

Meet the Author Poster Session Guidelines

Introduction

TRB Poster Sessions are a valuable opportunity for authors to present papers and meet with interested attendees for in-depth technical discussions. TRB poster sessions are very well attended and a popular feature of the Annual Meeting. Good planning can make your presentation clear, effective and rewarding – bringing an incomprehensible poster presentation is a missed opportunity for authors and viewers. Designing effective posters requires careful thought and advanced preparation. Posters that are simply a PowerPoint presentation or short manuscript **do not** work.

The goals in designing a poster should be:

- i) To attract attention,
- ii) To provide a clear overview of your work,
- iii) To provide enough material to explain the research without an oral explanation, and
- iv) To provide enough material to initiate discussion and questions.

The next section of these guidelines will provide the details of a TRB poster session. The remaining material is a compilation of suggestions from poster authors, viewers, and other conference organizers.

TRB Poster Session Details

TRB Poster Sessions run in the morning (9:30 a.m.-noon), in the afternoon (2:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.), and in the evening (7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.) Authors should plan to arrive 30 minutes before the poster session to set-up. Poster numbers are sent to each author prior to the Annual Meeting and a floor plan in the poster room will show the assigned poster location. At a minimum, one paper author should be present to provide details and answer questions from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., or 8:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Most authors stay for considerably more time. Authors are responsible for promptly removing all materials at the end of the session or they will be trashed.

TRB provides a gray display board that is 4 feet (121 cm) high and 8 feet (242 cm) wide. A narrow table is provided in front of the display board for materials. An electric outlet is provided and may only be used for a laptop computer. Computers may be used to run demonstrations, display additional information, or illustrations. Commercial advertising of products or services is not allowed. The posters are set up in public space so participants are responsible for the security of their own computers. We advise that you bring a cable lock to help secure your equipment. Push pins will also be provided. Note that as in previous years, Internet and telephone access, sound, VHS, DVD, overhead, 35mm slide projectors, and other equipment are **not** allowed.

Posters are attached to the display boards with thumbtacks provided by TRB. Lightweight poster board or paper will stay up – foam core will not. The boards are rented and may not be written on or defaced in any way. There are no provisions for making posters at the meeting, receiving, storing, or returning poster to authors.

Suggestions from Poster Authors, Viewers, and Other Conferences⁽¹⁾

Simplicity and clarity are the keys to an effective poster.

- Simplicity - Avoid overwhelming viewers with too much information, the casual viewer should be able to identify the main messages after a quick look at the poster. Remember the full paper is on the compendium of papers and handouts may be provided.
- Clarity - Identify a limited number of messages viewers should take away – 3 is about the maximum number possible. The messages should be clear, novel, and important.

General Design Suggestions

- Viewers find it easier to follow a poster printed on one large sheet with the material arranged in columns. Arrange material in a logical sequence that is clear to readers (typically starting at top left and ending at bottom right.)
- Strong visual contrast is critical – many people have trouble distinguishing between closely related colors. For example approximately 7 percent of the male population—either cannot distinguish red from green, or see red and green differently.
- Text and illustrations should be easily readable from 3 feet away.
- Color is a good tool to highlight important points, however too many colors make poster look “busy” and make it difficult for viewers to find the critical points.
- Use pictures, graphs, and tables instead of text where possible – try for 50% graphics.
- Text
 - Text should be dark on white or light paper
 - Long paragraphs will not be read – use short statements or bullet points.
 - Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, and jargon
 - Try to state your main results in 6 lines or less
 - Use sans serif fonts (ex. Arial or Helvetica) not serif fonts (ex. Times Roman)
- Illustrations
 - Charts, drawings, and illustrations should be similar to those used in PowerPoint presentations **but** simpler and more heavily drawn
 - Illustrations should include titles or labels, labeled axes and identified units

Poster Content– the specific elements will depend on the research

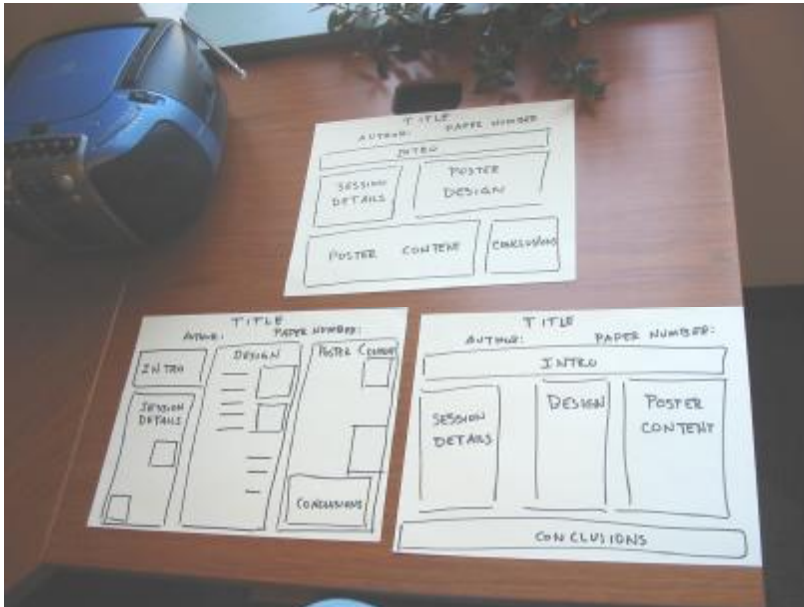
- Title, poster and paper number, author names, institutional affiliation - Letters 1 - 2” high – across the top of the poster
- Introduction / Objectives
- Statistical or Analytical Methods
- Summary / Results
- Conclusions
- Future Directions
- Acknowledgements

Presenting your poster

- prepare a short presentation (about 5 minutes) to give periodically to those assembled around the poster
- have handouts and/or business cards
- Sketch paper and a couple of markers can help in conversations with viewers

Steps to produce a poster

- Start with a set of initial sketches.



- Chose the best sketch and make a rough draft at the final poster size. A chalkboard or white board is a good starting point.



- Have colleagues or peers review the rough draft.



- Finalize the poster content and print a draft version – check that the poster is legible from 3 feet; the color contrast is sufficient, etc.
- Print the final version.



Notes

(1) Ideas from:

- Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians
- University of Utah Conference Staff
- McGill University Bio-Medical Engineering Department
- Poultry Science Association
- Information Technology and Electrical Engineering Department, ETH Zurich
- Penn State University, Electronics and Computer Services
- Audio Engineering Society
- Association of Bio-molecular Resource Facilities
- Institute for Animal Health
- American Society of Human Genetics
- California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- Society of Toxicology
- American Society of Animal Science
- International Society for Biological Therapy of Cancer
- Industrial Relations Research Association
- Northeastern Weed Science Society