

# Creating a poster in PowerPoint – Tips

AgEcon Search, May 2012  
[aesearch@umn.edu](mailto:aesearch@umn.edu)

## Design Considerations

### **Make your message clear**

What is your take-away message?

Will the reader get the main idea in 5 seconds from 5 feet away?

Consider alternatives to paragraphs:

- Lists
- Charts
- Graphs

The reader should be able to get the gist of your poster without you having to explain it. Consider putting detailed info in a handout.

### **Create focus and flow**

Create a focal point and a clear, logical path through the poster.

About 30% of the poster should be white space.

### **Use color and contrast**

Light backgrounds and darker text work well

High contrast makes words and objects more visible

### **Know your size and other requirements**

Size of poster

Elements may be Abstract, Intro, Method, Findings, Summary

### **Graphics**

Consider creating tables and graphs in Excel (instead of in PowerPoint) and importing them as a picture.

Use caution with images from the Web:

- Are they copyrighted? Do you have permission to use them?
- Will they blow up well, or will they become pixelated?
- They should be a minimum 300 x 300 pixels
- To check the size in Google images click on full size image and selecting “properties”
- Most are JPEG; TIFF, EPS, and WMF are better; PNG is gaining popularity

## **Printing your poster**

Before you begin, decide where you will have your poster printed, and find out if they have any size or file type requirements or limitations (do they want a PDF file instead of a PPT file?)

### **Printing an Oversized Poster**

PowerPoint allows for a maximum of 56 inches by 56 inches. If you want to make a larger poster:

- set your poster size at half (1/2) of your final size
- have it printed at 200% magnification

For example, if you set your poster for 47 x 21" and print it at 200% magnification, your final poster size will be 94 x 42".

## **Creating Your Poster**

### **Either use a free template or start from scratch**

#### **Using Templates**

Templates are a quick and easy way to create a poster. Possible sources:

- Google search: "free PowerPoint templates"
- <http://postersession.com>
- <http://posterpresentations.com>

Click on the template of your choice and save to your computer

### **Creating a poster without a template**

Basically, you create one large slide in PowerPoint:

1. Start with a blank presentation, and pick the blank content menu.
2. Design , Page Set-up, "Slide sized for" → custom
3. Fill in the width (w) and height (h) in inches. PowerPoint allows a max width of 56".

### **Basic tools to create your design**

- Background color may be set under: Design → Background
- Text or titles -- start by adding a text box: Insert → Text box
  - Text color or fill color of text box: Format → Shape fill
- Graphics, including photos, graphs, clip art (use sparingly): Insert → Picture or Clip Art
- Create charts and graphs using other software and import as "pictures."
- Consider displaying grids and guides to help keep the elements evenly spaced: View → Rulers or Guides

## Recommended font sizes

# Title

90 – 150 pt bold (shown in 100pt)

## Author

36-42 pt bold (shown in 42pt)

## Section Head

36-54 pt (shown in 54 pt)

## Main Text

28-32 pt (shown 32 pt)

## References

18-28 pt (shown in 28 pt)

## More on Powerpoint Posters

Better Posters – a resource for improving poster presentations  
<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/>