

Review of: "Visual Science Communication: The next generation scientific poster"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Strengths

The article presents a clear and concise discussion of the role of visualizations in transferring scientific data and information to other scientists and to the public. It incorporates a thorough presentation of the advantages of interactive posters compared to what can be achieved with traditional posters. It succinctly articulates the essentials of interactive design that must be incorporated into an interactive poster to achieve positive learning. There is a thorough presentation of the essential interactions between scientists and designers used to create the example Explore the Ocean interactive poster that is the focus of the article.

Weaknesses

Reasons for selection of Explore the Ocean from the eight posters the team has developed, the focus of the other seven, as well as a summary of the research design, study samples used, and evaluation findings for two of the eight are absent. Without knowing whether the poster was one of those studied and being provided with a summary of the studies and key findings, the validity of the conclusions described in the discussion section and the assertion that interactive posters provide an opportunity for scientists to communicate complex information to other scientists and to the public are suspect. The article is difficult to follow as important pieces are threaded within the sections that are its strengths. The article would be more effective if it were revised to eliminate this confusion and included sections focusing only on one aspect. Using headings such as background information; advantages of interactive visualizations; essential components; prior development, research, and reason for selection of the particular poster; poster design, and discussion might be a way to turn this weakness into a strength.