

MAKING SCIENTIFIC POSTERS

Peter G.H. Evans

POSTER LAYOUT

- Decide dimensions of the poster - generally to a maximum of 100 cm wide and 130 cm high; **DON'T MAKE TOO SMALL**
- Keep the title reasonably short and descriptive of the subject matter, using lettering of at least 96 pt, followed by authors' names and affiliations (include your e-mail address)
- Include a small photo of the **PRESENTING** Author, with his/her name alongside in the top left corner so that people can recognise you
- Keep the text brief - people will not stay to read it otherwise; ensure that all your main points are conveyed clearly
- Make the **CONCLUSIONS** prominent, in a separate box, or in a striking font colour, or both, using lettering of no less than 72 pt

LAYOUT (continued)

- No lettering should be less than 36 pt, if you want people to read it
- Use a font colour that contrasts strongly with the background, so that the text is clear to read
- Pictorial backgrounds can be pleasing and may liven up a poster, but make sure they do not intrude upon the important part - the subject matter! This is currently a common flaw of many posters
- Use graphics, where possible, to illustrate points; maps and graphs are preferable to tables, but if using tables, try not to exceed 5 rows by 5 columns
- Pictures of the subject matter, methods of study, etc, help to break up text, but use them sparingly and choose in order to be informative

POSTER CONTENT

- Divide the poster into the following sections:
BACKGROUND or INTRODUCTION, AIMS, METHODS, RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, and, if appropriate, REFERENCES
- **BACKGROUND:** Introduce the study you are reporting, previous knowledge and the question(s) you are trying to address; keep it brief
- **AIMS:** Summarise aims succinctly, for example as numbered questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested
- **METHODS:** Include only the essence of methods used that enable the reader to understand and evaluate the approach to the topic. This may include sample sizes, field/lab techniques, and analytical procedures

CONTENT (continued)

- **RESULTS:** Where possible, present these as graphics with brief supporting text. Confine the poster to the key findings
- **CONCLUSIONS:** Summarise the main conclusions of the study; ensure they clearly follow from the results presented
- **REFERENCES:** These are not always necessary to include; choose only key ones and, if space is limited, confine to citing authors, year of publication, journal, volume & page numbers
- Although **LAYOUT** is important, don't forget that the prime purpose for producing a poster is the **CONTENT**
- If you are not a native English speaker, find one to read through the poster to correct any mistakes in grammar & spelling

TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

- Ultimately, the poster will be assessed on its content: whether it tests a new theory, uses a novel approach or makes a significant advance in our knowledge; the study design is robust; conclusions follow from the results; and appropriate methods and analyses have been employed
- An accompanying sheet that people can take away with them to read at their leisure is an excellent way to disseminate your poster; make sure you take enough copies as hand-outs (at least 200).

GOOD LUCK!!