associate Professor
Division of Epidemiology
University of Minnesota
oakes007@umn.edu

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Special thanks for Kate Nygaard
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And thanks to Jim McCabe of www.umnposters.com
"I know so much that I don't know where to begin."
Research Poster Background

- Research posters are a way to present your work at scientific/academic conferences.

- Seems like all major conferences have one or more poster sessions (sometimes with >100 posters), some have 6-10 sessions.

- Many like to present posters, and view them, because unlike a conventional talk, there is ample opportunity to meet and discuss issues one-on-one in a poster presentation format; posters are more social.
Research Poster Background

- One typically submits an “abstract” to a particular conference, via website. Abstracts are like 150-300 words describing your research.

- Conference organizers review abstracts and select some for presentation as “talks”… a 15 minute presentation in front of podium and seated audience.

- Other abstracts are selected for poster presentation.

- Posters are viewed as less prestigious than talks, but frankly there are too many good abstracts to have everyone “talk.”
Researchers Posters Should…

- Be attractive if not fun to look at…
- Be easy to “get”… from 6 feet away
- Advertise, the name and affiliation of author(s)
- Be simple and precise
- Be well organized, 2 or 3 “areas” or so
- Have easily identifiable and readable conclusions
Researchers Posters Should NOT…

- Be made 1 hour before conference
- Be filled with text
- Use HUGE or teeny-weeny font
- Use CAPS for title… use sentence case
- Overwhelm viewers
- Be incorrectly sized for space
How to Make a Poster

• Conferences have various size (L*H) poster requirements

• PAY ATTENTION to the requirements because the “corkboard” where you’ll be hanging your poster will only be this big. It can be really embarrassing to show up with a poster too big for the space!

• I say make your poster smaller than allotted space

• Remember, some viewers will be short, others tall; tall people are better ;)

How to Make a Poster

- Use PowerPoint or similar software, Pagemaker is great too; open-source freeware is good option – ask printer what format they prefer

- Think about “blocks” or “chunks” of space, empty space is good; design with viewer in mind

- Use proper citations (key ones only)

- Make sure your conclusion is easy to find and read; summarize point of poster and set it apart for viewers; many will simply read conclusion

- There are plenty of PowerPoint “templates” on web
How to Make a Poster

- Presume it will take you 15 – 20+ hours to make poster and get it to (email?) printer; first one may take much more time

- You’ll also need time to review printer “proofs” and then have it printed.

- Start poster work 2+ weeks before conference

- You cannot expect to make and have your poster printed last minute
PowerPoint Tips  (thanks Jim!)

- Make a small version of the poster that is ½ as tall and ½ as wide as the final poster size, as printing doubles dimensions. Example: if you want a 4' x 6' poster, go into page setup and make the dimensions 24” wide by 36” long)

- Type your text into textboxes that you make on the PowerPoint slide

- Important note: for images and/or graphs, it is best to use uncompressed tiff files
How to get poster to site

• Roll up and rubberband (not good idea)

• Purchase/borrow and use paper tube
  (you can leave at conf!)

• Purchase/borrow and use plastic tube

• Ship it (why?)

• Have it printed “locally” (too risky for me!)

• Bring quality thumbtacks (perhaps long and short ones); double stick mounting tape may also be good to have
Printing costs

- Poster printing costs between $50 and $200
- Costs vary by printer-store, paper type, and size
- Local UMN options included but are not limited to
  (approx ordered from high-cost to low)
  - Kinkos
  - Albinson Reprographics/ProColor
  - Biomedical Imaging Processing Lab (BIPL) UMN
  - Jim McCabe and UMNPosters*
  - Computer Lab in Basement of Coffman Union
Other stuff

- Put your poster up on time
- Be ready to “present” at start of session
- Wear professional clothing, brush teeth, smile
- Let viewers browse without assaulting them
- Have 8.5*11 (or smaller) color copies of posters (or summary) available for passing out to interested viewers; have your email address on handout
- Export PowerPoint (or whatever) into PDF format for archiving and emailing to the (potentially) interested
Some online resources

- www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm
  (superb)

- http://undergradresearch.missouri.edu/resources/powerpoint-video.php
  (a video tutorial for PowerPoint poster making)

- http://depts.washington.edu/mphpract/ppposter.html#top
  (UW SPH)

- www.umnposters.com

- Search Google for “Research Poster” and/or “Scientific Poster”