Using MicroSoft PowerPoint to Create a Poster

Introduction

Note: These specifications are for students in my courses at NC State -- others may have different specifications, but the basic ideas are the same.

The are instuctions for creating what's called a "single sheet" or "strip" poster using MicroSoft PowerPoint as the main software tool, and using an ink-jet plotter for output. The plotter paper is just over 36 inches wide, so that the maximum width of your poster is 36 inches. The maximum length allowed is 54 inches. The paper can be arranged in either portrait (36" wide x 54" high) or landscape (54" wide x 36" high) mode.

Setting up PowerPoint

Note: These instructions might vary a bit among versions of PowerPoint.

First, open a new file and choose the blank page as your layout.

To design a large poster, you must tell PowerPoint (or whichever program you're using) how large the paper is. You can do this by going to the **File / Page Setup** menu -- just enter the width and height you want, within the limitations given above. It should choose Portrait or Landscape automatically, based on the height and width you enter.

Once you've done this, press **OK**. PowerPoint may complain that the size exceeds that of the current printer -- just say **OK** to continue -- we'll deal with this later. You should now be facing a blank page in the appropriate dimensions. If the rulers are turned on, you'll see that it's the size you asked for.

Creating Your Poster

You can treat this extra large page just like a PowerPoint slide -- write text, import things, create graphs and so forth. The difference is that for all but the largest font sizes, you will have to zoom in on the section you want to work with. Depending on which version of PowerPoint you have, zooming in may cause a "Slide Minature" to appear -- this gives you an overview of your page. There's really no difference between what you've done before on standard sized slides and what you can do here -- there's just more space to do it on.

Printing a Small Version

To see how your poster looks on paper, you can actually scale it to fit on a standard 8.5x11 inch sheet of paper. I recommend that you do this, because ...

- it's a good way to print and check your work, without wasting a huge sheet of paper
- if you can't read it on the 8.5x11 page, your font is too small
- it makes a great handout.

To scale to 8.5x11, go to **File / Print** ...

PC: Make sure your regular printer is selected. At the bottom of the dialog box is a checkbox that says **Scale to fit paper** -- check it and go.

Mac: In the dialog box, you will see a pulldown menu on the left hand side, a line or two down. It probably says

General. Click on that and select the pulldown item that says **Microsoft PowerPoint**. Look for the box that says **Scale to fit paper** and check the box. Then continue with your printing.

Printing the Big One

Note: These instructions are for my NC State students -- other facilities will have different procedures.

To print the actual poster, you will have to go to the GIS lab on the 5th floor of Jordan Hall -- it's on the west side of the building in the center of the floor -- room 5111B. I'll show you the computer to use, the plotter location, and the login during lab. You should bring your poster on a zip disk or a CD. If you have problems printing, look for Beth Eastman in 5108 Jordan (north side of building).

Once you log in, open your file and give it one last look-over.

1. Select **File / Print**
2. In the dialog box, there is a pulldown menu for the **Name:** of the printer. Click on it and select **plotter**.
3. Press the **Properties...** button, which will put you into another dialog box.
4. Set the **orientation** to landscape or portrait, as appropriate.
5. Make sure the **Paper Source** is **36 inch roll**.
6. Press **More sizes...** which will put you into yet a third dialog box.
7. On the right hand side of the dialog box, enter your hieght and width -- it should match what you did in the Page Setup when you started your poster.
8. Make sure **Units** is set to inches.
9. Press **OK** to get out of the More sizes... dialog box.
10. Back in the Properties ... dialog box, make sure **No scaling** is selected
11. Press **OK** to get out of the Properties ... dialog box.
12. Press **OK** to print.

Now you can go and see it plot. If you can see that there is a problem right away, press and hold the cancel button on the plotter until it confirms the job is being cancelled -- this will avoid wasting paper.

Before you leave, log off the computer.
