Poster Presentation Guidelines

This document contains general information on making poster presentations

Of all presentation forms, a poster is one of the hardest to make, because you are forced to make drastic decisions hence the limitations.

Actually, the name 'poster' is somewhat misleading. A real poster usually consist of limited information: 'Buy this product', 'Vote for me!' or 'This interesting performance will take place there, at that time'. A large, catchy image is often used to attract attention from a distance.

However, a poster _presentation_ should consist of much more (complex) information. Usually, you would prefer to convey this information by means of a paper, report or lecture, but for any reason, that is not a possibility. Therefore, your 'message' has to be summarised to fit just one page. This is not all bad, because, when it's right, the viewer can grasp the idea at a glance.

AIDA

Is a formula developed for the marketing industry but is also applicable to poster presentations. AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire and Action.

To be effective, the first thing a poster has to achieve is to stand out, be noticed = Attention. Once that is accomplished, the poster must be so attractive that the viewer becomes curious about it = Interest. As a result, the viewer is drawn closer and wants to know more about what is presented = Desire. Now the observer can access the (more detailed) information and hopefully wants to engage into contact with the author, designer of it = Action.

How to go about this? Here are some practical guidelines that can help you.

Content

TU house-style applies; the logo-border is an integral part of the poster.

For more information on the TU house-style:
http://www.huisstijl.tudelft.nl

Because of the limitation in space, it is most important to decide what really has to be part of the poster. Which text and images represent the essence of the project you are presenting.

Be conscious about your choices and be aware that a poster cluttered with facts is inaccessible and definitively not attractive at all.

Be aware that blank spaces are an integral part of the content and are equally important as the other elements in a successful poster presentation, because they provide tranquillity.

Text

TU Delft house-style applies; the font to use is Tahoma
Running text: Tahoma regular, font size 24; leading 42.52 pt (=15 mm); tracking 10 (standard letter spacing in Tahoma is too narrow)

When using the InDesign template, text over 2 columns is preferred to 3 columns

Legibility is a key factor to a successful poster presentation. Therefore, choose a 'common' font for the running text. There has to be a reason to go for a extravagant or special font. From a distance of about 2 meters the running text should be readable, that has implication for the font size to be use.

Font size is not the only factor that influences legibility, leading and line length are also important. Fact is, when lines become too long, legibility becomes difficult. Rule of thumb is that 60 - 70 characters per line (including spaces) is ideal. Leading can partly compensate for longer lines; the longer the lines, the larger the leading should be.

Hierarchy improves 'access' to your content. This can be accomplished by using headers/sub-headers that are distinctive by using different font sizes and/or bold/italic.

Color is not a good means to achieve hierarchy, but can - considerately - be put to use in distinguishing parts of text.

Avoid the use of frames and/or colored block around/behind text unless to a specific purpose. Using to many visual elements can result in an inconsistent/ cluttered, and therefore unattractive poster. The goal is a clear, serene look. Leaving enough space between the elements leads up to a clear lay-out and makes the 'need' for visible items like frames superfluous.

Getting people interested in your project should be because of the clear way of presenting, and its content, rather then embellishing your presentation with irrelevant (visual) items.

Title

Each poster should have a title, preferably a strong, catching one. An explanatory sub-title is often added to put the title into perspective to the project.

The title must be readable from a distance to fulfill the role of drawing attention (A in AIDA).

Structure

The use of a (lay-out) grid is very helpful when placing elements on the poster plane. Starting point for determining such a grid is the (paper)size of the poster. Divide the plane into columns (preferably an uneven number), gutters and margins. The column width also determines the size of all other elements on the poster; text over 2 columns or a one column picture. The same way, you can make a horizontal division to support alignment. Text leading should be adapted to this measurement (base line grid). When all elements are aligned using the grid, the result will be a well balanced, eye pleasing design.

Illustrations

When selecting illustrations derived from your project for use on the poster, be aware that it must be inviting and 'accessible' material. One large picture is preferred over several small ones, or, with AIDA in mind, a large one, and some smaller ones in addition to it. Ones you have the viewers' attention, the smaller ones will also be noticed. In some cases it's better to limit yourself to just text, especially when the image material at hand is poor.

Hierarchy may also apply to illustrations. Size, and position on the plane attain that.

poster size: A1 = 594 x 840 mm

Compulsory items
(present on the template):
student name
project title
committee members
company
MSc course (variant)
graduation date