TOP TIPS FOR PROMOTING YOUR RESEARCH

University of Reading

Writing an academic poster

Top tips on writing an engaging, interesting and informative poster that your intended audience will want to read.

Who is your audience?

- What do they already know?
- What do you want to tell them?

This information will help you to work out how much the reader might know about your subject and how much technical language they will understand.

How will you get them to read YOUR poster?

- Use a snappy title, large images/diagrams and clear subtitles
- Make the abstract clear, concise and include the main findings/conclusions
- In each section, get your message across in the first sentence or two in case the reader is keen to move on and doesn't read to the end
- Use a large font size to make it easier to read from a distance.

How will you keep their attention?

- Visitors to your poster may only spend a minute or two looking at the content, so make sure the message you want them to take away is clear and concise throughout.
- Use short titles and subtitles - capture the essence of the story/key point of the poster or section in the title/subtitle.

- Use bullet points where possible - short one line statements are easy to read at a distance.
- Make paragraphs short and to the point:

  1. Write in short sentences (20 words maximum)
  2. Use active language - 'we discovered' rather than 'it was found...'
  3. Vary your verbs – demonstrated, discovered, explored....
  4. Minimise use of adjectives – keep it to the point
  5. Avoid acronyms as much as possible, and when used, spell them out
  6. Explain technical terms, and use accessible language wherever possible.

Signpost the key information

- Include images and clearly labelled graphs/data sets with captions
- Simplify the dataset as much as possible to illustrate the main points clearly
- Include meaningful captions - one clear sentence summarising the dataset or stating the take away message for the photograph.
- Have a clear 'take-home' message
- Include only information/evidence that supports your main message/findings
- Keep the messages clear and consistent throughout.

For further information on designing academic posters, please contact the University of Reading Graduate School: **http://www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/**

Other useful guidance from the Research Communications and Engagement Team:

- Communications planning toolkit
- Writing a blog post
- Writing a policy brief
- Speaking to the media
- Using social media
- Successful networking

i For more information, please contact:

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