

# **Capstone Poster Production**

## **Project Poster Guidelines and Suggestions**

- Size: 40" x 32"
- Must include: Title, author(s), clear problem statement
- Make text easy to read. Viewers can't read small fonts from a distance so use 24-point fonts or larger for body copy. Captions can be set at 18-point.
- UW Creative Services' poster printing supports all fonts that come bundled with Windows XP, Mac OSX and all fonts included in Adobe Creative Suite 2. If you are using a font that is not included in the list, there are three options:
  - Embed the font in the file (PowerPoint, Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop)
  - Make a flattened/rasterized pdf (PowerPoint, Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop)
  - Convert font layers as curves or paths (Illustrator, Photoshop)
- The most successful posters use graphics to break up text while still supporting the flow of the document. When creating graphics, best results come from using the appropriate type of program:
  - Graphics that are primarily flat areas of color (simple logos, arrows, simple shapes) are best designed in vector-based programs such as Adobe Illustrator. Since elements in vector-based graphics are captured as equations, the program works with the output hardware (monitor or printer) to render the most accurate version of the equation given the output's display capabilities. PowerPoint also has the ability to render simple visualizations but be sure to test out whether what is seen on screen reproduces the same in print.
  - Photographs and other images with complex gradations are best worked with in raster-based (pixel) photo-editor programs such as Adobe Photoshop. When manipulating an image in Photoshop, set resolution and dimensions at highest possible use – minimum 150 dots per inch (dpi)
- Sites to help in choosing color schemes:
  - <http://kuler.adobe.com>
  - <http://colourlovers.com>
  - <http://wellstyled.com/tools/colorscheme2/index-en.html>

## **Programs for designing a poster**

In general, use whatever program you feel most comfortable with to create the poster... as long as the final digital copy is in Adobe PDF format. As noted above, if you are using and special or unusual fonts, when converting your file to a PDF, if the option comes up to "embed fonts", you should do so; the larger file size is worth preventing unexpected font substitutions. A few observations of specific programs:

- *Microsoft Office PowerPoint:*
  - Advantages:
    - Most students familiar with the program.
    - Can spell-check automatically.
  - Disadvantages:
    - Since it's mainly designed for video presentations, some graphic options (e.g. gradient fills, special font effects) won't print as it appears on screen.
    - May experience compatibility issues converting Microsoft PowerPoint to Adobe PDF.
  - As you test out design options, it's a good idea to convert your experiments to pdfs and print out drafts as you go. UW Health Sciences Creative Services does see a lot of PowerPoint posters and can help. See [http://depts.washington.edu/hsasf/posters/pdfs/poster\\_usepowerpoint.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/hsasf/posters/pdfs/poster_usepowerpoint.pdf) for their suggestions in preparing PowerPoint poster for printing.
  
- *Adobe Illustrator and other vector-based drawing programs:*
  - Advantages:
    - If majority of poster is flat graphics (few to no photographs) but mainly text, vector-based drawing programs will guarantee clarity in graphics and layout relationships regardless of screen or print format.
    - If poster contains few photographs file sizes can remain small
  - Disadvantages:
    - Steep learning curve for first-time users. There's no traditional analogue to this program.
    - No automatic spell-check.
  - To minimize file size and possible printing errors, be sure to make a flattened copy of your file before converting to pdf. If using Illustrator CS, it is not absolutely necessary to embed unsupported fonts when creating the pdf since the program can convert them to simple shapes. See [www.science.smith.edu/resources/poster\\_printing/docs/AI\\_QuickRef.pdf](http://www.science.smith.edu/resources/poster_printing/docs/AI_QuickRef.pdf)
  
- *Adobe InDesign and other layout programs:*
  - Advantages:
    - Similar to vector-based programs (i.e. quality of product is independent of output device)
    - Better support for vector-based and raster-based images.
  - Disadvantages:
    - Special effects are limited
    - Learning curve
    - Limited spell check
  - See [www.stanford.edu/dept/VAS/pdfs/ID\\_poster.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/VAS/pdfs/ID_poster.pdf) for suggestions on printing.
  
- *Adobe Photoshop and other image-editor/painting programs:*

- Advantages:
  - Produces snazzy looking posters with a breadth of graphic options
  - Has full support of raster-based images (photos, images with gradients) and limited support for vector-based images (flat graphics like logos and text)
- Disadvantages:
  - The quality of images is device dependent, i.e. you will need to set the resolution depending on whether the final output is on screen or print.
  - Poster printing requires relatively high-quality resolution which translates to huge file sizes (e.g. one poster in Illustrator was about 700KB; the visually identical Photoshop poster would be 110 MB)
- Set the resolution, no lower than 150 dpi (dots per inch)
- Save your working copies as TIFFs. The most recent version of TIFFs supports all the capabilities of Photoshop but can also be LZW compressed. Don't use JPEG since it uses a "lossy" compression algorithm, meaning photographic elements will lose clarity every time you save the document.
- When creating the final PDF for the poster, use Photoshop's Save As... menu option and choose ZIP as compression method. Be sure to flatten all layers before creating the pdf. Unsupported fonts do not need to be embedded since Photoshop converts the image to shapes.

## Trademarks and Logos

We encourage you to display your affiliation with both the iSchool and UW. Please bear in mind that when doing a public presentation like the iSchool Capstone Event or the Undergraduate Research Symposium, you are a representative of the School. If you choose to make use of one of these official UW logos, please observe trademark usage guidelines. A guideline for UW related logos may be found at:

[http://www.washington.edu/univrel/UWStandards\\_Print.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/univrel/UWStandards_Print.pdf)). The iSchool is in the process of establishing trademark guidelines for public use but you can contact Dowell Eugenio for more information.

Digital copies of the logos will be made available to Capstone students via website in both the designer's original format (either Adobe Illustrator or PostScript) and limited size variations as TIFF files. UW logos are available in full color, all-black or all-white. iSchool logos are available in black, white, or purple. However, if you need a logo in another size or file format (e.g. transparent GIF) or an iSchool logo in a different color, please contact Dowell at [deugen3@u.washington.edu](mailto:deugen3@u.washington.edu). Samples of available logos:



## Other websites

Undergraduate Research Symposium website:  
<http://www.washington.edu/research/urp/symp/index.html>

Basics of poster design from the Washington Space NASA Grant Consortium:  
<http://www.waspacegrant.org/posterdesign.html>