Doug's Big Poster Guidelines

- The main thing (prime directive): Focus on what's **most** important and build your poster around it. *Posters are an excellent means of communicating ideas or results **quickly**!* If your poster is about ideas, educate us. If your poster makes a case, persuade us. If your poster is about research, show us your findings. *Don't focus your poster on your methods (unless your prof has told you to).*

- Give yourself enough time to complete your poster and get it printed. *(It takes a number of hours to create a good poster and proof it for possible mistakes and misspellings.)*

- Posters are not the same as papers. They're more like billboards. They rely more on graphics and images than on text to carry their message. From far away, someone should be able to get the gist of your poster. *The main point or conclusion of your work should be expressed in active voice in your title.* Every step closer should bring more detail (e.g., first section headings, then charts and images, then body text, then references and data sources, etc.)

- **Posters should be good-looking** enough to attract attention, **and clear** enough to communicate your ideas or research results.

- Do not overcrowd your poster with too much text, too many colors, or a background color or image. Use simplicity and clean design (think Apple Store design) to get your message across. *Too much text is the number one reason people don't read posters!*

- Make things **obvious**, both your **content** and your **layout/sections**. Posters are *not* like mystery novels. You shouldn't have to read to the end to find out whodunit (or what, where, when or why). *Most of the text on your poster should augment (fill in, bolster) your title, section headings and graphic elements.*

- Work on your graphics outside of PowerPoint to make them as good as you can (readable at the appropriate size, not pixelated), and as small as possible (in computer storage terms).

- Choose appropriate fonts and font sizes for the different parts of your poster: Put the title in a Sans Serif font (at about 72 -150 point size), and put the main text areas in a Serif font (at about 24 - 48 point size). **Use no more than two different fonts in your poster**. (You can use different sizes as needed.)

- Choose colors very carefully:
  - Font color and poster background color must have high contrast.
  - Be wary of colors that do not mix well, red and blue, for instance.
  - Avoid low-contrast combinations that make text hard/impossible to read.
  - Don't let the background distract the audience from your message.

- Arrange your poster for "flow", typically from upper left to lower right, to guide the reader.

- Use alignment consistently to justify your text and your sections. *Align all the sections of your poster to each other.*

- Check all your spelling and punctuation.

Consider:
- *What are your goals? What should your audience learn from reading your poster?*
- *Who is your audience? Who are you making this poster for?*