

Effective Poster Design



*Brice Grunert

*Disclaimer

- The majority of ideas in this presentation originate directly from the BetterPosters blog (Zen Faulkes), and reflect advice I have received over the years from many different scientists and resources
- There is a science to visual aesthetics; there is also an opinion. As I tell students in my GIS course, rules are made to be broken but are also in place for a reason. So, you had best have a good reason if you intend on breaking them!



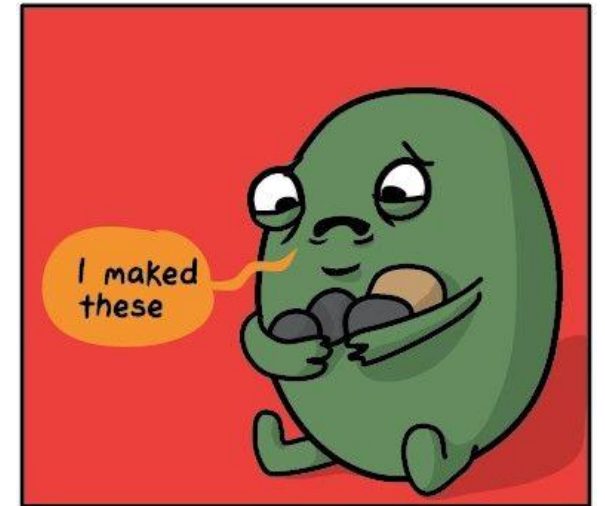
**Disclaimer's disclaimer: I receive no compensation if you purchase a copy of the Better Posters book.

***Disclaimer's other disclaimer: Do as I say, not as I do. My slides are by no means a work of art

What's the problem?

“Academic conference posters are often ugly, with tiny text, confusing layouts, and dubious colour schemes.”

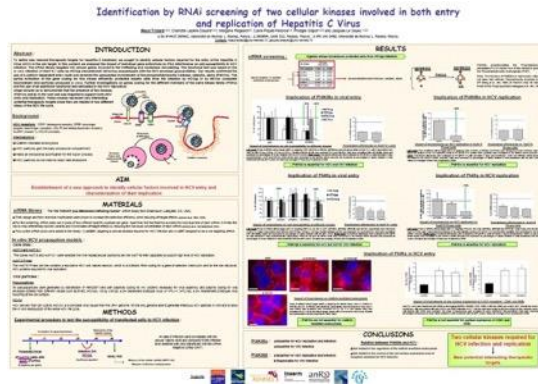
-Zen Faulks



theAwkwardYeti.com

So, what makes a good poster?

- Let's see what our gut says first!



Poster 1

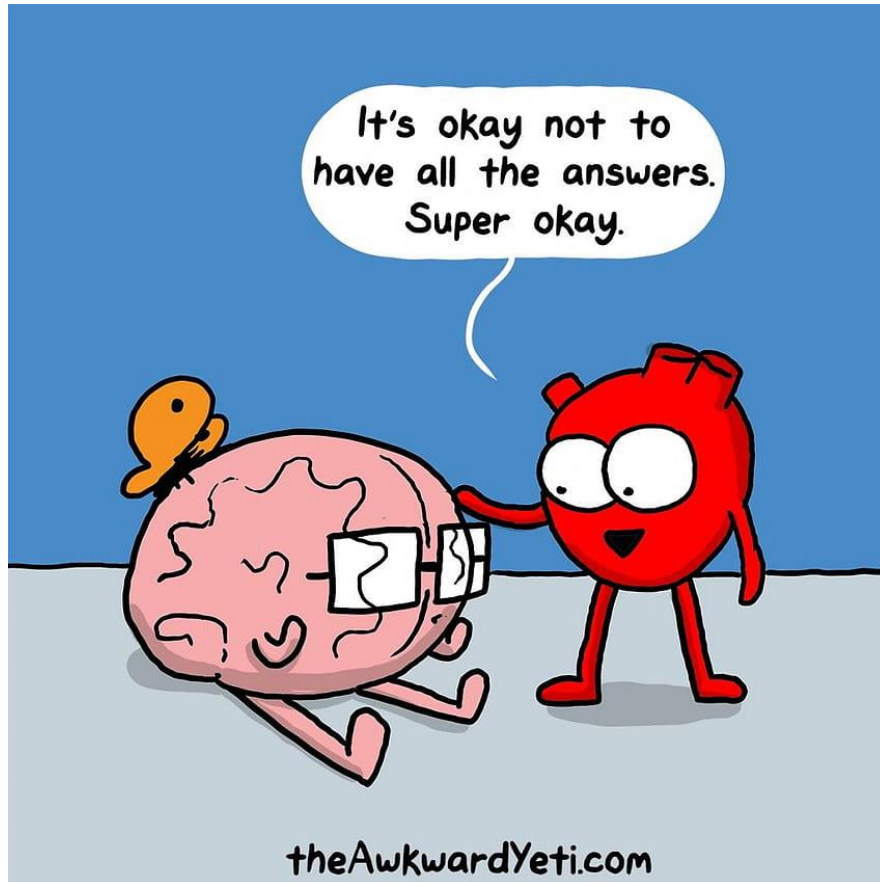
<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2010/07/critique-rnai-and-hepatitis-c.html>



Poster 2

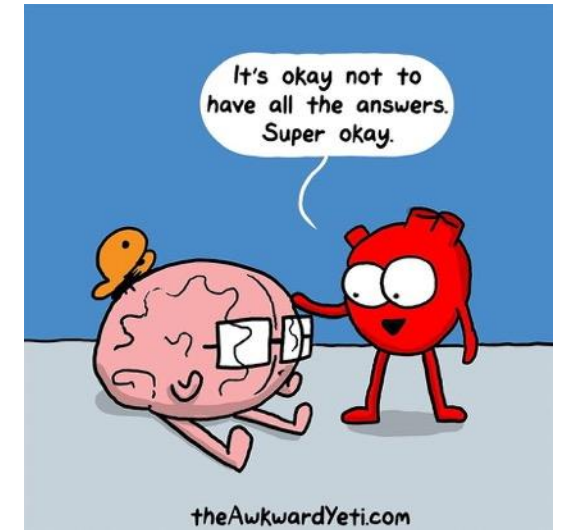
http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-tP1jOyNHNhs/VPOXXVRvVdl/AAAAAAAAANyM/7g7y717RJ78/s1600/Hanlon_orchid_best_poster_ever.jpg

What should I focus on when making a poster?



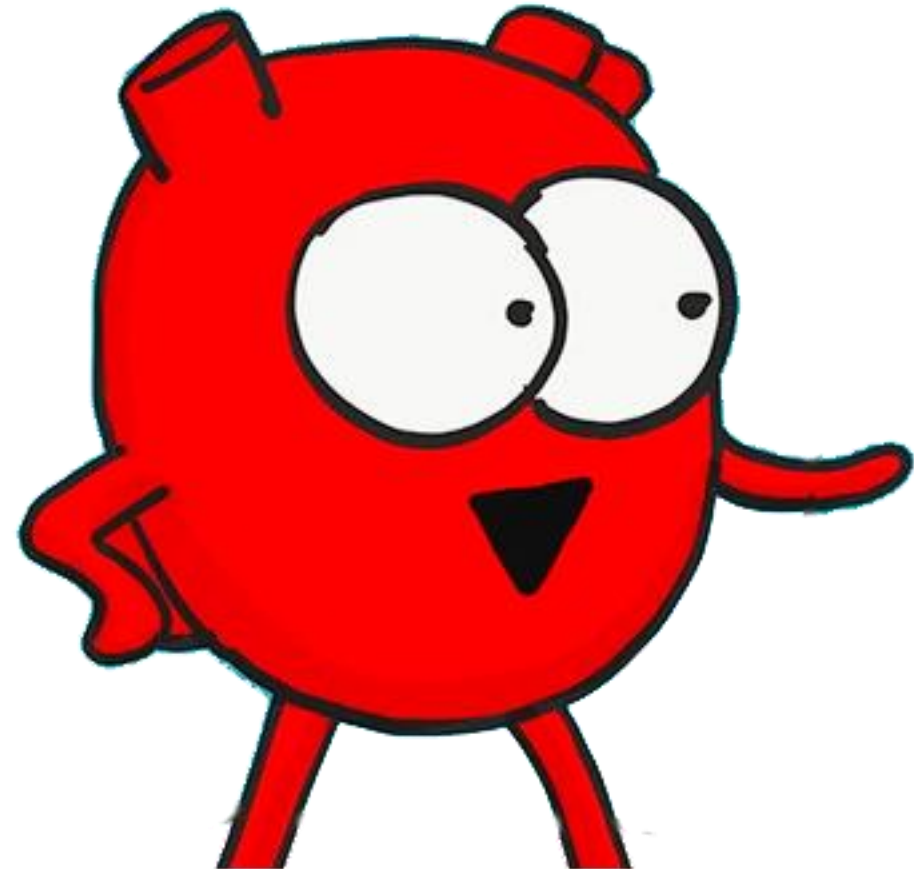
What should I focus on when making a poster?

- Title
- Abstract?
- What should you include?
- Do you have a laundry list of lesser guidelines I can also have and ignore?
- This seems like a bunch of really negative slides...
- I now have intense anxiety any time I hear the word poster



The Title

BIG FONT???
Yes, please!



"Your title is 90% of your poster." ("Headlines are about 90% of your communication effort.")

–Zen Faulkes (Randy Olson)

The Title



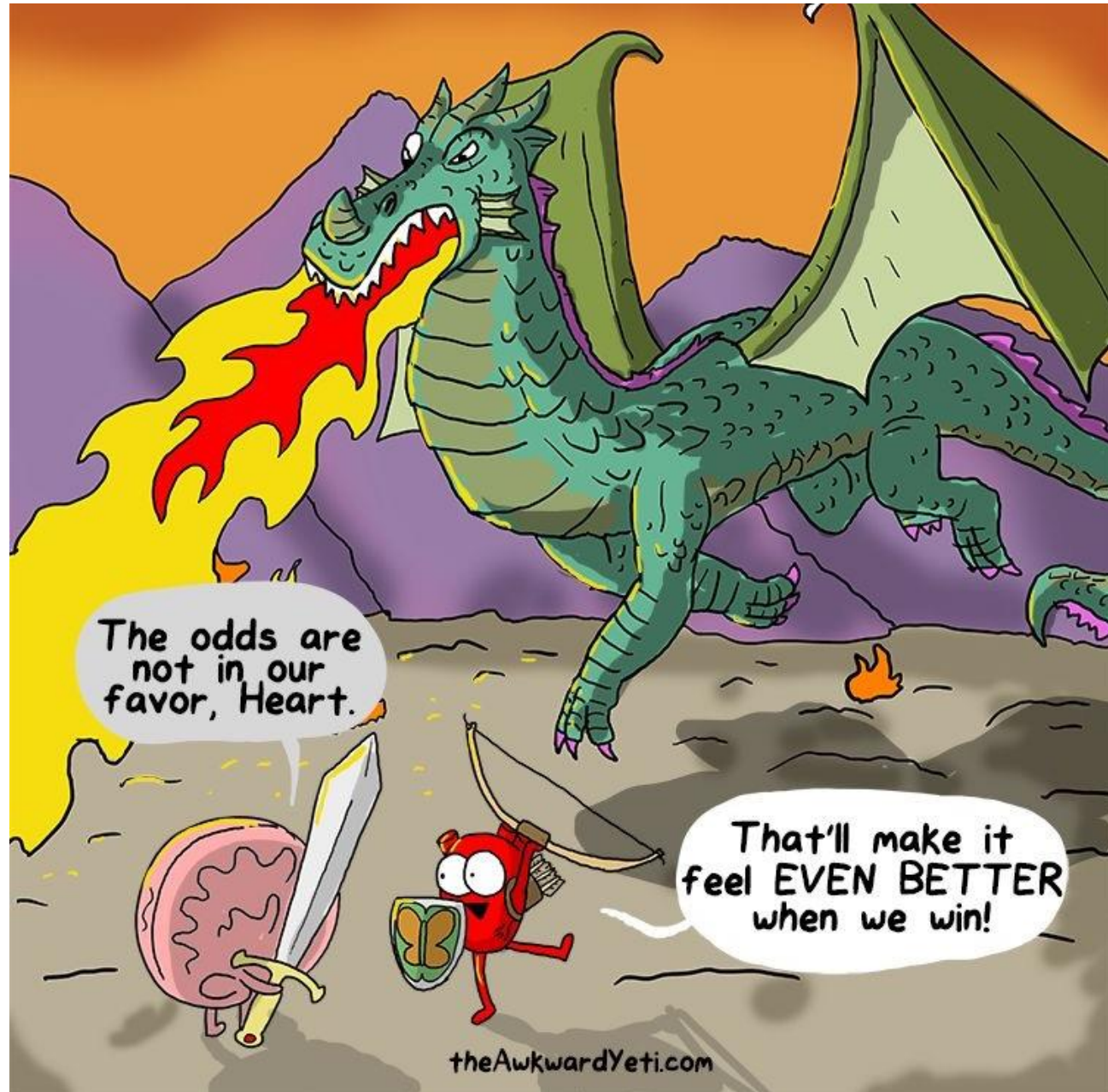
The Title that takes a long time to finish and has to wrap to the next line, and then is squeezed because of all the logos we're trying to fit alongside the title





*“Titles should be 8 words,
at most.”*

-Dr. Val Klump

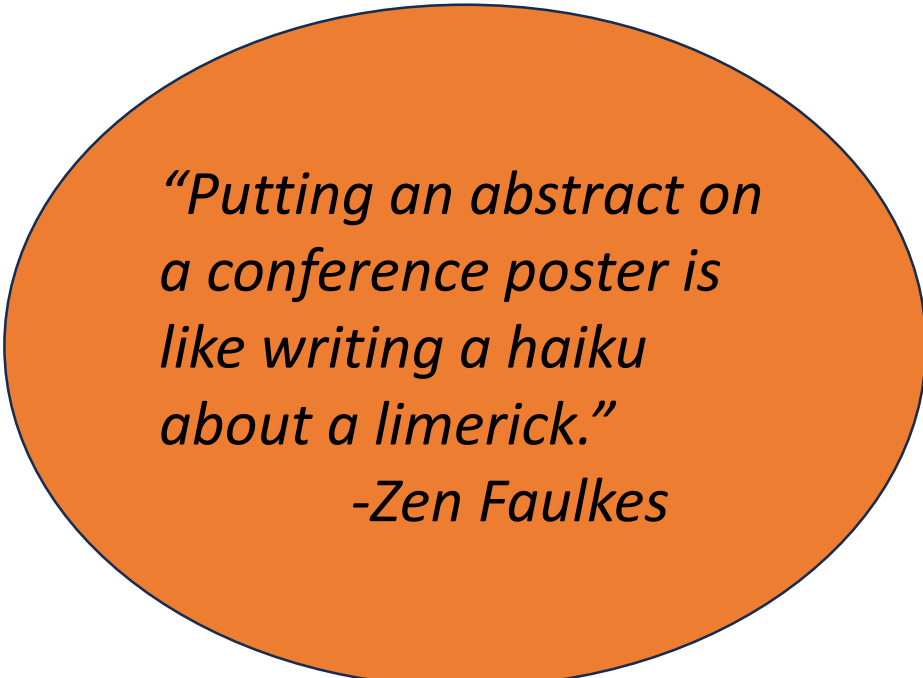


The odds are not in our favor, Heart.

That'll make it feel **EVEN BETTER** when we win!

Who needs an abstract?

A poster is a summary of your research. An abstract is a summary. Ever heard of a summary of a summary? Me either.

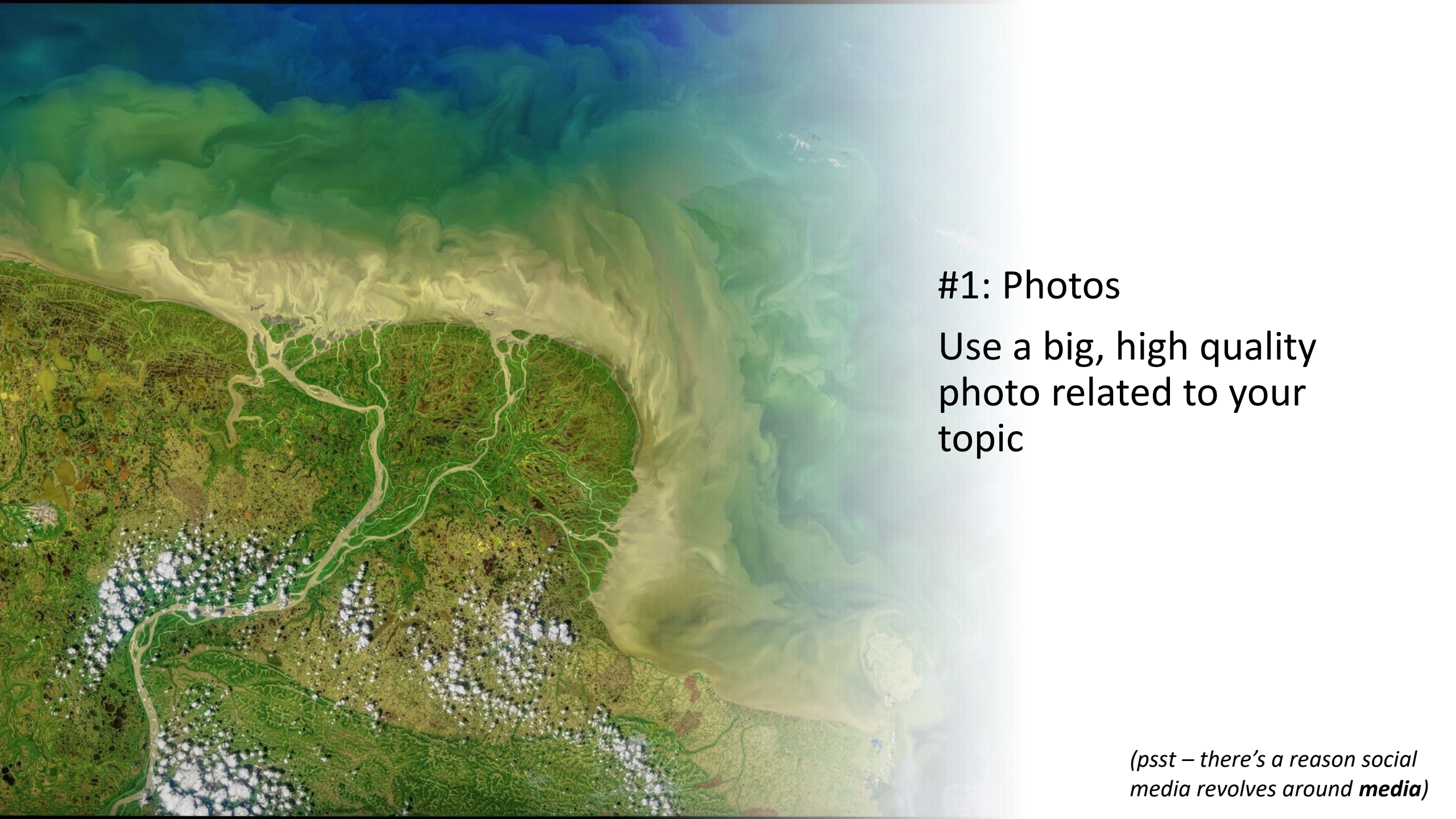


“Putting an abstract on a conference poster is like writing a haiku about a limerick.”

-Zen Faulkes

Are there any positives to making a poster???

(Also known as the recommendations part of the talk)



#1: Photos

Use a big, high quality photo related to your topic

*(psst – there's a reason social media revolves around **media**)*

#2: Headlines

Yes, the title, but also section headings too.

Are there any positives to making a poster?
Find out here!

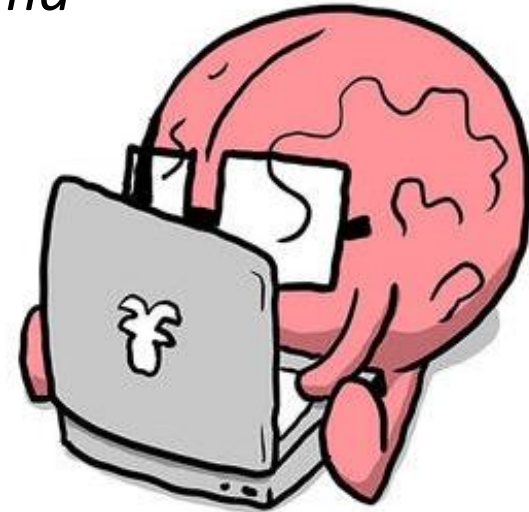
And while we're on the subject of headings...

“Introduction”, “Methods”, “Results”, “Discussion”?

Sure, you can. But do you want to?

#3: Quotes

“Take a highlight from your work and set it apart, just like they do in newspapers and magazines.”





#4: Circles

Apparently human eyes
love circles!

(Kimberly Elan)

*or maybe our eyes are exhausted
from all the boxes on posters...sort of
like how all these circles may become
exhausting to your eyes!

#5: White space

Possibly the most valuable real estate. It doesn't have to be a white background but can also be spaces in a photo that are vacant of a subject. These spaces give the viewer's eyes "breathing" room.

A “few” more guidelines

- Avoid too much text. Remember it’s a poster, and **NOT** a manuscript
- The font you use matters
- If you have to use tables, format them as a journal would. Or, as with all things on your poster, **use ink with purpose**
- A few to several (not many!) references are good, listed in small font near the bottom of your poster.
- Make sure all elements of your poster are visible from a distance; you can use the “arm’s length” test

Word's of Encouragement

- Less is more, so what is the primary takeaway from your poster?
- If you can tell a story in one page, why use ten? The same can go with figures, charts, etc. One big, beautiful figure is better than many small, cluttered figures.
- **Posters are not papers**
- Be creative



When should I break the rules?

That's up to you! But, many of these "rules" are old. The Better Posters blog started in 2009...did they still have dial up back then???

Many conferences allow posters to be uploaded. So, more text might benefit you. But, we live in a time of websites, QR codes, and other means of providing easily accessible "supplemental" information to a poster. So, do what you can with the resources you have.

Most important is...

Be Confident

And always let your enthusiasm for your research shine!

<https://sites.google.com/view/postergallery>

*if the above link does not work (even after copy/pasting URL into your browser), try this link and click on the embedded link in the sidebar, under GALLERY ('A collection of notable posters')

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2009/08/entry-points.html>

