

Sharing Your Research Results: How to Create a Winning Poster

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Sharing Your Research Results: Motivation

- * Communicating project findings an important skill
 - Industrial engineering/science positions
 - Courses and research in grad school
- * Summarizing experiences is integral part of research
 - Experimental results
 - Successful and unsuccessful approaches
 - Lessons learned during project
 - New research questions raised
- * Goals of presentation:
 - Explore methods for communicating results
 - Why posters?
 - Describe how to design a good research poster

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Approaches for Communicating Results

	Easy to create?	Widely applicable?	Large audience?	Interactive?	In-depth discussion?	Archival?
Poster	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☹
Web page	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹
Demo	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☹
Paper	☹	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺

Legend: ☺ = yes (good), ☹ = maybe (so-so), ☹ = no (bad)

- * Posters
 - Easy (and fun) to create
 - Applicable to many disciplines
 - Great for sharing results with local community
 - Permit interactive discussion

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Why Do People Create Posters?

- * Interactive presentation of research to local community
 - Undergraduate research fair
 - Graduate course project results
- * Summary of ongoing research for visitors
 - Industrial Liaison Program (ILP)
 - Research group retreats, open houses
 - In conjunction with demos
 - On constant display in labs, outside offices
- * Poster sessions at conferences
 - Exhibit more research than in talk sessions
 - Work-in-progress descriptions
 - In conjunction with demos

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Poster Content

- * Guiding principles
 - How would you explain your research to a friend?
 - Posters are similar to talk slides!
- * Catchy title and contact info (email, web page)
- * Motivation
 - What problem/goal does research address?
 - Why is problem important? interesting?
 - Why are current solutions insufficient?
- * Methodology
 - What are different approaches to problem? Pros/cons?
 - Which alternative did you choose?
 - How did you do what you did?

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Poster Content (cont.)

- * Findings: format is domain-specific
 - Experimental results: performance graphs, tables
 - Prototype implementation description (and evaluation)
 - GUI design principles and screenshot
 - New algorithm and evaluation
 - Description of new method for studying (new) problem
- * Conclusions
 - Reminder of problem description
 - Summary of key findings
- * Future work
 - What's the next step (for you, or others)?

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Logistics: Visual Presentation

- * Posterboard sizes
 - Ex: 22" x 28" to 30" x 42"
- * Medium
 - Printed talk slides
 - Ex: PowerPoint
 - Plotter output
- * Use illustrations
 - Block diagrams, graphs, screen shots
- * Use color for clarity and emphasis
- * Use terse phrases, not sentences
- * Use large fonts
 - Title: ≥ 60 pt
 - Contact info: ~ 48 pt
 - Slide titles: 36 - 40 pt
 - 1st level bullets: 26 - 32 pt
 - Lower level bullets: 20 - 24 pt
 - Absolute smallest: 18 pt

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Logistics: Oral Presentation

- * Audience behavior
 - Browse posters, ask if interested
 - "So, tell me about your project..."
- * Prepare ~ 5 min. summary of poster
- * Let audience questions drive detailed discussion
- * Practice your spiel out loud before the session

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Sample Posters

- * Many computer science posters on display
 - 4th and 5th floors of Soda Hall
- * Ask grad students/faculty in your research group

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Conclusions

- * Sharing research findings is important
- * Communication medium depends on goals
- * Posters
 - Easy to create
 - Applicable to many disciplines
 - Great for interactive discussion with local community
- * Rules of thumb
 - How would you explain research to a friend?
 - Use illustrations
 - Use color
 - Use large fonts
 - Use bulleted phrases
 - Practice a short oral summary

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