



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL &  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

# **Creating a Large Format Poster in MS PowerPoint 2003**

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**Requirements:** MS PowerPoint 2003 (earlier versions are similar)  
Access to a large format printer

These instructions generally apply to scientific style poster sessions, but the basic design rules also work for more free style exhibits.

Ideally, a poster session should be designed to provide a brief overview of your work in visual format. It should attract attention, be informative, initiate discussion yet stand alone when you're not there. The following guidelines may help.

The main difference between a digital PowerPoint (PPT) presentation and a poster is the number of slides. A poster only has one slide, a big one.

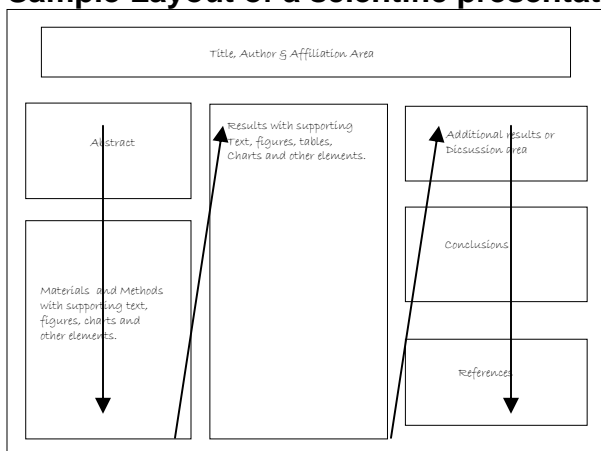
### Pre-planning - Before You Begin:

- Determine the essential point or concept you want to make
- Know your target audience (and edit poster elements accordingly)
- Find out how much physical space you will have for your poster. This can range from 2'x2' to 4'x8'. Check with the hosting organization.
- Determine the size you would like to poster to be (3'x4', 42" x 54", etc.) based on physical space allowed and amount of 'stuff' you have to put into your poster. **Note: Check with your printer to make sure they can handle your poster size. See Printing, page 12, for further information.**
- Gather and organize all your materials: text, tables, figures, charts, photographs, images, etc.

### Starting out:

Determine the reading flow of your poster for layout of elements and sketch it out. Generally, we read top-to-bottom, left-to-right. Note where tables, charts, and images need to be added. Depending upon the size of your poster, you may have 3 or 4 or more columns of data. Some typical topics covered in a scientific poster can include Abstract, Introduction, Objectives, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, References, and Acknowledgements.

### Sample Layout of a scientific presentation set for 3'x4'



## Using PowerPoint 2003

Once you have all your elements ready to go, it's time to start the actual layout and design in PPT.

The difference between a PPT digital slide presentation and a poster is simply the number of slides you'll have in it. A digital presentation may have several slides that you scroll through, while a poster will have one slide (or page). All your elements go on this one page and are then printed on the large format printer which uses paper on a large roll.

*Tip: It's often easier to add all your elements to the page first and then edit them for size, color and placement. Depending upon the amount of content, text sizes may vary from the standard size guidelines, but should be consistent throughout the poster.*

You can start your poster by either creating a new blank presentation directly in PPT, or by visiting the Office of Communication's Resource web page: <http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/oc/resources.html#temps> and saving a predesigned 36" x 48" template layout.

### **Method One:** Creating a new blank presentation

1. Open PowerPoint – choose **File, New, Blank presentation**, choose **blank Contents layout**
2. Set the page size of your poster.  
Create a page with the proper size and length/width ratios. Choose **File, Page Setup, Slides sized for Custom** and put in your poster **width** and **height** dimensions. Set your orientation either as **portrait (tall)** or **landscape (wide)**. Click **OK**.

### **Method Two:** using the template for a 36" x 48" landscape layout

1. Logon to your web browser
2. Go to the OC url listed above
3. In IE, right click on the Two or Three column layout under Research and 'Save Target As' or in Firefox, right click on the desired file and 'Save Link As'
4. Save the file on your computer.
5. Open the file in PPT. There will be two pages with suggested layouts, font sizes, guides, etc. The first page is a sample and should be deleted. Use the second page.
6. Save your file with a new name to avoid overwriting the template.

**NOTE 1: The maximum paper size for the Tifton Conference Center is 36"**, so one of your dimensions has to be equal to or smaller than this. A very common poster size is 36" x 48" which is easy to transport and hang. If you need a poster larger than that, you will have to find a printer that can handle it (see Printing on page 12)

**NOTE 2: PowerPoint doesn't allow a page size larger than 56"**. If your final output is bigger than that, you need to create a page size that is one-half the size of your final output. For example, if you need a 36" x 84" (3'x7') poster, then your page setup size would be 18" x 42". The file will be printed at about 200% to give you the final size that you need. **Make sure you let your printer know that the files should be printed at 200%.**

**NOTE 3: What you see on the screen is the physical size PPT uses.** The large format printer, however, is a bit different. The printer actually has a built in margin area all around the page that it will not print in. **It is highly recommended that you keep all your elements at least 1" in from each edge of your page to avoid having the printer cut off your elements.**

To make placement of your elements easier, turn on your ruler (**View, Ruler**) and guides (**View, Grids & Guides, uncheck Snap objects to grid, Check Display drawing guides on screen, OK**). Then hold down the 'ctrl' key and click and drag the center guides to all edges at the 1-2" mark. Stay within these guides.

Allow yourself enough "white space" between elements and columns so that your poster doesn't appear crowded and hard to read.

## **Adding Text Elements**

There are several ways to put text into your poster. If you already have your text in a Word document, then you can copy and paste blocks of text from Word into PPT. Or you can type directly into a PPT text box.

*Tip: Since a 24 point text size is considered the minimum standard for content, you might want to set that as the default for your system before you begin. **Insert a Text Box** somewhere on your page. **Format, Font** to select the box and in the dialog box, set the **font size** and click the **Default for new objects**. Click **OK**. You may have to adjust font sizes later on, but this is a good starting size.*

- a. Click on the **Text Box** tool or select **Insert, Text Box** to add a container for your text.
- b. Click and drag the text box where you want it to be.
- c. Type or copy and paste your text into the box (which can be stretched by clicking and dragging the little corner handles)
- d. You can change the size and font in your text box by clicking on the box edge and changing the values in the tool bar areas near the top of the screen.
- e. You can change a section of your text by clicking the text box, and dragging through the selection text.
- f. Make a separate text box for each section. That makes it easier to shift elements around, if necessary.

## Recommendations for Text:

- Choose one standard font face and use it throughout your poster.
- Use a san-serif (Arial) or serif (Times New Roman) font
- Avoid using funky fonts unless you plan to embed them with your presentation. Be careful as not all fonts can be embedded. **(File, Save As, click Tools, Save Options, click Embed TTF (characters for printing only)**
- Be careful when using scientific symbols. Sometimes they don't translate to the LF printer correctly. It's best to directly insert symbols within PPT. See *Inserting Symbols into Text* below.
- You can emphasize various pieces of text by changing its style...using **bold**, *italics*, different **SIZES** and/or **colors**.
- Left justify text (easier to read).
  
- Title should be about 72-100 points and bold (about 1"-1.5").
- Authors about 60-72 points (about .75-1"), bold.
- Affiliations about 54-60 points (.5-.75"), bold.
- Section Headings 48 points, bold.
- Subheadings 36 points, bold.
- Body text 24-30 points, normal.
- Captions, figure legends 16-20
- Should be able to easily readable from a distance of 6'.
- These are only guidelines. Based upon how much content you really have, you may have to adjust text sizes.

*Tip: To create a paragraph with a hanging indent (for References), or to add more spacing between the bullet and text in a list, click View, Ruler (to turn it on), then click inside the text box and move the lower gray triangle/box in the ruler over to the right*

## Inserting Symbols into Text

Click your mouse cursor in the text box where the symbol is needed. Then click **Insert, Symbol**, and choose the same font as your main body font. Scroll through the drop down menus until you find the symbol you need. Highlight symbol, click **Insert**, click **Close**. Repeat as needed. Some common symbols are listed below.

This is less than or equal to	≤	character code 2264 (Math ops)
This is greater than or = to	≥	character code 2265 (Math ops)
This is not equal to or	≠	character code 2260 (Math ops)
This is mu	μ	character code 00B5 (Latin-1)
This is alpha	α	character code 03B1 (basic Greek)
This is beta	β	character code 03B2 (basic Greek)

If you know the character code for a Unicode character, just type the code in the dialog box.

*Tip: For superscripts or subscripts, enter your text then highlight the specific character. Click **Format, Font**, click the appropriate box and click **OK**.*

**My Title** (100 points)

**Authors** (72 point)

**Affiliations** (60 points)

**Section Heads** (48 points)

**Subheadings** (36 points)

Body text (24-30 points)

Captions (16-20 points)

#### **Keyboard Shortcuts**

CTRL+C: Copy

CTRL+X: Cut

CTRL+V: Paste

CTRL+Z: Undo

CTRL+B: Bold

CTRL+U: Underline

CTRL+I: Italics

CTRL+A: Selects all elements

ALT+TAB: Switch to another running program (hold down the ALT key and then press the TAB key to view the task-switching window)

## Adding Tables or Graphs:

**Tables and graphs should be as close to final format as possible to avoid having to edit them once they've been placed on your poster page. Consider your color scheme before pasting charts using color.**

Tables should be created in Microsoft Word using the table editor function. Graphs can be created in either PPT or Excel and copy/pasted into your poster file. Spreadsheet data can also be copy/pasted into your poster from Excel.

There are several ways to bring these elements into your poster. Select the area in the document, chart or spreadsheet you want, then do one of the following:

1. **Copy & Paste** should allow some editing and resizing of the pieces of your table or chart, but the pasted element (particularly tables) may not show up as neatly as in original file. Data is editable if changes need to be made.
2. **Copy & Paste Special** as native file (MS Word Document Object, MS Graph Chart Object, MS Excel Chart Object) generally allows editing of the various cells in a table or the data in a chart. May be a little easier to resize.
3. **Copy & Paste Special** (as a metafile) brings the element in as an image and would need to be converted to a Microsoft Drawing Object in order to edit.

## Adding images:

**Official logos for either UGA or the CAES can be found on the Office of Communications website at this url:**

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/oc/resources.html#logo>

Images are a wonderful addition to a poster session as long as they add value and are relevant to the main concept.

## Recommendations for Images:

**The best images for print are TIF images, second is high resolution JPGs.** TIFs tend to be large files while JPGs are much smaller. TIF images are recommended for backgrounds because of their high quality.

*From Digital Cameras:* Adjust your camera to the highest resolution setting it allows, and take your pictures at this resolution. If you can save them as TIF images, do so. If not, save them as high resolution JPGs.

*From Flatbed Scanners:* Set your scanner on 300 dpi and scan at 100%. Again, save as a TIF or high quality JPG.

**From the Web: Downloading images from a website is generally not recommended for two reasons:**

- 1. All images are subjected to copyright laws so, UNLESS the site is a public domain site and/or gives permission, you are stealing someone else's work.**
- 2. Web images are generally set at a 72 dpi resolution which is fine for viewing on a monitor, but will not print well.**

Use your image editing software (Paint, PhotoShop, PhotoFiltre ([www.photofiltre.com](http://www.photofiltre.com) – main site, information only) to crop, color correct, and resize your final image. PhotoFiltre's free software can be downloaded from the Griffin campus ftp site at <ftp://ftp.griffin.uga.edu/pub/win95-nt/pf-setup-en.exe>

There are two ways to add images to your page

- 1. Insert, Picture.** This is the most common method. If you have a standard graphics file (TIF, JPG, GIF, WMF, BMP, PICT, etc.) use the **Insert, Picture, From File** commands, then select your file and click **Insert**. If necessary, resize the image by dragging one of the *corner handles*. **Only the corner handles will size your image with its original aspect (width to height) ratio.** The center handles will stretch it out of proportion. Click and drag in the middle of the image to move it.
- 2. Copy and Paste.** If you have an Excel graph or an image from a different software package, you can copy from that application and paste into PPT.

Once all your elements have been added, you can edit size and placement of them to get a well-designed layout.

*Tip: To left align text elements in a column, hold your shift key and click on each text box. Then choose Draw, Align or Distribute, Align Left.*

*Tip: To vertically align elements in a column, hold your shift key and click on each element. Then choose Draw, Align or Distribute, Distribute Vertically.*

## **Image resolution**

**The size of an image file and the quality of the picture it contains depend on:**

- the number of pixels in the image
- the amount of compression used to store it.

Pixels and Resolution

- A pixel is the smallest 'picture element' of a digital image.
- Arranged in horizontal rows and vertical columns (such as 640 x 480), pixels make up the image *resolution*, an indication of quality.
- The greater number of pixels, the more contrast, color richness, and clarity an image will have, and the better the picture will look when printed or enlarged.
- Mega Pixel = 1 million picture elements. For example, a 5 mega pixel camera can take a picture made up of 5 million colored dots!

Compression – allows storage of many photos in the memory

- Less compression (Fine, Super High Quality, etc. modes), gives better images used for larger prints, but you can't store as many images.
- More compression (Normal, Basic, Standard modes), stores more images and makes the images better for making smaller prints, posting on a Web page, or sending as e-mail attachments.
- For the highest resolution, some cameras offer an uncompressed format.

**JPEG** - Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG), a compression technique that reduces file size by eliminating redundant or unnecessary image data. Mostly used for photographs.

**GIF** - Graphics Interchange Format (GIF), a compression method used for line art.

**TIF** - (Tag Image File Format), non-compressed format used to save images created by scanners, frame grabbers, and photo editing programs.

### **Recommendations for Backgrounds**

Your choice of backgrounds is virtually unlimited! However, a lighter background color with dark text is standard design because it's easier on the eyes. Choose a color scheme that you find appealing, keeping your choices to no more than 3 colors, and use the scheme throughout your poster.

You can set the background colors directly in PPT by clicking on **Format, Background** and selecting color choices, fill patterns (shading), and textures.

You can also import a high quality image (TIF recommended) and make it your background, however, you might want to use an image editing software to lighten the image or adjust the transparency so that the image doesn't interfere with your other poster elements.





## Printing

Before printing, spell check your document (click **Tools, Spelling**). Print a small draft of your poster and proofread it carefully. Make any necessary changes. **Your file should be in final, print-ready form before you request printing. Save** your file to your hard drive.

In-house printing can be done through the Tifton Campus Conference Center. Contact either Barbara Maw ([barbaram@uga.edu](mailto:barbaram@uga.edu) or call 229-391-6914 or Gail Hargett ([ghargett@uga.edu](mailto:ghargett@uga.edu) or call 229-386-3821) to make arrangements for printing.

The Conference Center needs a minimum of two weeks lead time to process posters. However, during peak meeting dates, more lead time may be required.

The Conference Center charges \$7.50 per linear foot for large format printing and \$7.50 for lamination. Lamination is optional. If you require a tube for mailing, the cost per tube is \$5.00. The Conference Center ships via UPS. Mailing fees will vary based on the area.

For posters that exceed the 36" measurement, you may need to contact outside vendors. Near Athens, contact

Athens Blueprint  
269 W. Dougherty St.  
Athens, Ga. 30601  
Phone:(706)548-0656  
Fax: (706)369-8504  
Hours of Operation Monday through Friday 7:30am - 6:00pm(EST)

or check your local listings or search online for a printer who handles large format printing near you.

## Resources:

Several web sites are available that contain information about PowerPoint in general and about poster sessions in detail as well as sites where you can find free images.

### Templates and User Manuals

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/oc/resources.html#temps>

### UGA & CAES Identity and Logos

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/oc/resources/logos/>

### Image editing software (free download of V.6.3.1)

[http://photofiltre.free.fr/frames\\_en.htm](http://photofiltre.free.fr/frames_en.htm) or download from the Griffin server

<ftp://ftp.griffin.uga.edu/pub/win95-nt/pf-setup-en.exe>

### Color ideas beyond PPT:

Microsoft Publisher – open Publisher, choose Blank Print Publication, Format, Color Schemes and look through the choices.

### Microsoft's PowerPoint 2003 Solution Center

<http://support.microsoft.com/ph/2522>

### Presenter's University

<http://www.presentersuniversity.com/>

### Public Domain Images

<http://portfolio.caes.uga.edu/res/sites/caes/> (CAES)

<http://www.forestryimages.org/> (Forestry)

<http://www.insectimages.org/> (Insects)

<http://www.invasive.org/> (Invasive Species)

<http://www.ipmimages.org/> (IPM)

<http://www.lgmedia.org/> (UGA)

[http://www.bugwood.org/\(UGA\)](http://www.bugwood.org/(UGA))

<http://phil.cdc.gov/phil/default.asp> (CDC)

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/graphics/photos/> (USDA/ARS)

<http://images.fws.gov/> (Fish & Wildlife Service)

### Other sites

<http://www.freeimages.co.uk/> (requires using photo credit & email registration)

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/clipart/default.aspx> (Microsoft free clipart)

### Free Templates

<http://www.soniacoleman.com/templates.htm>