



Building a Poster using PowerPoint-

a guide for presenting your research in a large format poster

1. Decide what you want to say and know your audience.

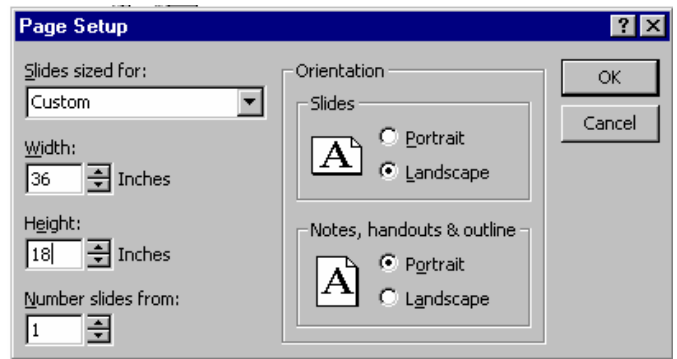
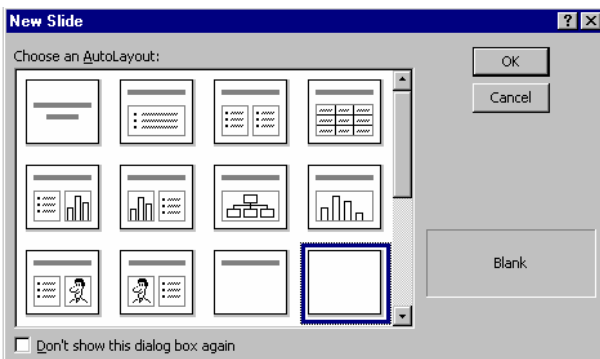
What is the main function of your poster? What is the information you want your audience to receive and understand? Avoid using both text and images that are beyond what they need or can absorb. Too much text and graphics can be overwhelming. Your message should be immediately obvious. The goal of the poster is to make the information easy to for the audience to understand. Anything that does not help this process is unnecessary. Remember less is more.

2. Organize your data into sections. Edit!

Before opening PowerPoint, assemble everything you want to include on the poster. This is the time to edit! Ask yourself, “is it necessary?” and “does it help my purpose?” Make a rough sketch of the poster, divide it into the main areas, and list everything within each area. For example, a RESULTS area may have a text block, 2 graphs, a table, and a few photos. Keep all graphs and images with the text to which it refers. For example: if the text refers to *Figure 1*, place the figure nearby and give it a title that the audience will find useful; this can eliminate both the need to call it *Figure 1* and the extra words used to describe where it is.

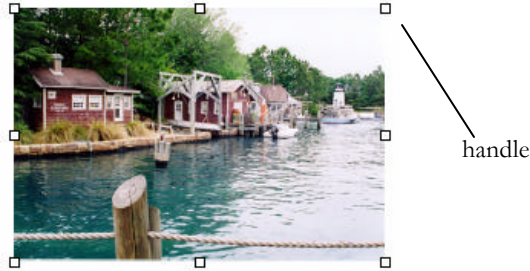
3. Begin a layout in PowerPoint.

Open PowerPoint(PPT), go to File>New>General>Blank Presentation. Before you start anything you must get the proper sizing for the poster, go to File>Page Setup>Custom. PPT allows 56” maximum for both dimensions, but since our poster paper is only 36” wide the largest width can only be 36”, the length can be greater. ** Enter all the main text at the final point size (larger than 28pt to be read at 5ft away). This will give you an idea of the room remaining for graphics. Try to avoid copying and pasting text blocks from other files, this can cause problems in printing and sizing, etc. A poster that is all text can be boring, a strong image can draw an audience to your poster. Captions, references, and acknowledgements should be of a smaller font size. ***Note: if you want a poster larger than 56”, create it half-sized and we will print it at 200% (for example 18X36 printed at 200% = a poster 36X72.*




4. Importing Photos.

To insert a photo (non clip-art): while in your poster slide go to Insert (top of the screen)>Picture>from File. At this point you need to know where your image is located. For example, if it is on a floppy disk, you would select 3½ floppy(A:) and then select the name of your picture, such as “pic1.tif”. By double clicking on that file name you will insert your picture into the center of the poster. At this point the picture can be dragged around and appropriately placed. To move the image around the slide simply click on the center of the photo, hold the left mouse button down and drag. Each inserted image will have “handles” around it. Be sure not to pull the image by the middle handles, this will distort your image. When resizing the image only use the corner handles.



This process is very similar for clip-art insertion, go to: Insert (top of the screen)>Picture> Clipart and then select your choice from there.

To crop a photo: select the photo (by clicking anywhere in the image), select the Crop Tool  from the Picture Palette and crop from any side. Cropping will cut out that section of the photo completely, it does not just resize the image! The remaining image can now be resized. If the picture tools aren't in sight, open them under View>Toolbars>Picture. These tools can enhance images also(brightness, contrast, etc).

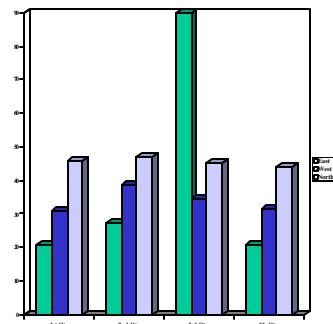
To “frame” a photo: With the image selected go to >Format>Colors and lines, leave the fill “none”. Select a color and line width to add an appropriate border around the photo.



5. Inserting and Simplifying graphs.

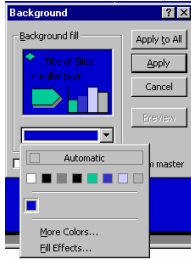
To insert a chart in PPT: go to Insert>Chart. A graph with a data table will automatically appear. Create the chart from here and place it within your poster appropriately.

To simplify the graph: remember less is more. Whenever possible combine graphs to share an axis title or numbers. If the same legend works for graphs that are together, use it once and make it large enough to be read. Avoid anything that adds clutter, is overly busy, or is not helping to tell your story: Delete any unnecessary lines, tickmarks, etc so you have a clean graph. Increase the point size of lines and remaining text, staying consistent with all graphs. Change colors to complement the entire poster.



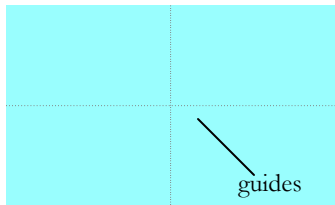
6. Choosing a background.

The background should complement the poster content and enhance the images used. Photos of red apples will be lost in a red background. Experiment with different colors and textures until you find one that works for all your images.

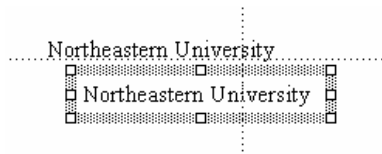


7. Knowing some tricks always helps.

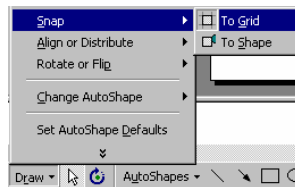
Viewing Guides: Go to View>Guides; this will display a set of dotted lines that will not print out but will serve as guidelines that help to align images and text. If you want to add additional guides, click on one guide and hold “Ctrl” as you drag another guide from it. Use guides to set margins and columns. Uneven edges can distract your readers!



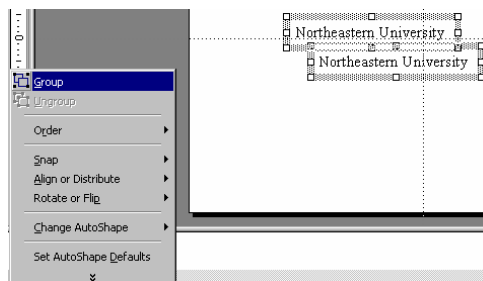
Copying objects: Select a text block, image, or group of things that you wish to duplicate. Hit “Ctrl+D” simultaneously and you get a copy of your selection. This is helpful with text blocks because the formatting is done, all you have to do is re-type the content.



Nudging objects: In PPT, objects can attach themselves to an invisible grid and sometimes this is not where you want them. To get just a small movement, go to Draw>Snap. “To Grid” will be highlighted, click on that to de-select it. Objects can be nudged now in smaller increments by using the keyboard’s arrow keys.



Grouping objects: Once you have your text boxes and images lined up it is easy to “group” them to avoid misaligning them again. Click on one object and then keep your finger on shift so you can select other objects when you click. Once all of your objects are selected go to Draw> Group. You can always “ungroup” in the same function should you need to.



7. Knowing some tricks always helps. (cont.)

Try to use standard windows fonts. If you must use a special font be sure to select “Embed True Type Fonts” when you save your file. To do this go to Save>Tools; this will avoid any printing problems.

