Chairs of Urban Water Management
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How to create a poster?

This short summary contains the most important points for creating a poster as part of your master thesis with the chairs of Urban Water Management. It is not complete, but presents some basic rules with regard to the content and form.

- A poster is a visual means of communication.
- A poster should collect and emphasize the most important points of a thesis, and ultimately encourage a discussion.
- Dare to be creative with the design, always with the goal to attract the attention of the reader and to convey the main messages.
- Before you start you should answer the following questions:
    - What do you want to achieve with your poster?
    - What is your main message?
    - Who is your target audience?

General regulations

- ETH templates for 'scientific poster' are available here. You may use any ETH theme for the colors (you can find them in the tab 'Design').
- Do not change the size and location of the title bar. All other elements can be modified as per your liking.
- Show the logos of the involved institutes (e.g. ETH and Eawag). You do not need to include the IfU-Logo.
- Professors and supervisors are to be named in the title bar.

Tips for title

- The title is a condensed statement of the main aim of a poster.
- Keep it concise and catchy!
- It must be readable from 5 m distance.

Tips for content

- Pick and choose the content wisely. Ask yourself, "What of the thesis suits best to be presented on a poster?"
- Can you show a remarkable result? Consider this to prepare a content of great quality.
- Clear and well documented statements.
    - Present only those results that are reproducible on the basis of the poster's content.
    - Keep the content audience friendly, avoid too many technical details.
    - Does something support the main statement? No ? Get rid of it!

- Focus on the results instead of the method.
- After creating a first draft of the poster, ask yourself: "Can the topic, its motivation, and the most important take-home messages be grasped within 45 seconds?"

Tips for design

- Use restraint and harmonic colors.
- Background should be monochrome or really restraint.
- Use plain, clear graphs and diagrams, which enhance the comprehension
    - Do not overload.
    - Use only meaningful representation, no "potty" illustrations.
- Explain pictures in the caption text, not in the text.
- At maximum, half of the area should be covered with text.
- Avoid tables.
- Avoid equations.
- Guide the audience through the poster.
    - Clear, well arranged layout.
    - The natural flow of reading is generally as depicted in Figure1. If other schemes are adopted, support them with arrows or numbering to lead the audience.
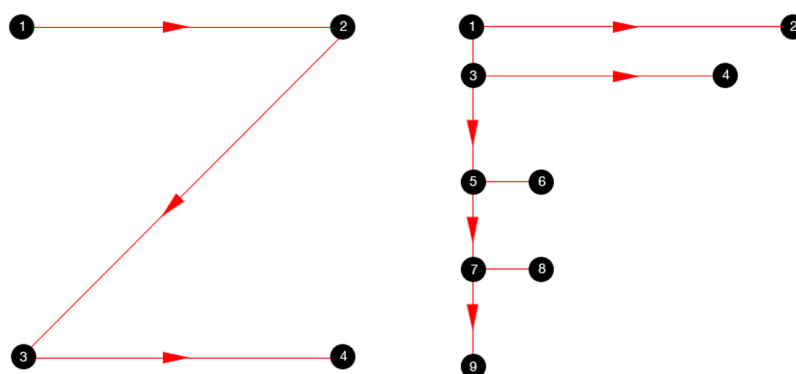
Figure 1: In the absence of other visual cues, people will start in the top/left and move across and then down the page. It's how we read. However, by adding elements of varying visual weight, the path the eye will take is the one you create. You can choose to reinforce Z (left) or F (right) patterns if you want, but you are not limited by them. [1]

Tips for text

- Use short and precise sentences.
    - Omit everything that is not necessary.
    - Use bullet points where possible and suitable.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Use large font.
    - Titles and key sentences should be readable from a distance of 3 m (80-100 pt. on A0).
    - All other text should be readable from a distance of 1 m (40-50 pt. on A0), by three people at a time.
    - Never try to add more text by making it smaller.
- Use a sans-serif font (Helvetica, Arial, Tahoma, ...)

- Use bold or italic font for highlighting, never capital letters or underlines.
- Dark letters on bright background are easier to read.

Other general tips

- Use guide lines to systematically align your poster elements. In PowerPoint, start the function as follows: Right click > Grids and Guides… > "Display drawing guide on screen". Use the mouse to shift the lines as you please. Press CTRL at the same time to insert a new line.
- Check in the print-preview that nothing is written outside the margins.
- The colors might change slightly when printed (brighter, darker, shade). Pay attention to contrasts. We recommend printing a test-poster on an A4- or A3-sheet.
- We recommend you discuss the poster with colleagues to get some feedback.

Helpful Literature

- Klaus Pommerening, IMBEI, 10. November 2009; Ein Poster ist ein Plakat
  https://www.staff.uni-mainz.de/pommeren/Vortraege/Gutes_Poster.pdf
- George R. Hess, C State University: Creating Effective Poster Presentations.
  https://go.ncsu.edu/posters
- George R. Hess, C State University: 60-Second Poster Evaluation
  https://sites.google.com/ncsu.edu/effective-posters/resources?authuser=0#h.mkqz3wmnbfb1
- Dina F. Mandoli, University of Washington, Dept. of Botany: How to make a great Poster.
  http://courses.washington.edu/css497/posterDesign.pdf