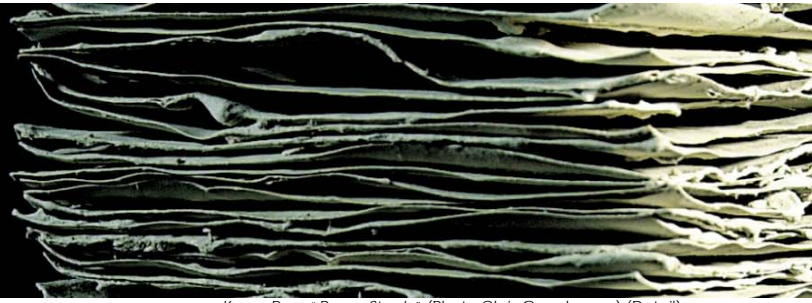


Palimpsests: TransForming Communities

Curtin Humanities 8th Graduate Research Conference
11&12 November 2004



Karen Reys "Paper Stacks" (Photo Chris Geoghegan) (Detail)

Guidelines For Effective Poster Presentations

Congratulations on having your poster accepted for presentation at this year's Conference.

Below you will find a set of guidelines for preparing and presenting your poster. Much of the advice will already be familiar to you. However, please do read through the guidelines carefully to ensure that you give the viewer the best opportunity to appreciate your presentation.

Presenting a Poster

The *Palimpsests* Conference runs across two days, with parallel sessions throughout. On each day, at least one of these sessions will be a Poster/Exhibition session. At these sessions presenters are expected to "stand by" their poster in order to discuss their research with viewers. And, of course, the presentations will be on display continuously for Conference participants to visit.

Why Present a Poster?

There are several advantages to presenting a poster:

- Posters can be viewed across the Conference, as well as at dedicated sessions.
- Viewers can "absorb" the presentation in their own time/way.
- You can discuss your research at length with viewers on a one-to-one basis—and receive detailed feedback.
- Presenting your research as a Poster is a wonderful opportunity to "network."

A poster serves to explain your research succinctly to colleagues within your own discipline and other Humanities areas.

What is a Poster Presentation?

A poster is a static, visual medium that you use to communicate a key idea related to your research: it presents that idea in verbal **and** graphic ways. Unlike an oral presentation, a poster does (most) of your talking—it should stand on its own, be self-explanatory (even as it enables conversations with viewers).

Supplementary materials—three-dimensional object/s, "business" cards, additional written information, etc.—may accompany poster presentations (a plinth or table, usually some 60 X 60 cm [24 X 24 inches] across, will be provided upon request).

The "Key" to a Successful Poster Presentation

Identify the single, fundamental concept you want to communicate!

- Ask yourself what is the research question that generates your presentation. Write out "answers" to that question, again and again, until you find a concise statement (aim for 10-15 words) that "captures" your central idea.
- Call on your supervisor and colleagues to help you with this critical first step.

Guidelines prepared by Associate Professor Barbara H. Milech

The important point here is that a poster should condense your central idea so that your audience can grasp its overall message at the outset at a glance, and then be able to follow the poster's text and graphics to understand the idea more fully. (Having a well-focused concise poster proposition will also help you find concise ways of stating your three or four points of explanation of the proposition—see the following section.)

Now you are ready to plan your poster.

Possible Structures for the “Story” You Tell in Your Poster

Your poster should present a well-focused argument that explains its central idea. That is, the poster should “tell a story” via its text and graphics. There are two main options here regarding the story you tell.

1. Your poster can give an **overview** of your research project—that is, its structure may echo the structure of your candidacy proposal. In this case your poster should include:
 - An element that lists the presentation's title, the author, and the author's School/Institution.
 - An element that concisely explains the research question, its context, and the poster's central message.
 - An element that indicates the critical methodologies of your research.
 - An element that reports the results of the research so far.
 - An element that argues (provisional) conclusions to be drawn from those results, perhaps describing the significance of the research, or further work to be done, etc.

Don't forget the power of graphics. The proportion of text and graphics should be about 60%-40%.

2. Your poster's structure can present an **argument** related to your research—that is, its structure may echo a paper presentation. In this case, the elements (“paragraphs”) of your poster should be:
 - An element that indicates the topic, context, research question, and central idea (thesis) of the poster.
 - Three or so elements, each of which explains/defends the central idea (thesis).
 - A conclusion that places your presentation in a wider context (of your on-going research, of the significance of your research, etc.).

Don't forget the power of graphics. The proportion of text and graphics should be about 60%-40%.

Know the Physical Constraints of Your Presentation

You will be provided with a poster (peg) board whose dimensions are about 1190 X 1190 cm (47 X 47 inches). You can use that space to present a poster composed in a variety of ways.

- Your poster can consist of a single A0- or A1-sized component or “frame.”
- Your poster can consist of two side-by-side A1-sized frames.
- Your poster can consist of a pleasing composition of A3- (maybe even A4-) sized frames.

Each of these options can be effective in composing an informative and visually pleasing presentation.

A0, A1, A2, A3 and A4 are standard metric paper sizes.

A0	841 x 1189	33 1/8 x 46 13/16	A0 = two A 1 sheets
A1	594 X 841	23 3/8 X 33 1/8	A1 = 4 A3 sheets
A2	420 X 594	16 1/2 X 23 3/8	A2 = 2 A3 sheets
A3	297 X 420	11 11/16 X 16 1/2	A3 = two A4 sheets
A4	210 x 297	8 1/4 X 11 11/16	

You can find web pages that give metric and non-metric measurements for all paper sizes. Also, there are computer graphic programs that will enable you to compose text and graphics in most of these sizes. You should be able to print A4 elements through your department. However, you will probably have to go through your University print shop to produce A0, A1, A2 and A3 sized elements. If you do that, you may want to laminate the poster as well.

If you choose option #3 above (a poster composed of a pleasing arrangement of A3 and/or A4 frames), you may want to mount each element on a suitably coloured card. Lamination and mounting on card are “finishing” touches that can enhance your presentation.

Keep Your Audience in Mind

The viewers of your poster will not necessarily work in your specific field—but they may well be interested in your topic. So avoid jargon and acronyms specific to your field of research; or, at worst, explain terms.

An advantage to you in expressing your research ideas in words that are accessible to a wide (educated) audience is that doing so is a powerful way of understanding them.

Design Tips

Keep the material simple

- Make full use of the space, but do not cramp a frame full of information, or crowd frames too close together.
- Be concise with regard to both words and graphics.

Use colours sparingly, with effect

- Use colours for emphasis, differentiation, and interest—not just to impress.
- Avoid large expanses of bright garish colours—they will detract from your print and pictorial content.
- Choose background and foreground colours that are contrasting and complement each other—for example, black or dark blue on light grey or white (it’s better to keep the background the light colour).

Use a font that is readable

- Avoid using more than two font types.
- Fonts that are easy on the eyes are Times Roman, Arial, Helvetica, and Garamond.

This is TIMES ROMAN.

This is ARIAL.

This is HELVITICA.

This is GARAMOND.

- Avoid script or calligraphic fonts, arty fonts in general
- Use underlined text, **bold face** or *italics* or **combinations** to emphasise words and phrases.
- If you use bold italicised print for emphasis, then underlining is overkill.
- Remember your poster should be readable from 1-1.5 meters, so **use a font size that is large enough**—at the very least

18 pt for the text

and a larger font for subheadings, and a still larger one for headings. Try out various sizes to get the right effect.

“A picture is worth a thousand words...”

- Drawings, diagrams, illustrations, photographs should be labelled.
- Labels should be large and clear enough so that they are legible from a distance.
- Photographs should be in focus and images clear.
- Clipart should be avoided for the most part.

Proof read your poster

- Check spelling—there is nothing so frustrating as looking at your poster and seeing the spelling mistake you missed.
- Check your punctuation, grammar, citation formatting, and the like for the same reason.

Maintain a consistent style

- Inconsistent styles detract from your messages.
- Headings should appear in the same position and be in the same font size in all frames.
- If bold lettering is used for emphasis in one place, then do not use italics in others.
- Captions should be positioned consistently either at the top or bottom of the image.

Enjoy making and presenting your poster!

**Please note, these guidelines draw on a number of guidelines available through the internet. We are especially indebted to posting by

Geography for the New Undergraduate
(<http://www.hope.ac.uk/gnu/GNUbackup/stuhelp/poster.html>)

Chemical and Process engineering at University of Newcastle Upon Tyne
(<http://lorien.ncl.ac.uk/ming/Dept/Tips/present/posters.htm>)

St Cloud State University Student Research Colloquium 2002
(http://www.stcloudstate.edu/~research/poster_guidelines.htm)

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