CIS Poster Contest

General Comments by Sarah Douglas
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A poster is not a mini-paper. It is a different type of communication.

A poster will be browsed. How much time should it take to read a poster -- 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes? You need to catch people's attention to your work, but let them quickly ascertain whether they want to spend a lot of time on it. Catching people's attention means using meaningful (perhaps even catchy) titles and headings, good layout with clear use of spatial organization and color, and pictures that communicate ideas. A brief summary or abstract at the beginning helps.

A poster should be tailored to an audience. Who is your audience in Deschutes Hall? What knowledge do they have about the topic of your work? What are the big ideas you want to communicate about your work? A poster must be tailored to the audience!

Don't try to get too complicated or do too much: What is your general research area and problem? Why is the work important? What are the questions you're trying to answer with the research work? What was your methodology? What were your results? Are your results novel or significant, and why? Make the text logically flow from one topic to the next. Citations to published work are good, if they add content. Don't overdo it.

Don't use jargon unless you know the audience understands it. If you use words they might not know, define them.

Don't forget the value of an example.

Figures and pictures should make sense! Don't make the point-size of text or data so small that no one can read the meaning in your figure. A complicated, hard-to-read figure defeats the purpose of having a picture in the first place.

Figures and pictures should add content to the text – not repeat it. However, you should explain the content of the figure in the text. Don't leave it up to the reader to understand your graph, especially without helping direct attention to the important aspects of it. Why did you need a figure at all?

Connect the figures to the text narrative by placing the figures where they should logically belong.

An excellent book to help with graphics is "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information" by Edward R. Tufte