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# Discovery Day

## Tips for Successful Posters



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# A great poster is...

- Readable – use clear language, good grammar in all poster text
- Legible – all poster text should be readable from 5 feet away
- Well-organized – group items logically, visually for maximum impact
- Succinct – you have 10 seconds to grab your audience's attention



# Guidelines: Content

**Remember:** The purpose of your poster is to attract the attendee's attention to your work.

Items you may wish to present include:

- Introduction
- Methods
- Hypothesis
- Results
- Significance
- References
- Acknowledgements
- Conclusions

**Abstract is not needed!**



# Guidelines: Content

**Remember:** You need not duplicate the full text of your work **on** your poster.

***Hit the high points!***

You may provide hard copies of your paper or other handouts for attendees to read after the event.



# Guidelines: Aesthetic

Use color, photos, charts, graphs to support your poster.

**Remember:** A little color goes a long way. Stick to two or *at most*, three colors for text and graphical elements.



# Guidelines: Aesthetic

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Use an easy-to-read font for all text at a minimum size of 16pt.

Avoid ALL-CAPS for extended blocks of text, as they are HARD TO READ.



# Guidelines: Aesthetic

Studies show that serifed fonts are easiest to read for long blocks of text.

Limit yourself to two fonts – generally one serifed and one non-serifed.



# Guidelines: Aesthetic

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Poster Presentations

**SIMPLIFY.**



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# Guidelines: Technical

Your poster may be as large as 3.5-4 ft tall by 3.5 ft wide **(not a typo!)**

Several places on campus print large posters including CAS and the School of Medicine (check max size)

Use a readily available graphics program for creating your poster – PowerPoint, Illustrator, Photoshop, etc.



# Guidelines: Technical

## Bitmap vs. Vector

A bitmap image is one that consists of a specified number of dots or pixels. Bitmap images are tricky to resize but are a must for photos and scanned images.

A vector image consists of instructions to draw its component shapes. Vector images can be scaled to any size with no loss of quality. Charts, graphs, and other graphical elements should be created as vector images when possible.



# Guidelines: Technical

## Bitmap vs. Vector

(the important stuff from the previous slide)

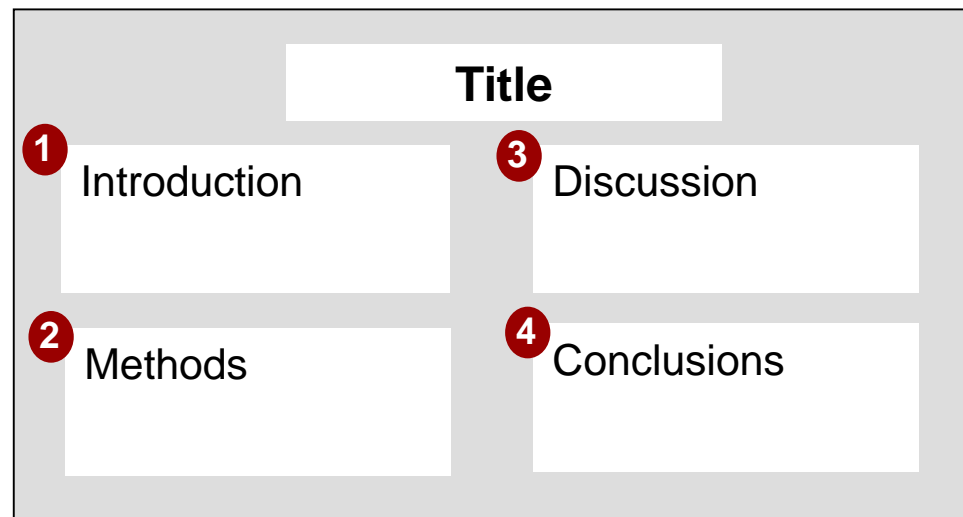
- Check the quality of your image PRIOR to printing (check it at 100% size)
- Avoid pixilated pictures and graphs!



# A few more hints...

People take in information according to a known spatial sequence: capitalize on this in your layout.

The most common layout is effective:



# A few more hints...

When choosing colors for your poster, err on the side of conservatism. Chartreuse and pink? Not so much.

Certain colors when side-by-side “vibrate” making text difficult to read:

**Headache**

**Yikes**



# A few more hints...

Clip art is evil. Ok. Not evil. Occasionally useful. But in general, in scholarly work, you will do well to avoid anything drawn by an underpaid Microsoft employee.

If your work depends on illustrations but you can't draw to save your life, make friends with someone who can or do without.



# Just a few more... (promise)

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Don't use images you find on the Internet for your poster unless you know that:

1. The images are not copyrighted
2. The images are large enough to print well on your poster



# Putting it all together:

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## Introduction:

Students will display their scholarly work from across all disciplines at USC's annual Discovery Day. We suggest many students have never prepared for a poster competition before and don't know where to begin.

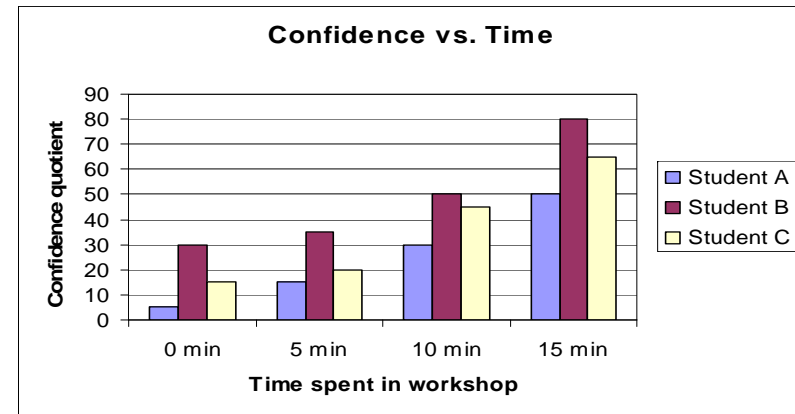
## Methods:

We took an informal poll of students, asking if they knew how to create effective posters.

## Discussion:

As we hypothesized, students in our informal poll said overwhelmingly they needed guidance. We determined a slide show would be helpful in educating these students.

## Data:



## Conclusion:

Although corny, this poster demonstrates many of the key points covered in the preceding slideshow.

## Acknowledgements:

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