



# Online Poster Sessions and Videos

## Concept

You've probably been to poster sessions at in-person conventions, in a large conference room with rows and rows of easels with posters attached and eager presenters standing at the ready to answer questions from the inquiring attendees. At least, that's the way it starts out.

But then reality kicks in. Almost every person that walks up to a poster has never seen the poster before, and either stands in front of everyone else reading it (if the font is large enough), or they just ask the presenter, "Tell me about your poster and research," and the presenter says the same thing they've already said 100 times in the last hour.

And at this point, one of two things happen: either they say, "Thank you, that's interesting" and walk away (because it's not something they're particularly interested in), or then they start to ask you more detailed questions (which is good... except then everyone else walking up thinks you're too busy to be interrupted, and besides, they don't know what your poster is about anyway).

We have a better way!

You record a short video – the short version of your response to "Tell me about your poster and research" ... the same thing you would say 100 times at a regular convention's poster session. That video gets uploaded, along with a PDF of your poster, and all of the attendees are sent a link to your video and poster (and of the other presenters, too) a week or two in advance of the online poster session.

Then the "future attendees" watch your video and go through much the same process as they do in-person: if they're not interested in your concept, they'll move on to the next poster video; if they **are** interested in your poster, they'll jot down some questions and make a note about you and your poster.

Here's where it gets different. On "poster day", you and all the attendees will gather in a Zoom Meeting, and Breakout Rooms will be created for each poster presenter. You'll go into your Breakout Room and – if you like – screen share your poster to refer to. Attendees will see the full list of Breakout Rooms, and those that are interested in your poster will come into your room, already aware of the subject matter! If there are several people in your Breakout Room, what we see is that most everyone participates in the discussion, and it's a much more rewarding experience for presenters and attendees.

## Your Poster

Guidelines for posters vary from event to event. There's a trend toward "less is more" posters, with just enough information on them to get people's attention, and that can be read at a small distance away (4 to 6 feet). I've seen posters done the "traditional way" converted to PowerPoint that are almost unreadable from *any* distance. Get out the magnifying glass!

You must make your poster readable: one PowerPoint slide that can be converted to a PDF for download. The average attendee will want to view your poster online; the *very interested* attendee may want to print it out on "regular paper".

I recommend thinking of your poster as a "detailed introduction" ... with emphasis on introduction, and not too much detail. It's a conversation starter, and many potentially good conversations are killed by a long, boring introduction. Get their interest so they'll want to meet with you to ask more.



## Your Video and Poster Files

Your video can be done however you want to do it. 😊 There are several possibilities... most people will do a Zoom recording – either by themselves, or with some help. If you have other video recording capabilities and expertise, you’re welcome to do whatever suits you.

I have had a couple of people record audio tracks into PowerPoint and then send me the PowerPoint which I then record into a video... but my experience with these has been that they ultimately don’t look very professional, and the PowerPoint voice-over isn’t good quality.

Some people have success with just opening up a 1-person Zoom meeting, display their slide in Zoom’s Screen Share, start recording, imagine themselves being greeted by their first visitor at a live poster event, and explain their poster. Remember the goal is to get their attention, not bore them with thousands of details. Grab their attention, so they’ll want to come visit you during the Poster Session.

Once the video is recorded, some people upload directly to YouTube (or Vimeo, or other video hosting place) and send us the URL. This can work if your video needs no editing, or if you have tools and knowledge enough to do your own editing. Otherwise, drop the recorded video from your PC into a DropBox area (see the link provided that starts with “https://www.dropbox.com/request/” followed by a string of characters).

The poster also needs to be provided, in either PowerPoint or a PDF format; if you send a PowerPoint, I will convert it to PDF for you. Your poster will be available for download by the viewers, so they can view it either in conjunction with watching the video or separately.

Some people have broken down their big, single slide into a few smaller, more readable sections, each on its own PowerPoint slide, and then talked 15-20 seconds on each section for the video. This is probably the best experience for the viewer, who then doesn’t have to download the poster in order to follow along... but it’s a little more work for the presenter to create a multi-slide version of their poster. The multi-slide version of the poster is also a little more readable online while Screen Sharing during the online poster session, so the effort might be worth it. But you should still have the “one-slide view” of your poster for the more traditional part of your poster presentation.

As for what to say and how to say it: Some presenters “just wing it”, and some write a script and read it. Winging it is generally the best experience for the viewer... if you can make the information coherent and sequential. It’s like the attendee just wandered up to your poster and said, “Hi, tell me about your research.” Having some notes helps, but the informal look and sound of it seems to go over well. However, some people can’t “speak impromptu” very well, so a script is fine – just try to “act natural” and be yourself. 😊

You might include a quick blurb at the end about your co-presenters, if any.

## Looking and Sounding Good!

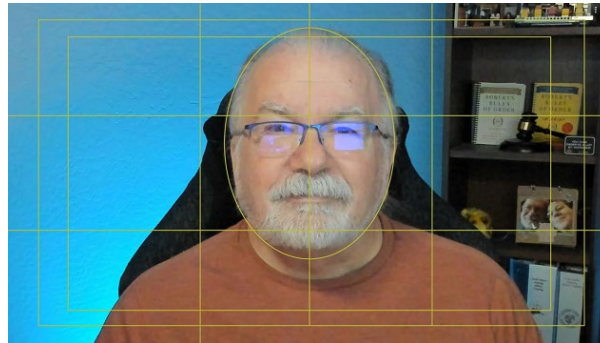
I do have some recommendations for making sure your video looks good. It doesn’t have to look “professionally commercially produced”, but face it: you don’t want your viewers distracted by poor audio or video. “Level up” your presentation if you can, and your viewers will be more focused on your message! These suggestions are also helpful when presenting live in a meeting or webinar.

- I recommend **not** using Zoom’s “virtual background” feature, as the “image cloud” around the head and hands is often distracting to viewers. If your physical space is unpresentable, then



consider adjusting your camera angle, moving your computer, or cleaning up your space. Only use the virtual background if you have no other option.

- Camera placement should allow you to be centered horizontally, and head/face in the upper 2/3 of the screen; the camera angle should be level, or an inch or two above eye level. A view of the top half of the speaker's face, with rotating ceiling fans above and behind them is not the ideal presentation look!. Here's me in a "template" often used to show good speaker video positioning:



- "Gaze" is the term often used to describe how you look *at* your audience. When recording, imagine that your camera has a small screen on it with pictures of your audience. Look directly at them, by looking at your camera! Your recording will have that "personal feel" to it, just by looking at your viewers through the camera. It may seem awkward at first, but try it.
- If you are using a built-in microphone, either in your laptop or webcam, make a recording of you speaking (practicing your presentation, perhaps), and then listen to the audio, preferably through a headset, so you can really hear how you sound. Are there background noises? Fans (inside the computer, and around the room), echoes, too quiet or too loud, traffic noise, etc. All these can detract from your presentation... and in some cases, make it impossible to understand you. Consider buying a separate microphone – it doesn't have to be expensive. If you need a recommendation, let me know.
- There are some audio and video settings in Zoom that can be adjusted to enhance your recording. Contact me if you would like some help working with these Zoom settings. They're not horribly complicated, but do generally require some "trial and error", since everyone's setup is a little different.
- I've written some helpful/general tips for using Zoom and doing presentations. <https://meetingsandwebinars.com/userguides/>

## Screen Sharing and Recording

If possible, you should use the Zoom desktop app (Windows or MacOS) for recording your video. Since you're recording your presentation in advance, you can take your time and get the Screen Sharing set up before you start recording. There is some help on starting Screen Sharing here:

<https://meetingsandwebinars.com/userguides/how-to-screen-share/>

You're probably not recording and editing videos on your own, but if you are, feel free to do so! I've seen some very nice presentations from folks who have made and uploaded their own video. But if you don't have the time or the skill to do so, I'm here to help, as part of the event preparation.



There are three approaches to consider:

1. We'll meet via a Zoom meeting, and I'll do the recording – we can do a couple of “takes” if you like. Afterward, I'll do some light editing of the video and audio, then upload your presentation... and you're done!
2. If you prefer to make your own recording, but don't have the time or skill to do any editing, then you can make a Zoom recording all by yourself (or with a few friendly viewers on board, if you like), and then “drop” the file to me, and I'll do some light editing, and upload the video to Vimeo.
3. If you have the time and skill and want to do your own recording, editing, and uploading, just send me the URL of where your video is uploaded, and we'll use that.

## Help With Recording

If you'd like some help recording the video, I'm happy to help. The easiest way is to book 30 minutes with me on Calendly (see link at the end of this paragraph). Calendly will set up a Zoom meeting, send you the link, and put you in an available slot in my calendar. I'll record the session both on the Zoom cloud and locally on another PC, and “lightly” edit the recordings into one video, as well as upload the resulting video up to Vimeo... all you need to do is prepare a little in advance on what you'll say, show up, and do your thing – I'll take care of the rest. In the past, where the poster layout is conducive, I've been able to enlarge/highlight the area the speaker is talking about.

<https://calendly.com/goodclix/PosterRecording> ← Click to schedule 30 minutes on my calendar; other times can be accommodated if needed... send me an email with suggested dates/times, and I'll work with you to find a convenient time.

The recording session needs to be scheduled well in advance! A couple of weeks before the event is fine. We want attendees to be looking at your video at least a week before the event, and the editing and upload process can take several days if my schedule is busy. Please don't wait until the week before your event to schedule the recording, since this will impact the advance visibility of your poster!

## Questions?

The best way to reach me is via email to: [Ray@GoodClix.com](mailto:Ray@GoodClix.com)

I generally answer email in under 24 hours, sometimes “surprisingly fast” if I'm in the office. If your issue warrants a phone call or Zoom chat, I'll likely point you to a Calendly request link to coordinate our schedules.

I look forward to working with you!

Ray Harwood  
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