

## BCNET Poster Tips

### Introduction

Posters are a way for you to convey your work to a wide audience as well as to give a quick overview of your research. The great advantage of posters is that viewers can view the material alone at their own pace, or to engage in discussions of the material with the presenter and other viewers.

To create a poster that attracts viewers as well as conveys information effectively, it is essential to create text and graphics that clearly and easily communicate your research in a short period of time, as people tend to spend only minutes at each individual poster.

### Size

The overall size of the poster should not exceed 4'0" X 4'0" (1.2 meters x 1.2 meters) Make all visual aspects of the poster large enough to view as most people view a poster from two to four feet away. To enhance readability use:

- large fonts,
- enlarged photos,
- simple graphs, and
- clear charts.

The size of poster elements and the fonts in each element can also serve to emphasize the main points. For example, setting your subheadings in all capitals and two font sizes larger than the rest of the text on the same panel will draw the reader's eye first, and so be emphasized. The use of multiple fonts in a poster can distract from the science.

### Poster Content

A poster must be visually appealing and easy to read and comprehend. You can use [PowerPoint](#) to write and edit the poster and depending on your resources, such as money and equipment, you can give your poster different looks and feel. For example:

- One sheet poster. This needs a special printer and an expensive large sheet of paper. Often, you can have your poster printed at the University – check with your department for details. Printing and laminating a color a 3' X 4' poster at Staples can be done for about \$10 per square foot (or about \$120 per poster), and will take a couple of days at least to print.
- Individual panels. This is a cheaper way to make a poster. The advantage is that you can rearrange the order of the panels according the dimension of the poster stand you are using as well as the audience. This does not have the same visual impact as a one sheet poster.

## Tips for poster content:

- Keep the information as concise as possible by summarizing every paragraph you want to include in one line and writing it as a bullet using large font.
- Provide only final equations or major milestone equations of a long proof.
- Provide reasons why you are doing this work in the first page of the poster, or in the center of the poster, depending on the layout you are using.
- Address different audiences in your poster, such as the general public, someone in your general area of research, and someone who is working in the exact same field.
- Make sure that your poster clearly includes:
  - the name of the authors
  - the topic you've chosen
  - BCNET logo [download logo](#)
  - applications of this topic, i.e., why is it useful research?
  - the topic's relation to similar topics e.g., if it is a type of search, how is it related to other search methods
  - how is your topic or approach to a topic unique?
  - the research you've completed (on this topic)
  - the research you intend to do
  - open issues
- Also:
  - Know your audience and adjust the content of your poster accordingly.
  - Create a summary and conclusions slide so that people with little time can still get an idea about your work. This panel should be the last panel read (i.e. in the bottom right corner).

## Elements

The posters are read while standing. Complete text, such as formal sentences and paragraphs, requires close proximity and a significant amount of time to read.

- Use bullets, diagrams, charts, and tables as much as possible to deliver your message quickly and effectively.
- Keep text to a minimum. The text should be sufficient to clearly explain your work but there should not be excess text. The abstract is the only place where full sentences should be used.
- Use large figures with clear labels
- Use more figures and less text.

## Space



Space in a poster gives the viewer visual pauses to think. Overloading the poster with information is tiring to read and a poster is seldom read in its entirety. Irrelevant text or visual distractions such as borders between related data and text should be omitted so that the reader can absorb the ideas in the poster easily and fully.

### **Colours**

Use color if possible. Choose an appealing color scheme, use it consistently and do not distract your reader with too many colors.

### **Handouts**

- Additional text information about the topic can be provided to the viewers in form of a pamphlet or some other medium.
- A good idea is to provide the viewer with a small print out of your poster (on 8.5x11 paper) so that readers can take the poster with them.

### **Presentation**

To prepare for the poster judging, BCNET strongly suggests you prepare a brief (5 minute) presentation that gives an overview of your poster. This should be appropriate for non-scientific audiences as well as your peers. This will be followed by a 10 minute question period with the judge. Remember to respect the judges' time and keep to the assigned schedule.

### **Last tips**

- Seek assistance from your supervisor in designing and proof-reading your poster
- "Test drive" your poster with various groups of people. It's useful to get feedback from your classmates and professors, as well as readers from other disciplines.

### **Useful Links**

[Creating conference poster, using PowerPoint - Tutorial](#)

[Creating conference poster, using LaTeX - Tutorial](#)