

Preparing a Poster: Basic Ideas and Specific Instructions for the Rabi Symposium

Additional Resources:

This document is based on several sources including:

www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/ug/surf/PosterPrep.html

http://www.igert.org/pdf/UPitts_AttingProfessionalMeetings_070704.pdf

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/IndexStart.html> -- particularly the Examples

<http://www.biology.lsa.umich.edu/research/labs/ktosney/file/PostersHome.html>

Common Mistakes:

The most common mistakes in poster preparation are (1) using too much text, (2) using fonts that are too small to read, and (3) not planning well for the available space.

Materials:

Most posters presented at scientific conferences today are prepared as a single document in a program such as PowerPoint or Illustrator. They are then printed on a poster printer resulting in a large, one piece poster. However, to avoid difficulties of access and cost associated with printing such large documents, we will be making use of slightly different poster materials.

Each Rabi Scholar will be provided with a black tri-fold display board by Hazel. These boards are 36 x 48" when flat and fold to 36 x 24." You will print your text and graphics on 8.5 x 11" paper and affix it to the board with adhesive. Glue sticks, spray adhesive, rubber cement, and double sided tape all work well.

To prepare your text and graphics you can use PowerPoint or any other program you are familiar with. If you do not have access to such a program, let me know.

You will likely have to print out both black and white and color panels for your poster. **If you need access to either a b/w or color printer, let me know. We can print out all your panels on printers in my office if necessary!**

Organization:

There are many ways to organize a poster. One common way that affords clarity is vertical organization, with an introduction and methods on the left, results in the center, and conclusions and future work on the right. See an example on page 11 of the pdf document referenced above. Horizontal organization can also work well, presenting the information in rows, rather than columns.

Font Sizes:

People stand several feet away from posters, so type size should be larger than usual. Since you will be making individual slides to be mounted onto your poster board, you can print these out and place them on the floor. You should be able to read all text from a standing position, as people reading your poster will likely do so from 5 – 6 feet away. Generally, the Title should be around 100 points, Authors and Affiliations should be 60 points, and Subheadings should be 48 points. General text on the poster should not be smaller than 24 points. Again, you do not want too much text on your poster. Use bullets rather than paragraphs where possible and avoid long sentences!

Figures:

Several figures are usually included in a poster. Make them simple and self contained. Figure legends are optional and should be short if used.

Color:

Use color in figures and text sparingly for best effect.