



The Basics of Poster Presentations

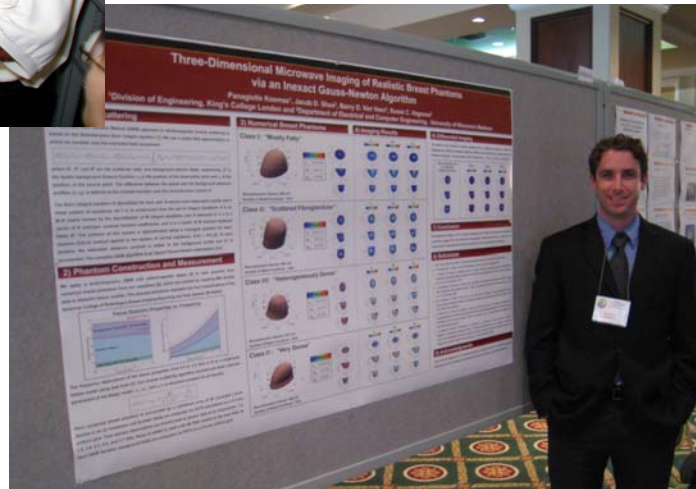
Susan C. Hagness

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

What is a poster presentation?



Technical poster:
A large *visual* communications tool



Poster session:
Informal, visual, interactive forum



Advantages of a poster presentation



- Personal interaction
 - Poster = conversation starter
 - One-on-one or small group discussions
- Customized dissemination
 - Viewer can go forwards and backwards through the poster
 - Poster attracts audience that is really interested in your work
- Broader reach
 - Viewing period is longer than that of a scheduled talk
 - Your main point(s) can be conveyed to many people

The first steps



- Read the instructions
 - Usually supplied by the session organizers
- Define your message
 - Determine the essential idea/concept/message
 - Stay focused on message
 - Eliminate extraneous details
- Know your audience
 - Provide context for the work
 - Avoid acronyms and jargon (use plain English)
 - Interpret your work (explain significance)

An effective poster is...

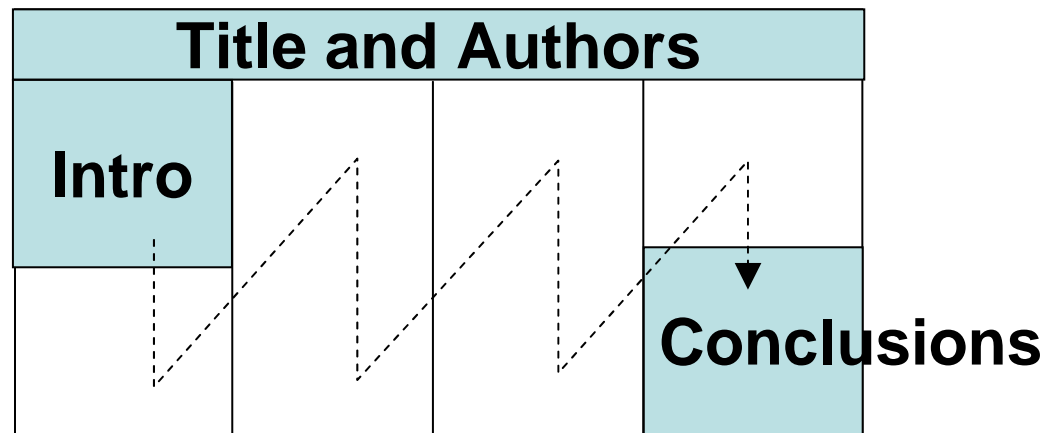


- Not a standard research paper or design report stuck to a board
- A poster uses a different, visual grammar.

 **It shows, not tells.**

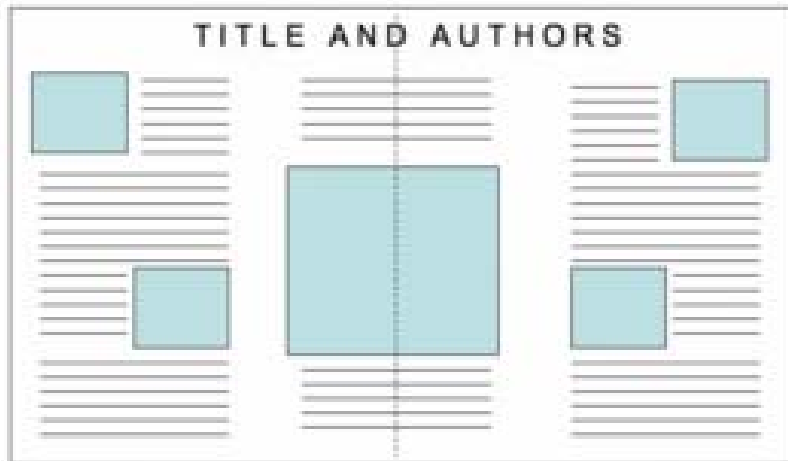
Poster layout

- Organize content so that the reader can easily navigate

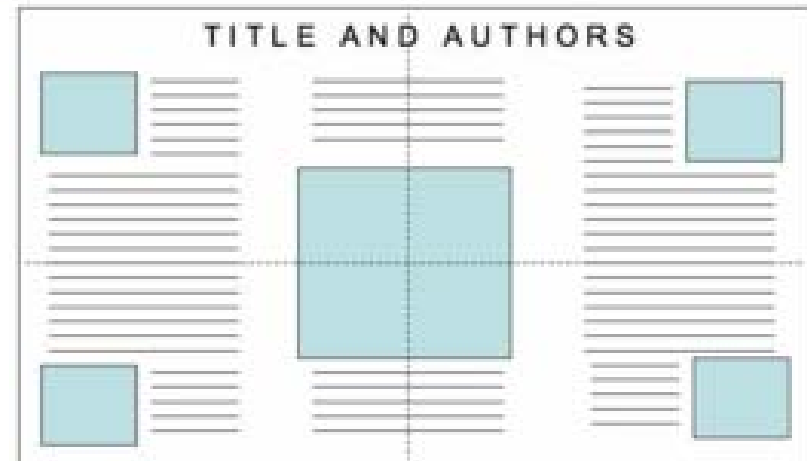


- Use an easy-to-follow sequence for clarity
 - Organize material into sections
 - Determine a logical sequence
 - Use numbers to help order the sections
- Use headings to orient readers and convey major points

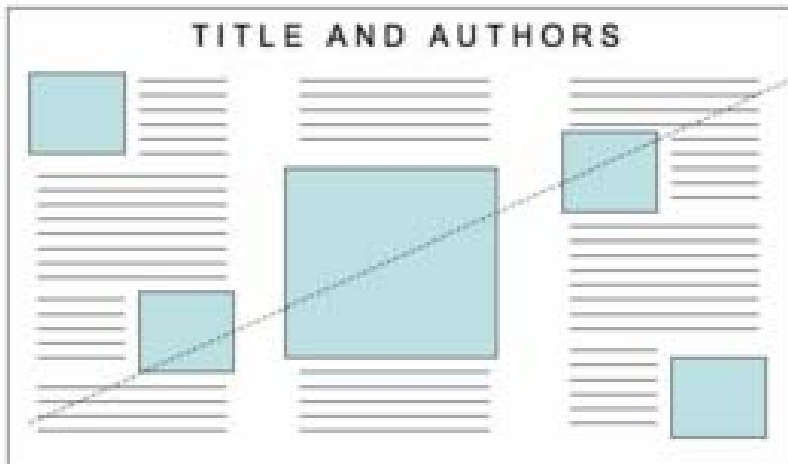
Layout: balance and space



Horizontal Symmetry



Horizontal & Vertical Symmetry



Diagonal Symmetry



Asymmetry
(text-heavy on left, image-heavy on right)

Poster layout and design: graphics



- Reasons to use illustrations, photographs, charts, graphs:
 - Increase audience interest
 - Increase understanding
 - Enhance retention
 - Increase efficiency
- Before using graphics, ask these questions:
 - Is it relevant?
 - Does it add information?
 - Is it clear and easy to understand?

Poster layout and design: color



- Stick to a theme of 2 or 3 colors
 - much more will overload and confuse viewers
- Use a light background and dark letters for contrast
 - dark backgrounds with light letters are very tiring to read
- Avoid overly bright colors
 - they will attract attention - and then wear out readers' eyes
- Consider people who have problems differentiating colors
 - common problem: inability to distinguish between green and red

Poster text



Title:

- Limit to one or two lines
- Use "sentence case" – do not capitalize every word

Section headings:

- Format headings with larger font size than main text
- Do not "bullet" or otherwise punctuate

Supporting text:

- Use left-justification
- Use short sentences, simple words, and/or bullets

Poster text: fonts



- *Sans serif* fonts are easiest to read
 - Arial, Calibri, Verdana, *Comic Sans MS*, Century Gothic
- Use one font throughout the poster
 - Use **bold**, underlining or **color** for emphasis
 - *Italicized text is difficult to read*
- Example fonts and sizes for 3' x 5' poster
 - Title – Arial, Boldface, 80 point
 - Headings - Arial, Boldface, 48 point
 - Supporting text (main points, figure captions, etc.) - Arial, 24 point

An effective poster...



- Avoids visual chaos (distracts the viewer)
 - No jagged edges
 - No major variations in sizes of boxes, columns, etc.
- Guides the viewer by using a visual logic
 - Structure emphasizes the main points
- Has all elements visible from several feet away
- Displays the essential content in the title, the most prominent text, and graphics

Presenting your poster

- Be prepared to give...
 - a concise, informative 5- to 10-minute "tour" to the most interested viewers
 - a brief overview (no more than a few minutes) to the casual viewer
- Don't read!
 - Use the poster as a visual aid
 - Point to particularly interesting features
- Answer questions
 - Take advantage of the interactive format



Engaging your viewers



- Allow a few moments (read/process information)

- Give an **Invitation**

- Offer to guide them through the poster

“Hello. Thanks for stopping to view my poster. Would you like a guided tour of my research/design project?”

- vs. a **Dead-end**

- Even if interested in your project, viewers might not have had time to come up with questions... so do not ask:

“Uhhh... Do you have any questions?”

References and credits



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