

## How to give a poster

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### Your jobs

- Excite people about your work
- Convey a single, simple, important story
- Learn about interesting place to go with the work before you publish
- Find out what others are doing
- Network (i.e., get to know people you might want to work with some day)
- Become famous

### How to get there

- Reel people in. If they look remotely interested let them know you can answer questions
- Have a 3 minute (or less) spiel that is polished and practiced, which walks an utter novice through the work.  
No jargon. It should clearly motivate the question and hit all the high points. Do not get bogged down on the methods unless it is specifically a methods poster. I do 30 seconds on the question, 30 seconds on the design, 1-2 minutes on the results, and 30 seconds on a strong take-home message.
- Give credit to others who were involved as appropriate – spread the wealth
- Talk at a medium speed – not so fast you appear manic and not so slow you bore yourself
- Pause frequently to ask for questions
- Look at whether the person you're talking to appears to have questions and respond as such
- Make lots of eye contact
- If there are multiple people at your poster attend to them simultaneously. Don't spend all your time with one person unless there's no one else there.
- Let people leave when they want to
- If someone's asking questions about stuff that's not on the poster, feel free to go there, again, as long as you don't have to attend to lots of other people
- Ask people's names! Take their emails down at the drop of a hat

### Attitude

#### **- It helps to be:**

- friendly, cheerful, and excited but not bubbly
- confident enough that you can present your work without embarrassment and so that people see you as an authority in your own work, but not too confident that you appear haughty
- open to suggestions and criticism; not defensive – in a learning mode

#### **- If you are criticized:**

- Listen carefully. This person may review your paper in print or someday be your advisor/advisee
- Do not be defensive. Rather ask for advice on how to handle the criticism and what you could do differently
- I generally try to start my responses with "That's a great idea" or some such positive feedback to let people know that their idea is worth hearing and that I'm open to it.
- If you actually believe someone is wrong, convey this information gently. E.g., "That's a neat idea. We thought about it for a while, and tried to test/overcome it in this way... What do you think?"

### Stuff to bring with you

- Sign-up sheet for reprints. I have columns for name and email because 1) so often you can't read one or the other but can reconstruct from the other column and 2) I like to know who wanted my work
- Cards, if you have them
- Reprints of your other work if you have them
- Supplementary data to augment what's on the poster, if you have it
- A roll of tape seems to go a long way

### After the poster

- Throw it out unless you have a very good reason for keeping it. Really.
- Write down all the comments you remember
- Write to everyone who put their name down. Personal notes are great when appropriate.