

The Perfect Poster (Parts Reprinted)

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Poster presentations are a wonderful means of disseminating information quickly to a large audience. For me, it is an opportunity for quick access to researchers and various projects all in one place, at one time. Preparing a poster can be a challenge, especially for students or other first time presenters. What should be on a poster? How much information should be included? Disseminating research through a poster presentation can be rewarding both for the presenter and for the audience. Of course, students presenting posters on criminal justice topics have added incentive - the Criminal Justice Section of CPA will award a **cash prize** to the student with the best poster. Below are some helpful guidelines for those preparing and presenting posters.

Preparing Posters

Good posters start with good research - that is a study with interesting and relevant questions and one that provides convincing evidence (e.g., sound methodology and results) regarding the answers to these questions. A good poster conveys this information quickly to the viewers and should be easily observable.

Posters are visual displays. Information, when possible, should be presented visually (as opposed to written). The display should be pleasing to the eye but not overly busy; avoid including unnecessary or distracting visual information such as multiple fonts, colours, or complicated backgrounds. Remember, a quick look at the poster should pique the person's interest and invite them to take a closer look.

A poster is not an article; rather, it is a "visual" abstract of the study. Keep posters and the information on them short and concise. Highlight and direct the viewer's eye to the most salient points. Provide enough information to give the viewer the "gist" of the study. It is useful (and appreciated) to have a more detailed handout of the research that can be provided to the viewer when requested (e.g., references and contact information).

Presenting Posters

Hanging up your poster and having handouts available is important, but being there to answer questions and discuss the study is critical. For me, this interaction fosters critical thinking and energizes us researchers. It is also a great chance to network with others in your field.

A useful way to view poster presentations is to think of a poster as a “window display” in a store. Try to lure “shoppers” (the audience) into the store and involve them in a more detailed discussion of the “product” (the study) on display.