

Poster Presentations at an International or National Congress

*It is recommended that this be read in conjunction with the IAPCO document
Guidelines for the International Scientific Programme Committee*

WHAT IS A POSTER PRESENTATION?

Poster presentations are a method of presenting scientific or technical data graphically in a clear and concise way. They are an alternative to presenting data orally.

WHY ARE POSTER PRESENTATIONS WIDELY USED AT SCIENTIFIC CONGRESSES?

As time slots for oral abstract presentations are limited, poster presentations enable the scientific programme committee to accept more abstracts than if all papers were presented orally. It is important to recognise that poster presentations represent an important part of any scientific meeting.

WHAT TYPE OF POSTER PRESENTATIONS ARE POSSIBLE?

Hard copy display (traditional) or electronic format (e-posters)

Hard copy display poster

A hard copy display poster graphically shows the work on a large piece of paper (poster), displayed on a poster board during the congress either for the duration of the event or for a specified period of time.

E-posters

E-posters (electronic) are poster presentations in an electronic format with two technical options:

- PDF format (ppt files, flash files) – static
- Database-driven tool – dynamic – with following functions
 - Filter function for content
 - Real-time statistics
 - May include multimedia content
 - Control of access rights
 - Create PDF-Emails
 - Send comments to authors
 - Create bookmarks (interaction & convenience functions)

SET UP OF POSTER EXHIBITION

Careful consideration should be given as to the most suitable format of presentation:

Set-up of hard copy display posters

Area

- Poster boards should be located in a central and easily accessible area of the congress centre. They can also be combined with a trade exhibition to attract delegates to both activities.
- It should be kept in mind that there should be a minimum of 3 metres of space between the poster board walls/rows.

Poster Boards – number

- The scientific programme committee should decide on the maximum number of abstracts they wish to accept as poster presentations. Posters should ideally remain in place for the entire congress but may also be displayed only for a certain period of the congress and then exchanged by the next set of posters. These periods can last from several days to one day or half a day. The number of poster replacements (or number of poster sets) influences the possible number of abstracts that can be accepted as a poster. The congress organiser (PCO) will advise, taking into consideration any venue limitations, on whether posters could be changed and how often to accommodate a higher number of accepted abstracts. Posters are allocated a specific board for the determined length of time.

Poster boards – size/lighting

- The size of the poster varies between 1 metre and 2 metres wide. Depending on the poster boards, posters can be landscape or portrait generally A1 (594 x 841), A0 (594 x 1189) or display board size (900 x 900 or 900 x 1800) poster.
- Attention: It is important to provide the poster authors with the dimensions of the useable space, not the poster board measurements)
- Consideration should be given to any extra lighting required.

Poster/poster boards – numbering

- The posters should be grouped by topic. Each board should bear the identifying consecutive number of the respective poster so that posters can be easily located. This number (poster number) is decided upon the allocation of abstracts to the poster exhibition. It can give indications about the abstract category, presentation day, etc.

Examples:

- P/BUR7 (P= Poster, BUR = Category “Burns”, 7 = 7th Poster within this Category)
- P/FRI/10 (P=Poster, FRI = displayed from Friday, 10th Poster)
- P-A-12-3 (P=Poster, A=set up during the first days of the congress, 12=Category 12, 3=3rd Poster within this Category)

Poster exhibition – set up

- The congress organiser (PCO) should provide appropriate adhesive materials to enable the author to mount his poster neatly and easily (pins, fixers, velcro etc). Small steps should also be made available. Rubbish disposal areas and scissors are essential. A map/floor plan to locate each poster when mounting should be available.

Poster exhibition – presentation times

- The presenter should be instructed to stand by his board at pre-selected times and care should be taken to set aside sufficient time for delegates to view posters. It is advisable for time also to be allocated for posters to be discussed either in workshop sessions by topic, or reviewed in plenary sessions.
- Consideration can be given to specific “walk-rounds” under guidance of an appointed chair, to select and discuss specific posters at a given time as identified in the programme. In this instance, some form of (portable) sound system/pa might need to be considered.

Set-up of E-posters

Area

- Terminals should be located at strategic locations, especially in areas of the trade exhibition to attract delegates to both activities. Consideration should be given to screen size and quantity depending upon individual or group viewing.

Terminals – number

- There are almost no limitations on the maximum number of abstracts that can be presented as electronic poster presentations, however the exact electronic format should be agreed upon by the scientific programme committee.
- As for the number of terminals the congress organiser (PCO) will advise on the best method of e-poster presentation, taking into account the space available, either within or outside of the trade exhibition, and the budget available. Having confirmed the format of e-posters, the congress organiser (PCO) will advise on layout and cost.

Terminals – set up

- E-Posters terminals can be freely configured to host keyboard, mouse, regular screens or touch screens and can be set up as a communication centre including tools such as chat functions, the possibility to contact poster authors via email, etc.
- Clear instructions as to the use of the terminals must be provided.
- Technical assistance should be available in the event of malfunction and also for guidance.

E-Poster – presentations

Unattended Loop Presentation in theatre format

- A small room containing an appropriate number of seats (according to the size of the event) should be provided. Careful planning of aisles and gangways is essential as there is a continuous movement of people.
- The appropriate equipment (screen, projector etc.) should be ordered and technical assistance available
- E-posters should be installed into a continuous loop format. These should be divided by sessions into subjects and incorporated into the programme.
- The e-posters will run continuously throughout the session, a specific time allocated to each poster before, automatically, moving on to the next.
- Clear instructions as to the session timings should be available outside the room.
- The audience is free to wander in and out of the session; there is no chair or author present.

Open forum stage presentations

- An open area, potentially within the trade exhibition, should be set aside, containing chairs and a top table. The top table should house the chair of the session and the appropriate e-poster author.
- The appropriate equipment should be ordered and technical assistance available.
- The e-poster is displayed, questions from the floor are directed to the author, facilitated by the chair of the session. An allocated time, for example, 2-minutes, is scheduled for each author/presentation.
- The presentations should be divided by sessions into subjects and incorporated into the programme.
- Clear instructions and signage as to the session timings should be available at the open area.

CONSIDERATIONS

Hard Copy Display Poster

- Large floor space requirements & associated costs
- Rent of poster boards, possibly with lighting
- Need for staff to man the area and need for fixing materials
- Waste management
- No-show issues (empty poster boards)
- Interaction / networking & group viewing
- Recognition among peers (social esteem)

Electronic Poster

- Technology requirements (hard and software)
- Posters can be viewed before and after the congress
- More possibilities of displaying data (videos, etc.)
- Scientific content is stored – long-term archiving
- Standardization of presentation format
- Allows last-minute changes
- New sponsorship opportunity
- Better control of registration with better forecast on potential no-shows.

POSTER PREPARATION

The preparation measures of both formats are similar with the exception that for e-posters there is eventually access to online poster creation systems.

When being notified about the acceptance of their poster, poster authors should receive preparation and set up guidelines. Clear instructions must be provided by the congress organiser (PCO).

It is recommended to include that

- the presentation of the poster is subject to congress registration, in order to push registration.
- access to all poster presentations is limited to registered participants of the congress only. The organiser(s) can not accept any liability for the passing on of login data, or forwarding of posters to 3rd parties.

Hard Copy Display Poster

Advice should be given to the author on the best size and format of the material to be displayed and what it should contain. This can be in the form of text, photographs, graphs, drawings, etc. The abstract title and names of authors and co-authors must be included.

Minimum required information:

- Poster number
- Times of set-up and dismantling
- Size of poster

Electronic Poster

Authors have to be informed about how and until when (deadlines!) they are expected to submit their electronic poster.

If there is no online submission system, the PCO has to provide the required format (e.g. PDF-file), maximum file size and limitations concerning the content (can pictures and tables be included, required structure of the content, etc.)

In case an online submission system has been set up, authors have to receive the following information:

- Link to the submission system
- Login information plus login guidelines (case sensitive, ...)
- Submission deadline
- System requirements
- Contact details for technical support

It is recommended to include the following agreements into the poster submission system:

- The organiser is permitted to process, present and publish the poster/electronic poster during and after the congress.
- The poster author agrees that all authors are aware that their names appear in the presentation.

Reference Guidelines

All IAPCO documents and guidelines can be obtained from IAPCO or from the IAPCO website to assist in the planning of your event.

List of Members 2009

ARGENTINA

ICS Congresos Internacionales S.A.
Mariano R. Castex, Managing Director
E-mail: buenosaires@congresosint.com.ar

AUSTRALIA

ICMS Pty Ltd
Sarah Markey-Hamm, National Manager
E-mail: sarah@icms.com.au

Tour Hosts Pty Limited
Roslyn A McLeod, OAM, Managing Director
E-mail: darmstrong@tourhosts.com.au

The Meeting Planners
Karine Bulger, Chief Executive Officer
E-mail: kbulger@meetingplanners.com.au

AUSTRIA

AIMS International Congress Services GmbH
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AIMS International Congress Services
Dorothee Flament, Office Manager
E-mail: brussels@aims-international.com

MCI Brussels
Idoia Rodés Torróntegui, Deputy MD
E-mail: idoia.rodés@mci-group.com

Semico Nv
Luc Niville, Executive Director
E mail: info@semico.org

BRAZIL

JZ Congressos
Juarez Filho Augusto de Carvalho, Exec. Dir.
E-mail: jzcongressos@jz.com.br

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JPdL Québec Inc.
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E-mail: acarboneau@jpdL.com

JPdL Toronto Inc.
Alain Carbonneau, Dir. Inter. Convention Sales
E-mail: acarboneau@jpdL.com

Venue West Congress Services Ltd.
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E-mail: congress@venuewest.com

CHINA / HONG KONG

International Congress Consultants Limited
Katerina Tam, Director
E-mail: icc@icc.com.hk

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Serenas Cyprus Ltd
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AIMS International s.r.o
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E-mail: prague@aims-international.com

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DIS Congress Service Copenhagen A/S
Peder Andersen, Managing Director
E-mail: psa@discongress.com

ICS A/S Copenhagen
International Congress Services
Julie Drehn, Congress Director
E-mail: julie@ics.dk

FRANCE

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E-mail: o.cassedanne@b-c-a.fr

Colloquium
Annie Gigon, Managing Director
E-mail: a.gigon@colloquium.fr

Europa Organisation Paris
Marc Doncieux, President
E-mail: mdoncieux@europa-organisation.com

Europa Organisation Toulouse
Marc Doncieux, President
E-mail: mdoncieux@europa-organisation.com

MCI Paris
Philippe Fournier, Managing Director
E-mail: mciparis@mci-group.com

MCI Lyon
Philippe Fournier, Managing Director
E-mail: mcilyon@mci-group.com

GERMANY

CPO HANSER SERVICE GmbH - Berlin
Inge Hanser, Director
E-mail: berlin@cpo-hanser.de

CPO HANSER SERVICE GmbH - Dresden
Inge Hanser, Director
E-mail: dresden@cpo-hanser.de

CPO HANSER SERVICE GmbH - Hamburg
Inge Hanser, Director
E-mail: hamburg@cpo-hanser.de

INTERPLAN AG - Munich
Dr. Markus Preußner, Managing Director
E-mail: info@interplan.de

INTERPLAN AG - Hamburg
Bruno Lichtinger, Managing Director
E-mail: hamburg@interplan.de

K.I.T. GmbH - Berlin
Stéphane Talboom, Director of Sales
E-mail: stalboom@kit-group.org

MCI Berlin
Gunda Stickan, Managing Director
E-mail: gunda.stickan@mci-group.com

MCI Stuttgart
Carsten Knieriem, Managing Director
E-mail: carsten.knieriem@mci-group.com

GREECE

AC&C International S.A,
Georgia Baroutoglou, Marketing Supervisor
E-mail: gbaroutoglou@acnc.gr

AKTINA CITY congresses & events
George Lassithiotakis, Managing Director
E-mail: info@aktinacitycongress.com

Erasmus Congress Tours & Travel S.A
Georgia Tsatsou, Managing Director
E-mail: info@erasmus.gt

HUNGARY

AIMS International Congress Services
AIMS International Kft
Susanne C Kostka, Executive Vice President
E-mail: budapest@aims-international.com

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MCI Dublin
Siobhan O'Hare, Congress Director
E-mail: sohare@ovation.ie

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KENES International
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ITALY

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E-mail: g.buongiorno@aimgroup.it

AIM Group – AIM Congress Rome Office
Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, MD
E-mail: p.buongiorno@aimgroup.it

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E-mail: m.neijmann@aimgroup.it

EGA, Professional Congress Organisers
Cristina Aru, Partner
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Arianna Caldon, Managing Director
E-mail: info@keycongress.com

Promo Leader Service Congressi
Luigi Cammi, Managing Director
E-mail: luigi.cammi@promoleader.com

JAPAN

Congress Corporation
Reiko Kubota, Managing Director
E-mail: iapco@congre.co.jp

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Tatsuo Arai, Executive Director
E-mail: iapco@convention.jp

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Insession International Convention Services Inc
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MECI International Convention Service, Inc
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E-mail: bannie@meci.co.kr

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B. P. Servimed, S. A. de C. V.
Dr. Jorge Bistení Bustani, Director General
E-mail: jorge.bistení@servimed.com.mx

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Email: m.lena@publicreations.com

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Academic Medical Center
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Vincent van Wulfen, Group Manager
E-mail: V.C.vanWulfen@AMC.UVA.NL

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Annemiek van Iersel, Operations Director
E-mail: annemiek.vaniersel@congrex.com

EAGE - EAGE Congresses bv
Ricardo Vivas
E-mail: eage@eage.org

Eurocongres International
Michelle Labouchere, MD/Partner
E-mail: labouchere@eurocongres.com

ICS - International Congress Services BV
Jerry A.F. Gaspersz, Managing Director
E-mail: j.gaspersz@ics-online.nl

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The Congress Company
Jan Tonkin, Managing Director
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Congress-Congress AS
Øivind R. Lie, Director
E-mail: congrex@congrex.no

PANAMÁ

Congrex Americas – The Congrex Group
Javier Montilla, Regional Managing Director
E-mail: javier.montilla@congrex.com

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AIMS International Congress Services
AIMS Portugal Ltda.
Susanna Tocca, Managing Director
E-mail: Lisbon@aims-international.com

K.I.T. Congressos e Incentivos Lda
Stéphane Talboom, Managing Director
E-mail: stalboom@kit-group.org

SINGAPORE

MCI Singapore
David Goh, Managing Director
E-mail: singapore@mci-group.com

SLOVENIA

Cankarjev dom
Teja Alic, Head of Operation Division
E-mail: teja.alic@cd-cc.si

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AOPC - Professional Congress Organiser
Paloma Bellés, Managing Director
E-mail: congress@aopc.es

ATLANTA/UNICONGRESS
Guillermo Fuster Fernández, MD / CEO
Email: direccion@unicongress.com

Grupo Pacifico
Patrizia Milan, Dirección Técnica
E-mail: pmilan@pacifico-meetings.com

MCI Barcelona
Oscar Cerezales, Managing Director
E-mail: oscar.cerezales@mci-group.com

MCI Madrid
Guy Bigwood, Managing Director
E-mail : guy.bigwood@mci-group.com

SIASA Congresos SA
Mercedes del Portillo, Managing Director
E-mail: mportillo@siasa.es

TILESA OPC, S.L
Carlos de Sebastian jr, General Manager
E-mail: carlosjr@tilesa.es

Viajes Iberia Congresos
André Vietor, Managing Director
E-mail: andre.vietor@viajesiberia.com

SWEDEN

Congrex Sweden AB - The Congrex Group
Stephanie Hellstedt, Sales Director
E-mail: stephanie.hellstedt@congrex.com

MCI Stockholm
Fredrik Vanerell, Marketing and Sales
E-mail: fredrik.vanerell@mci-group.com

SWITZERLAND

KENES International
Dan Rivlin, Managing Director
E-mail: drivlin@kenes.com

K.I.T. Swiss S.A
Stéphane Talboom, Dir of Sales & Operations
E-mail: info@kit-group.org

MCI Geneva
Richard Torriani/Philippe Fournier
E-mail: mci@mci-group.com

MCI Glattburg
Thomas Wuethrich, Managing Director
E-mail: Thomas.wuethrich@mci-group.com

TURKEY

Figür Congress & Organisation Services Ltd
Pinar Ceyhun, International Affairs
E-mail: pinarceyhum@figur.net

Flap Tour
Gurkan Gencler, Director
E-mail: gurkan@flaptour.com.tr

Koray Kurutepe [individual member]
K2 Congress and Event Management Co.
E-mail: koray.kurutepe@k2-events.com

Mustafa Kartopu [individual member]
Der Tur Tours & Travel
E-mail: mkartopu@dertur.com.tr

Serenas Tourism Congress Services Ltd Co
Mustafa Gurbuz, General Manager
Email: mgurbuz@serenas.com.tr

Topkon Congress Services
Kemal Kural, Managing Director
E-mail: congress@topkon.com

United Expo, PCO Congress and Tourism
Eli Simsolo, General Manager
E-mail: info@unitedexpo.com.tr

Visitur Congress and Destination Services
M. Talha Camas, President
E-mail: congress@visitur.com.tr

ZED Tourism Travel Agency
Cengiz Yazanel, General Manager
Email: info@zed.com.tr

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

MCI Middle East
Sumaira Isaacs, Managing Director
E-mail: sumaira.isaacs@mci-group.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Concorde Services Limited – The Congrex Group
Sarah Fitzpatrick, Managing Director
E-mail: sarah.fitzpatrick@concorde-uk.com

MCI UK
Jennifer Jenkins, Managing Director
E-mail: jennifer.jenkins@mci-group.com

SECRETARIAT

www.iapco.org

Sarah Storie-Pugh
IAPCO
Brambles House
Colwell Road
Freshwater
PO40 9SL, United Kingdom

E-mail: info@iapco.org

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