



FRONTIERS IN IMMUNOLOGY RESEARCH NETWORK

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR POSTER PRESENTERS (2 pages)

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for the accepted Poster Session authors. It includes information on posters in general, poster materials, and schedule of events.

POSTERS OVERVIEW

What is a poster session? This section is particularly useful to those of you who have little idea of what a poster session is all about. Research presentation through a poster sessions differs from oral presentation in two major ways:

- The first difference is in the manner in which the material is presented by the author(s). There is an interactive session associated with the posters, where all the poster authors attend their posters and conference attendees can discuss the work with the authors. You, as the poster author, must remain at your poster during this time. You may choose to have a prepared talk about your work, although such a talk is best kept very short and used as an introduction to open up the conversations. The discussions tend to be open and free flowing. Don't be shy about engaging the viewers in conversation! If you're shy and they're shy, it will be very quiet out there! Besides, in poster sessions, you are allowed to ask questions of the viewers as well as have them ask questions of you! If your poster represents work-in-progress, you can use this opportunity to gather input about how to direct, improve, and strengthen your work and link it to others. Challenge the viewers to demonstrate their ingenuity and ability to think on their feet, to help provide insight into the nastiest problems you've encountered, or contribute to your research vision. Posters mean exercises for the viewers as well as the authors: take advantage of this situation! Because others may view your poster on their own, your poster **MUST BE SELF EXPLANATORY!** The poster should present a well thought out, informative, and complete story (some helpful hints on poster design are included in subsequent sections).
- The second difference between posters and papers is in the manner in which the material itself is presented. The poster is a vertical, illustrated display of your work, which essentially takes the place of a series of slides or overheads that you would use in a paper presentation. The poster medium can be used very effectively. Creativity and innovation are encouraged!

A SHORT DISCUSSION ON POSTER DESIGN

Poster sessions are frequently used to communicate technical data. They are usually held in conjunction with symposia and technical society meetings and have become increasingly popular. Poster sessions are often used to support or replace slide presentations given to larger groups. One advantage of a poster is that specialist audiences can be targeted and reached effectively, especially when the poster presenter is available to answer questions. A poster that is self explanatory will still be an effective marketing or educational tool even when the presenter is not there. In these notes, guidelines are presented for getting started and for using a poster.

Getting Started

Each student will be provided with a board and an easel for their poster. Posters are usually divided into sections, such as

- title,
- objectives / introduction,
- methods, and
- results and conclusions.

The title should include your name and academic institution. The title should emphasize a primary benefit to the target audience and should be visible from "across the room". Photos, figures, and tables should stand alone (be self explanatory); your audience should be

able to walk up to the poster and understand it. Focus on a narrow topic or key points rather than trying to put the entire text of a speech onto a poster. Begin by determining what is unique about your concepts, then select important points to support that main idea.

Drafting the Text

Keep in mind that your text must be presented in a typeface that can be read from 3 to 6 feet (1 to 2 meters) away. Therefore, all text should be simple and concise. The poster should not be an outline, but should be brief like an outline. Omit unnecessary articles (a, an, the, etc.) when possible. Use easily recognized abbreviations, but use them sparingly; some people may not be familiar with them. Bulleted items are a better way to highlight selected data and significant results than paragraphs of information. The easier it is for readers to absorb the information, the more likely they will retain it. If detailed information is important, consider supplementary handouts or verbal explanations. If you use handouts, be sure they include a summary of the presentation along with your name, address, and institution.

Visual Appeal

The poster's visual appeal is important. Use high quality photos and simplified graphics to explain key ideas. Use well chosen figures and tables to save words and to improve the overall appearance. Color can both enhance the message and give useful information (for example, use color to represent a particular concept throughout). Consider using bar charts or line graphs instead of tables or tabular materials.

Using the Poster

After the poster is designed, proofed, and built, be sure you have a hard copy of the design layout to take along as a reference for setting up the poster correctly and quickly. You may want to number the back of each piece and sketch a small drawing of how it will appear on the poster board. If the poster is used again, the design layout will be readily available. Keep in mind other uses for the poster after the session, such as a laboratory display or slides from individual figures, view graphs, or report art.

SETTING UP AND TAKING DOWN THE POSTERS

Other than easels, we will not be providing any construction materials. Please bring your own pins, tacks, tape, and whatever other set-up materials you need to assemble your poster. Practice your setup at least once before coming to the conference. ***Please note that electricity will NOT be provided to the posters.*** Posters should be taken down immediately following the poster session. Authors are responsible for taking down and transporting their materials home.

SUMMARY

We hope that we've covered the information that you need to help you assemble an outstanding poster, to get you to and through the poster session itself, and to help you enjoy this process. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me.

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

- Remember: a poster tells a story, but in a different way than a paper does. Enlarging the text from your paper and plastering these pages on the poster mounting board isn't as effective as designing a display that features illustrations as the focal point.
- Many poster authors stayed at the poster session for quite a while after the official end of the event. And they loved it, because the interactions they were having were so interesting!
- Don't arrive at the last minute to assemble your poster for the interactive session!! Tacking up charts and pictures and other items takes a long time to do right, and if you are tacking while others are conversing, you'll look unprepared.

