Designing a Research Poster for the Humanities/Social Sciences

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- This information session geared towards students participating in Undergraduate Research Day in late April

- Poster traditional to STEM fields but some humanities' conferences have adopted it

- Purpose of the research poster:
    - Visual prop for talking to visitors at conference
    - Stand-in for when you are not there

- What skills do you use in making a research poster?
    - Presentation of ideas visually
    - Public speaking
    - Summarizing complex topic concisely
    - Will use these skills again-and-again academically and professionally

Undergraduate Research Day 2014, photo courtesy Thai Nguyen

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- Good design is important to attract attention

- Colin Purrington says that it takes only <u>five seconds</u> for someone to decide whether to read your poster

- Don't leave planning and design of your poster to the last minute—plan ahead!

Undergraduate Research Day 2014, photo courtesy Thai Nguyen

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Format for your Research Poster:

STEM disciplines traditionally follow IMRaD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion)

Some potential humanities formats :

- Modified IMRaD: Introduction, Research & Methods, Discussion/Topic Summary, and Conclusions

- Thematic: Group sections of your poster according to sub-themes

- Narrative: Tell a story about your topic; particularly useful for a specific event (i.e. World War II)

- Questions and Answers: Summarize your main research questions and how you answered them

Sample of a Classics poster, University of Texas at Austin, Office of Undergraduate Research, http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/our/poster/samples

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Software For Poster Design:

- Both proprietary and open source software can be used to make a research poster

- Microsoft Power Point is a popular software to use and MS Office suite can be downloaded for free with a UMD ID and login through Terpware (http://terpware.umd.edu/)

- See additional resources section at end of presentation for other software programs and links

Poster size and orientation:

- For Undergraduate Research Day, dimensions should be 36 x 48 inches (3 x 4 feet)
- Can use portrait or landscape orientation
- You can create your poster from scratch in Power Point or other software or use/modify an existing template
- It is easy to adjust slide size in Power Point– go to Design>Slide Size>Custom Slide Size

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Design for the Venue and Presentation Style:

- Check with the conference organizers for any requirements for poster size & orientation

- Undergraduate Research Day—Posters pinned to fabric display panels; can also use adhesive Velcro dots

- (Other conferences may ask you to mount posters on foam core board and display on standing or tabletop easels)

- Most posters are oriented as landscape (horizontal), although some people use portrait orientation (vertical)

Layout for your Research Poster:

- Most people read posters from left to right, top to bottom

- Place logo, title of project, and your name at top

- Can use two or three column format, or none at all

- Text used in main body of poster should not exceed 800 words

- Avoid long, unbroken expanses of text; use phrases and bullet points

- Left-align your text blocks; justified text leaves awkward gaps

- Set a thin black border (1-2pt) around images; include captions

- Whenever possible, align your text boxes and images

- Leave space for works cited and acknowledgments at bottom

- Include your full name and contact information

Thanks for reading my poster. This is a summary of my research project which I worked on this summer as a Maryland Summer Scholars project.

Justified text

Thanks for reading my poster. This is a summary of my research project which I worked on this summer as a Maryland Summer Scholars project.

Left-aligned text

Font, Font Size, and Color
Remember, keep style elements <u>consistent</u>

Font and font size:
- Sans-serif font for headings (Arial, Helvetica, etc.)
- Serif fonts for text (more readable), Times New Roman, Palatino
- Avoid exotic fonts like Comic Sans
- Use no more than two font faces—<u>don't let your poster look like a ransom note</u>!
- Poster needs to be legible from 4 to 6 feet away
  - Headings 36-54 pt.
  - Text 24-36 pt.
  - Captions and data labels on charts and graphs 18-20pt

Color:
- Avoid light text over dark background-wastes ink and hard-to-read
- Avoid red text on green or vice versa
- those with color blindness can't read it

DON'T get CARRIED AWAY With *Exotic* and Hard-to-read Fonts
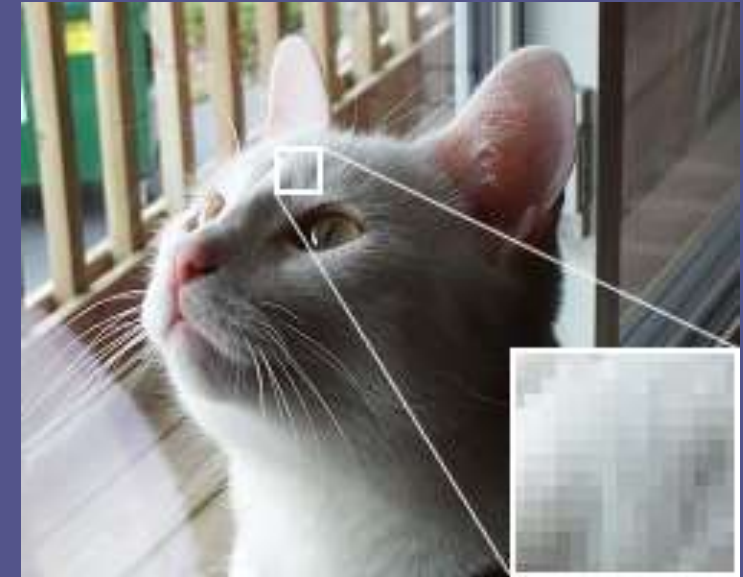
Finding Images for Your Poster:

• When possible, use images in the public domain, without copyright restrictions, or where you own the copyright

• Copyright Law allows some "fair use" of copyrighted works for educational purposes

• ArtStor (art/architecture database available via UMD Libraries Research Port with UMD login (http://www.lib.umd.edu)

• Museums such as the British Museum have images from collections online for download

• Libraries and archives have online digital collections

• For more ideas and links, see "Further Resources" section at end of this presentation

Horsemen from the West frieze of the Parthenon, marble relief sculpture, Greek, 438-432 BCE, British Museum, London

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Technical Tips for Dealing with Images:

- Ideally, images that are printed should have at least 300 dpi (dots-per-inch) resolution

- Find/scan the highest resolution image possible. When scanning, save image in TIFF format

- Use Adobe Photoshop to adjust resolution, resize, and crop images

- Screen-captures of webpages may be used in poster:

  - Hit CTRL + PRINT SCREEN buttons simultaneously and paste into graphics editor (Photoshop or MS Paint)
  - Check to make sure that image does not become "pixelated" when enlarged

Example of pixilation, from "Pixilation" entry, Wikipedia.org

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What's wrong with this poster? Example of a bad poster layout from Colin Purrington's blog:

- Background image distracting
- Dark background wastes ink
- Title perspective annoying
- Logos too large
- Light text on dark background hard to read
- Background color and sizes of text boxes inconsistent
- Text boxes not aligned
- Too much text!
- Results presented in sentences rather than charts
- Text in boxes is justified, leaving awkward space
- Bad graphic of guinea pig

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View and download a sample humanities poster (thematic format), "The Festival of St. John the Baptist in Renaissance Florence" by Elizabeth Tobey:

- tobeypaliosample.ppt (Power Point)
- tobeypaliosample.pdf (PDF)

Template for this poster was adapted from poster template downloaded from Colin Purrington's blog on poster design

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Saving and Exporting Your Poster

- Look at your poster at 100% resolution to make sure there is no pixilation of images; in PPT, go to View>Zoom>100%

- Be sure to spell-check your poster and have someone else proof it

- Embed your fonts in the file: go to File>Options>Save>Embed fonts in the file

- Save your project as a PDF (Portable Document Format) for printing—this will preserve your layout

- Save for maximum print resolution (not web resolution)

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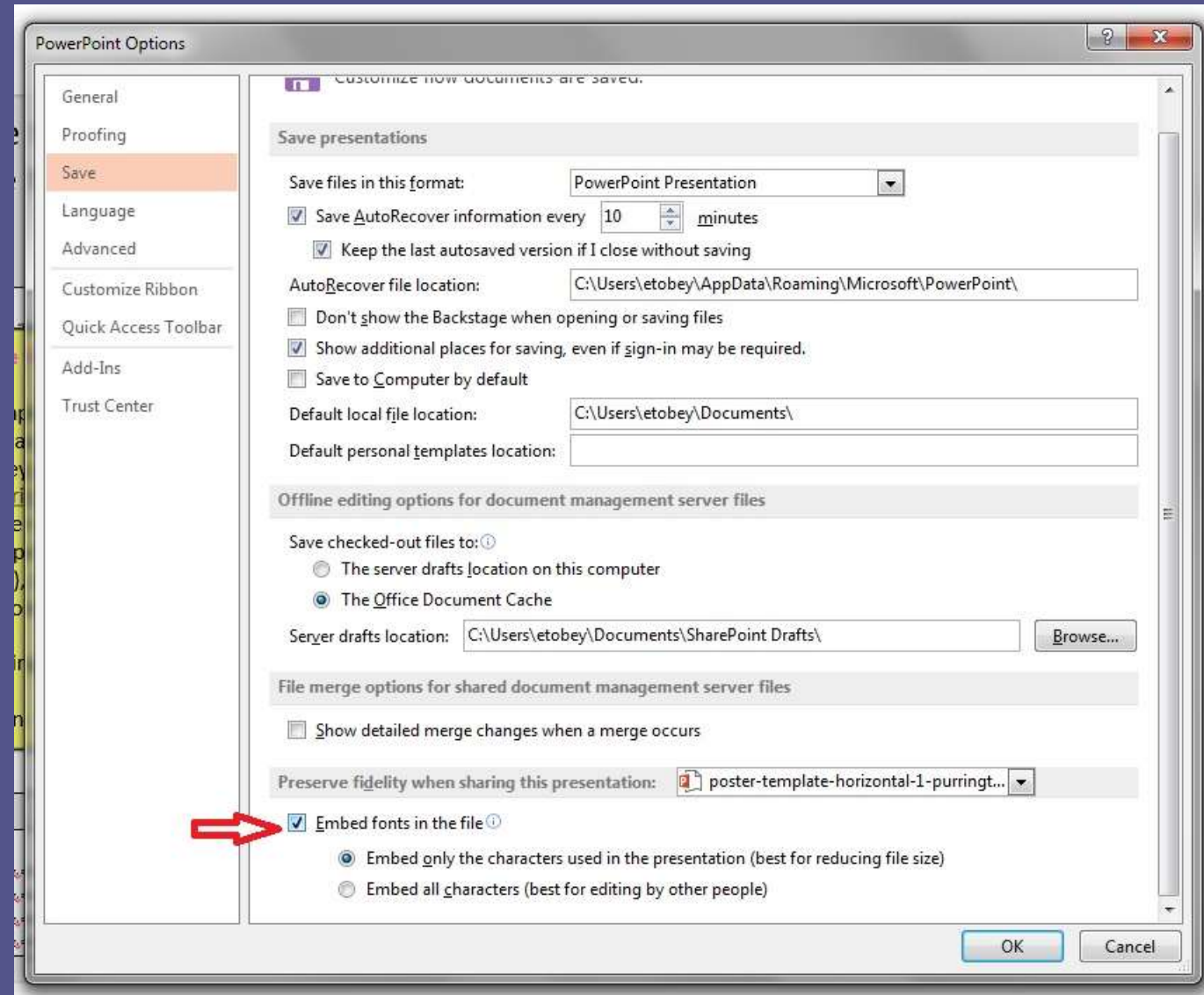
Printing your poster:

- <u>Don't leave printing to the last minute</u>, especially during crunch periods—print at least 5 days before the UG Research Day

- McKeldin Library, 2nd floor, printer in Learning Commons, http://www.lib.umd.edu/tlc

- The Engineering Copy Center in Glenn Martin Hall will also print posters, http://www.copycenter.umd.edu/

Prepare for the Poster Session:

- Write out and practice versions of a "poster talk" of various lengths : i.e. a 30, 90 second, and 3 minute speech

- Dress in neat and clean clothing; does not need to be "interview" clothing but you should be dressed more formally than what you normally wear to class

- Wear comfortable shoes—you may be standing for a long time without a break

- Bring a plastic bag to protect your poster in transport in case the weather is bad—poster ink can streak in the rain

Don't dress this casually—and remember a plastic bag for your poster!

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During the Poster Session:

- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace

- Maintain eye contact with your visitor

- Keep your language simple—don't overwhelm your listener with jargon

- Use your hand to direct your listener to your poster

- Do not wear sunglasses or chew gum

- Thank people for their interest and remember to smile!

Undergraduate Research Day 2014, photo courtesy Thai Nguyen

Further Resources:

MCUR Creating a Research Poster page, http://www.ugresearch.umd.edu/current-createresearchposter.html

See following slides for links to more research poster websites
and links to sources for images and software

Humanities Posters:

David Forrest, Presenting Conference Papers and Posters in the Humanities, Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center, Texas Tech University, http://www.tltc.ttu.edu/teach/TLTC%20Teaching%20Resources/PresentingConferencePapersAndPostersInTheHumanities.asp

Stephanie Krom, "Poster Tips for Humanities Conference Posters," May 13, 2014, Archives and Public History Digital, http://aphdigital.org/2014/05/13/poster-tips-for-humanities-conference-posters/

Mark McDayter, "Design Tips for Creating an Arts and Humanities Poster," February 21, 2013, Electronic Textuality and Theory at Western, Western University, http://rgettatwestern.wordpress.com/2013/02/21/design-tips-for-creating-arts-and-humanities-poster/

General Websites on Research Posters:

- Designing a Research Poster by Colin Purrington, http://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design, includes downloadable templates in PowerPoint, Open Office Draw

- Research Poster Samples, Office of Undergraduate Research, University of Texas at Austin, http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/our/poster/samples

- Presentation by Tracy Volz (Rice University), April 11, 2012, National Library of Medicine Training Center/National Network of Libraries of Medicine, handouts on Poster Checklist and Presenting your Poster available.

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Downloading University of Maryland Logos

The University of Maryland at College Park has on its communications website a page where you may download high-resolution official university logos. These are in EPS format (encapsulated post script), and you will need a graphics editing software such as Adobe Illustrator to open and edit them:

http://www.brand.umd.edu/downloads.cfm

The cloud version of the Adobe Creative Suite can be installed for free from Terpware (http://terpware.umd.edu/) using your UMD student ID.

Software:

Proprietary

- Microsoft (MS) PowerPoint a commonly-used software for poster design-some departments have templates available with logo

- MS Publisher

- Adobe InDesign, part of Adobe Creative Suite

- Download MS Office & Adobe Creative Suite for free with UMD login at Terpware (http://terpware.umd.edu/) – look under "Design and Production"

Free/Open Source:

- Apache Open Office Draw, https://www.openoffice.org/product/draw.html

More Resources: Finding Images for Your Poster:

- ArtStor (art/architecture database available via UMD Libraries Research Port with UMD login (http://www.lib.umd.edu)

- Museums (art, history, and anthropology collections)-here's just a few:

  - Smithsonian Institution, Collections Search Center (http://collections.si.edu/search/) searches across multiple collections
  - National Gallery of Art, http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/collection-search.html
  - Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Collection Online, http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online
  - The British Museum Collections Online,

    (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx) sign up for free account and receive emails of high-resolution images for research and study

Horsemen from the West frieze of the Parthenon, marble relief sculpture, Greek, 438-432 BCE, British Museum, London

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Finding Images for Your Poster, cont'd:

Online libraries, archives, historical societies; many have digitized archival materials online; look under "collections"

- Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org)-many out-of-copyright books as well as archival materials; many institutions contribute

- Creative Commons (http://creativecommons.org/)—online archive with images in the public domain or where creator has given permission for others to use

- Library of Congress (http://www.loc.gov/collections/) has thousands of images in the public domain; browse its digital collections

- National Archives DocsTeach online primary sources (http://docsteach.org/)

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