

Tips & Lessons for Creating Successful Posters Sessions

Used with permission from Joe Murphy, Science Librarian, Coordinator of Instruction and Technology at Yale University's Kline Science Library

(<http://joemurphylibraryfuture.com/pro-tips-for-poster-sessions-from-a-successful-example/>)

Designing:

- Make it about an idea, and present that idea visually
- Keep text to a minimum
- Maximize white space
- Make the content practical
- Don't try to put everything on the poster. Use it to spark conversation and share the lessons learned as details verbally.



- Have a visual element that ties it together
- This one I did with a colleague (Lisa Carlucci Thomas) was successful <http://bit.ly/ala09poster> because we built it around a recognizable design theme
- Online presentations will reach a much wider audience so design for the web
- Design for mobile. Your poster may be consumed on mobile devices so make sure it is viewable on multiple screens. Save a version on your iPad or smart phone to have with you. Gear and market a version for the on-site audience to view on their devices.
- Think of how you consume poster sessions: I know that I walk through quickly and only stop at posters w/ timely content and that do not require me to read long text in order to understand them, especially text in small print.

Creating

- Begin working on the poster on the scale at which you will print it. This will help you avoid having to resize and correct it later
- Observe all the rules, guidelines, and requirements supplied by the conference before creating the poster to save yourself headaches later (font size, poster measurements, how it will be attached etc).
- Do not, under any circumstances, create a poster by taping together sheets of paper
- Prominently include your name and Twitter hook / email address
- Create your poster as a PowerPoint slide, set the scale to just under the size allotted so you have a safety border
- Also save as an image file in the correct scale and in smaller versions to share elsewhere
- Printing your poster can be expensive. Print at your institution if there is a large scale printer on site. Ask your institution for funds to cover the printing (a legitimate

expenditure because you are performing a job duty adding to scholarly communication in our field, and you are doing a service to your institution by marketing their name).

Pro Tip: Keep in mind what viewers really need to take away from a poster session – a link, an idea, your information, and a mental association with you and the clearly presented image

Presenting the poster on site:

- Have a few elevator speeches prepped-
 - One sentence blurb introducing your poster
 - Another sentence for the important takeaways or findings
- Prepare to share the lessons learned from your project verbally to support the main points revealed on your poster.
- Show up early to the session so you have time to prep the poster before the event begins. You do not want to be scrambling on the table while people are walking by.
- Bring two modes of attaching the poster to the board provided, make sure they meet the requirements.
- Handouts are good, business cards are better, links are best
- The poster you present can lead to invited articles and more.
 - Several of my posters have been turned into articles
 - Be prepared to turn it into a paper by having an argument about why it will make a good piece ready for when editors approach you and by drafting the article outline while creating the poster.

Sharing beyond:

- The virtual representation of the poster will be more important than the print version, so design for online success.
- Have its URL ready to share on site.
- Include the URL on the poster
- Have lots of business cards ready with the URL and as a QR code
- Engage the topic you are presenting about as a medium or focal point for sharing or discussing
 - We Tweeted, posted to Flickr and Facebook etc as the live poster session began for our ALA09 Poster “Go Mobile: Top 5 Mobile Services for Libraries.”
<http://bit.ly/ala09poster>

Pro Tip: Premarket your poster to spark curiosity and draw more viewers. Engage social media, reveal the topic, use a visual snapshot

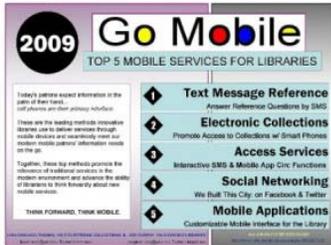
The poster object itself:

- Plan ahead for shipping or transporting it. Mailing it to your hotel may be easier than flying with it as a carryon.

- I have sworn off doing posters anymore (several times actually) simply because they are so difficult to travel with.
- Have a plan for what to do with the poster afterwards. You have put a lot of energy and resources into it so you may want to keep and possibly repurpose it.

What other tips do you have?

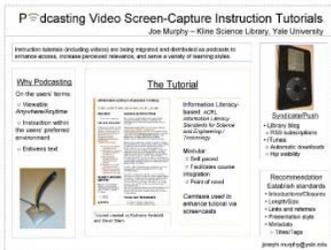
My Posters have received more than 25,500 views online.



"Go Mobile: Top 5 Mobile Services for Libraries" ALA2009 W/ Lisa Carlucci Thomas



"Perspectives on Library Leadership" ALA 2007 Emerging Leaders



"Podcasting Video Screen-Capture Instruction Tutorials" SLA 2007



"Science Info on the go: Enhancing Traditional Sci-Tech Library Services w/ Mobile Devices"
ALA 2008 ACRL/STS