Tips for an effective poster session

- Readability is paramount. Make sure that all text—especially the title—is readable from at least 5-10 feet away. You want anyone walking by to know what your project is about at a glance. Make sure that your name, contact information and library name are all also very visible.
- A short, catchy title in a large font size is critical to grabbing attention. Try not to use more than three different fonts overall.
- Keep it simple. Focus on a few key points of your project, just enough to convey the general sense, which you can then expand upon when asked. Make sure that the flow of information that you want to convey is easily followed so readers can understand how they're supposed to read the poster. The goal is to have it as self-explanatory as possible, leaving you free to talk about the more complex details.
- Keep text concise—focus more on visuals, i.e. photos, graphs, charts, etc. A good poster should be able to be read in 5-10 minutes. You can always explain in more detail once someone expresses interest, or provide more in-depth handouts. Poster word count should be in the range of 300-800 words.
- Handouts and copies of posters can be uploaded to the conference handout page prior to presenting your poster. Information on how to do this will be provided to all accepted presenters.
- Some schools of thought recommend a serif font over a sans serif font for better readability, but ultimately—as long as you have the proper size—that decision is up to you, and the difference is minimal.
- Use bullet points, numbering, and headlines to keep information organized and succinct.
- One method of creating a poster is to design it using software like Photoshop or Illustrator, then have it printed as one large piece. This makes for a very clean, professional-looking poster, but can get expensive (usually around $100-$150 at most commercial printers).
- Avoid simply printing out 8.5" x 11" slides from a powerpoint presentation.
- One good way to stand out—especially if you do not have the budget to print a giant 4' x 8' poster—is to cover the poster area with colored construction paper first, then attach your poster segments on top of these strategically. Large amounts of red, yellow and orange can overpower visually, so take that into consideration and opt for more neutral tones. Also, using two or three related colors is generally most effective.
- Along the same lines, be sure and include plenty of negative space (shoot for around 40% overall) in between text/graphical elements, this will help with readability.
- For some topics, it may be appropriate to bring and arrange additional props on the table (if available) alongside the poster. Again, these should be mostly self-explanatory and participatory, with you standing by ready to elaborate and demonstrate if necessary.