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Producing an academic poster

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Introduction
Posters are an essential part of conferences in many disciplines. As a unique visual form of academic presentation, they allow you to illustrate your research with images and diagrams. They are best thought of as a summary of a paper or an extended abstract, rather than the paper itself. Posters are usually displayed throughout a conference, with authors presenting their poster during a specific conference session. Delegates will likely glance at your poster and make a snap decision as to whether to read it or talk to you in more detail. Your poster should therefore be attractive and as clear as possible. Many resources exist, such as those shown to the right, that provide a general guide to developing text for your poster, principles for layout, and presenting your poster at the conference.

To complement these resources, this poster presents five critical and time saving steps that will allow you to create an attractive and printable poster in Microsoft Powerpoint.

Prepare your text of 300-500 words

1. Set paper size
   (Menu tab: Design)
   A0 = 1189mm x 841mm
   A1 = 841mm x 594mm

2. Select images
   Images need to be at 300dpi. Clipart should be avoided. Remember to credit copyright on images not created by you. Charts and tables should be simple and clear.

3. Choose a colour theme
   Avoid the standard Microsoft colour selections: go to Adobe http://color.adobe.com to choose something unique. That site also allows you to create your own colour palette from a photograph:
   1. Create a (free) login
   2. Click create
   3. Click the camera icon (appears under your login name)
   4. Select the photograph to use – a set of five colours will be generated
   5. Select a Color Mood from the menu; Custom will allow you to move the circles around to select specific elements of the photograph.

6. Save your theme
   7. Select Edit Copy to see the RGB and HEX codes for each colour. Record these manually for use in Powerpoint.

4. Create a background colour wash (gradient fill) and text boxes at 20% transparency

Background Wash
From the Design tab, select Format background - use a gradient fill (linear is easiest), with multiple colours from your theme set in the gradient tabs.

Text Boxes
Create a text box, then select it. The Drawing Tools tabs will appear. Select the Format tab, then the corner arrow on the Size item.
   a) Select Do not autofit (radio button under Position). This will ensure you have control over text box sizes.
   b) Select Solid fill (radio button under fill)
   c) Set Transparency to 20%

5. Printing your poster
For all printing you will need to convert your poster to a pdf. Most commercial printers can print at A1 or A0 sizes on gloss paper, and potentially on fabric. However in Australia you may need a specialist printer for fabric (see resources). Fabric is more expensive, but folds potentially on fabric. However in Australia you may need a specialist printer for fabric (see resources). Fabric is more expensive, but folds more easily for easier transport.

To review your poster before printing, it is useful to create a full-size draft on your local printer. To print a full size sample from Acrobat Reader or Writer:

1. Click print. Check colour is on.
   2. Under Page Size & Handling, select Poster. Dashed lines will appear over the preview image.
   3. To have less pieces of paper, click Page Setup... (bottom left of the Print window), select A3, then click OK.
      There will now be wider spacings in the grid of dashed lines in the preview image.
   4. Click Print. Trim the white edges from the sheets of paper, then sticky tape together.

Put your poster on the wall and check you can read the headings from a distance of at least 2 metres and the text from at least 1 metre.

Resources
➤ The University of Leicester “Designing a poster” learning activity https://connect.le.ac.uk/posters
➤ Youtube video – Producing an academic poster (18 mins) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJwcVWzsLC4
➤ Youtube video – Giving an effective poster presentation (12 mins) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vM5aFlurk-FA
➤ Colour schemes including create your own from a photograph https://color.adobe.com
➤ Images (attribute as required) http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons