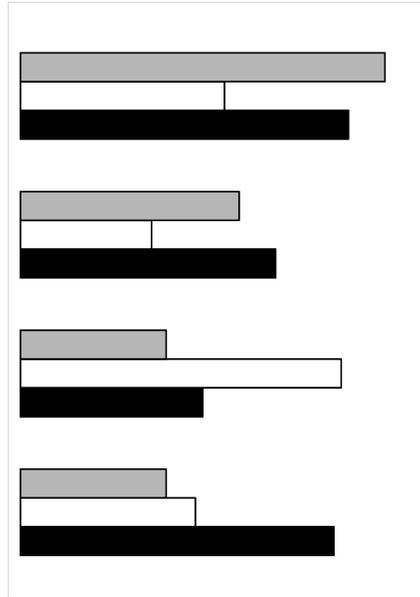
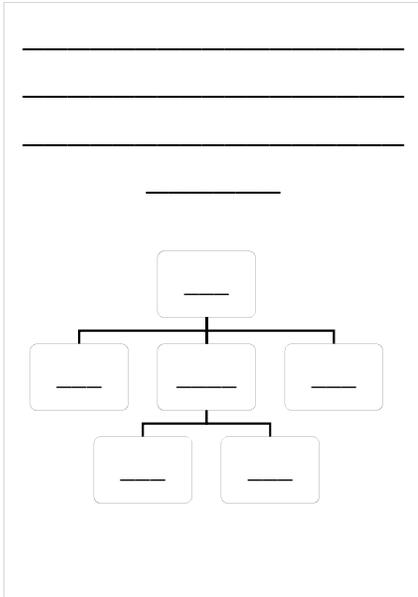


# Designing Conference Posters in PowerPoint



**Julia Dahm**  
Technology  
Services Librarian

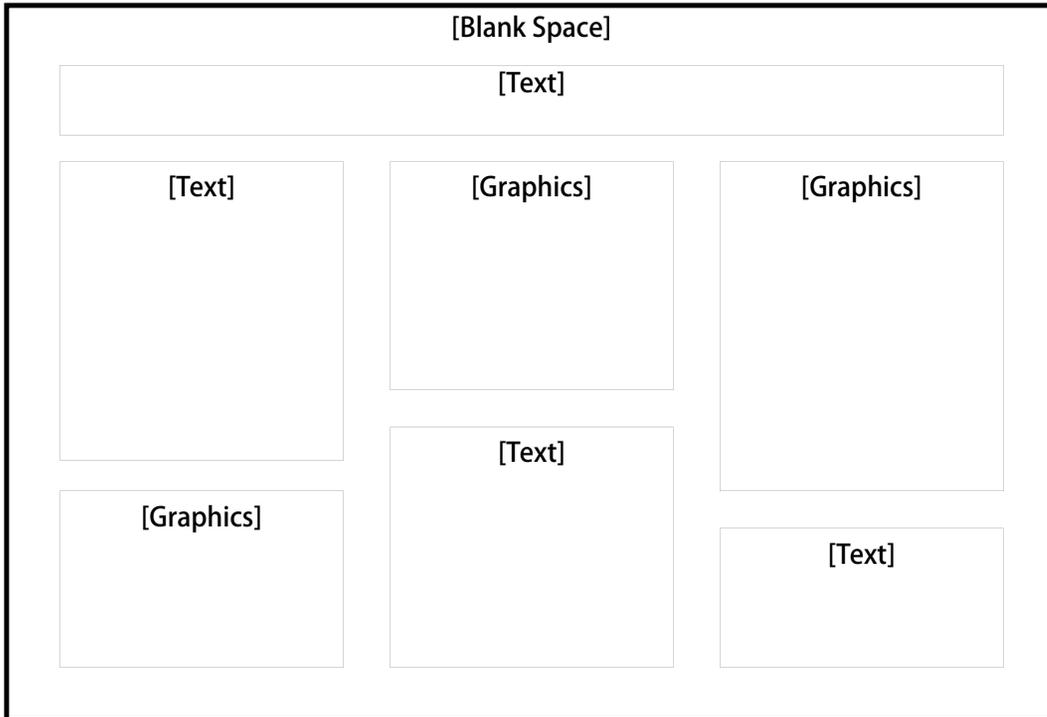
Health Sciences Library System  
University of Pittsburgh

**Do's and Don't of Poster Design**

**How to Design in PowerPoint**

# Do's and Don't of Poster Design

## Visual Balance: Text, Graphics, & Blank Space



Different parts of poster don't line up	Boxes within boxes	Zigzag reading order	More than three <b>typefaces</b>	Long-winded title
Gradient fills in coloured boxes	Big blocks of text	Photographic background	Unlabelled error bars on graphs	Pixelated pictures
More than five colours	Institutional logos bookending title	Free space	ALL CAPITALS	Text with shadows, outlines, or bevels
Abstract	<u>Underlined text</u>	Comic Sans	3-D graphs	Checking tablet or phone during presentation
Tables showing data that could be in a graph	Poster does not fit on poster board	Comic Sans (it's that annoying)	Objects almost touching or overlapping	<small>Try: unreadable type</small>

## Bad poster bingo

By Zen Faulkes, [betterposters.blogspot.com](http://betterposters.blogspot.com)  
 Inspired by: <http://www.moniametzler.com/bad-presentation-bingo/>

# How to Design in PowerPoint

## Digital vs. Print

Step-by-step from slide  
to poster

Special settings

# Poster-Ready Content

## Making a Statement: Incorporating Poster Design Best Practices

Eleanor B. Rigby, PhD, Head, Department of Visual Communication, University of Pittsburgh

Bobby McGee, MSIS, Technical Lead, Department of Visual Communication, University of Pittsburgh

### Introduction

Creating informative and visually appealing posters for conferences is a frequent task for many of our researchers. The Department of Visual Communication provides instruction on the best practices of poster design. As a confirmation of the best practices we teach, we evaluated a collection of conference posters based on their design and contextual elements.

### Methods

- Designate good poster qualities based on instruction in poster class
  - Consider directions to the authors<sup>1</sup>
- Choose three judges from the Department of Visual Communication to evaluate the posters at the PRA annual conference.
- Create evaluation criteria based on agreement and recorded with a Likert scale
  - 1 Disagree
  - 2 Somewhat disagree
  - 3 Neither agree nor disagree
  - 4 Somewhat agree
  - 5 Agree
- Record results using Qualtrics software.
- Calculate results with an average score and assign a letter
  - A (4.3-5)
  - B (3.5-4.2)
  - C (2.7-3.4)
  - D (1.9-2.6)
  - F (1-1.8)

### Results

Our results show that a majority of the best practices (10 out of 13) were adhered to by the posters reviewed (Figure 1). The weaker categories that received an average of C or lower included: (1) The poster is not cluttered (2) There is adequate blank space (3) There is adequate amount of text. Also, 43 (36%) received a perfect (or near perfect) A grade, a majority (65%) scored an average (C) or above average (B) grade, and only 10 posters (8%) received a D or F (Figure 2).

### Conclusion

The results of our evaluation pinpoint what best practices to focus on, based on the criteria that received overall low grades. Looking at the average grades of the posters, we also see that over half

were lacking enough to provide an A grade, meaning that many posters could still use some improvement in their design and content. This confirms a need to provide continuing instruction for research poster design.

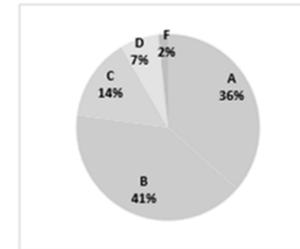
### References

1. Directions for Poster Authors  
<http://www.professionalsearchassoc.com/annualconference/posters.html>

Figure 1: Criteria with their average rank assigned for all posters evaluated

Criteria	Average Rank
The poster is not cluttered	D
There is adequate (about 40%) blank space	D
There is adequate amount of text	C
The text is large enough to read	B
There is a high contrast between text and background	B
There is adequate (about 30%) illustration space	B
I can understand the purpose or results of the paper in under 30 seconds of reading it	B
There were no typos	B
The poster fits within the designated space	A
Design focuses on important parts of research	A
I can follow the sections of the content	A
The title, authors, and affiliations are present on the poster	A
Illustrations explain the research	A

Figure 2: Posters by letter grade received (n=118)



Contact information:

[www.pitt.edu/visualcommunications/posterbestpractices/](http://www.pitt.edu/visualcommunications/posterbestpractices/)

# Designed Poster

## Making a Statement: Incorporating Poster Design Best Practices

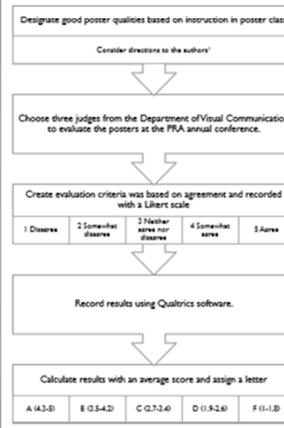
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### Methods



### Results

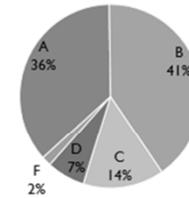
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I can understand the purpose or results of the paper in under 30 seconds of reading it.	B
There were no typos	B
The poster fits within the designated space	A
Design focuses on important parts of research	A
I can follow the sections of the content	A
The title, authors, and affiliations are present on the poster	A
Illustrations explain the research	A

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### Results

Figure 2: Posters by letter grade received (n=118)



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# Techniques Covered in Demonstration:

## Visual Balance – use equal space for:

- Blank space: large outer margins (2-3”) and space between content
- Text: Reduce, use bullet points
- Graphics: tables, charts, and SmartArt

## Poster Size

- Resize slide: Design > Slide Size > Custom Slide Size
- Maximum slide size: 56” x 56”

## Fonts

- Use sans-serif fonts, 1 or 2 font types in a poster
- Font sizes:
  - Body & chart/table text: 28-36
  - Figure labels: 36-48
  - Section headers: 40-60
  - Subtitle: 54-72
  - Title: 80-150

## Theme Colors and Fonts

- Design > Variants > More > Colors or Fonts

## Format Shape menu

- Right click on a text box or shape
- Size and Properties options:
  - Size (width, height)
  - Position (vertical, horizontal)
  - Text box (alignment in box, do not autofit, internal margins)

## Alignment

- Select multiple objects: hold down CTRL and click each one (Home > Select > Selection Pane for complete list)
- Drawing tools > Align (to edge, to center, or distribute evenly)

## Image resolution

- Capture/download image at 300 DPI or higher (or largest pixel size available)
- Preview: Zoom in at 100%
- Format Picture > Size and Properties: do not scale greater than 100%