Helpful Poster Layout and Printing Guidelines

by Suling Wang 3/1/19

Resolution Guidelines

All images should be 240 dpi to 400 dpi at the final print size for best image print quality. If you start with low dpi images and scale them up, you will see a lot of pixelation in the final print. If you have to use low dpi images, you can get better results by opening the file in Photoshop, goto Image > Image Size. If you decrease the image size the resolution will increase. Often images that have been adjusted in PowerPoint do not print correctly, try to complete all image manipulation in Photoshop.

Design Guidelines

Leave margins around text, other design objects, and the edge of the poster. It will look better when there is space between objects. When a poster is too crowded it will look chaotic, and be difficult to read.

The poster will look neater and be easier to read if there is structure to the design. You can line up the edges of your graphics, text blocks, and margins by using the align tool. In Powerpoint this can be found under the Draw tools, in InDesign and Illustrator goto Window > Align. Also turn on the Grid, and use the ruler guides.

Be consistent in font usage and font size. Don't mix different fonts unless it's really necessary.

A good size for the main body of your text is 24 - 30 pts. You should scale it so your poster is legible from about 3 feet away. View your poster on the screen at 100% and see if it is legible when you stand back from it.

Avoid large areas of dark backgrounds with light text. This is hard to read and expensive to print.

Pre-Printing Checklist

Helpful things to do **before** bringing a poster to get printed:

- Look through your entire poster layout on screen at 100% size. This will help you find mistakes that you can't see when you are viewing your poster zoomed out to fit on your screen.

- Print out a scaled down version and read it over carefully for typos or other mistakes. Look for font, alignment problems, or missing text and graphics. It also helps to ask other people to check.