Scientific Poster Production and Presentation

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INBRE/LIFT Workshop

15 July 2026 | 9-10am

Workshop Agenda

- Brainstorm and review the purpose, goals, and objectives of scientific posters
- Explore poster examples and report back
- Poster basics!
- The poster presentation
- Start your own poster!

FIRST: What is the purpose of a Scientific poster?

- ***Turn to the person next to you and brainstorm what you would want your poster to do!***

****Folks online feel free to pop things in the chat or raise your hand when we share out***

- *We will collect the group's ideas:*

FIRST: What is the purpose of a Scientific poster?

- ***Turn to the person next to you and brainstorm what you would want your poster to do!***

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- ***A means of visually summarizing your research in order to efficiently share your findings AND prompt discussions (typically at conferences)***

- **What do you want your poster to accomplish?**
  - Communicate Efficiently AND Effectively
  - Promote interactive engagement and discussion
  - Enable wider dissemination and reach

Activity: Poster Example Review (10 min)

- In this activity you will be reviewing some poster examples and recording:
  - **5 aspects you found effective/engaging** and be able to describe **why you found them effective**
  - **5 aspects that you would do differently** and **why**
- **For those in person:** venture out into the Boyd Hallways and find examples of posters (lots on the 1^{st} and 2nd floors)
- **For those online:** Please look through the folder of example posters I provided to you via the link in the chat, or this QR code:

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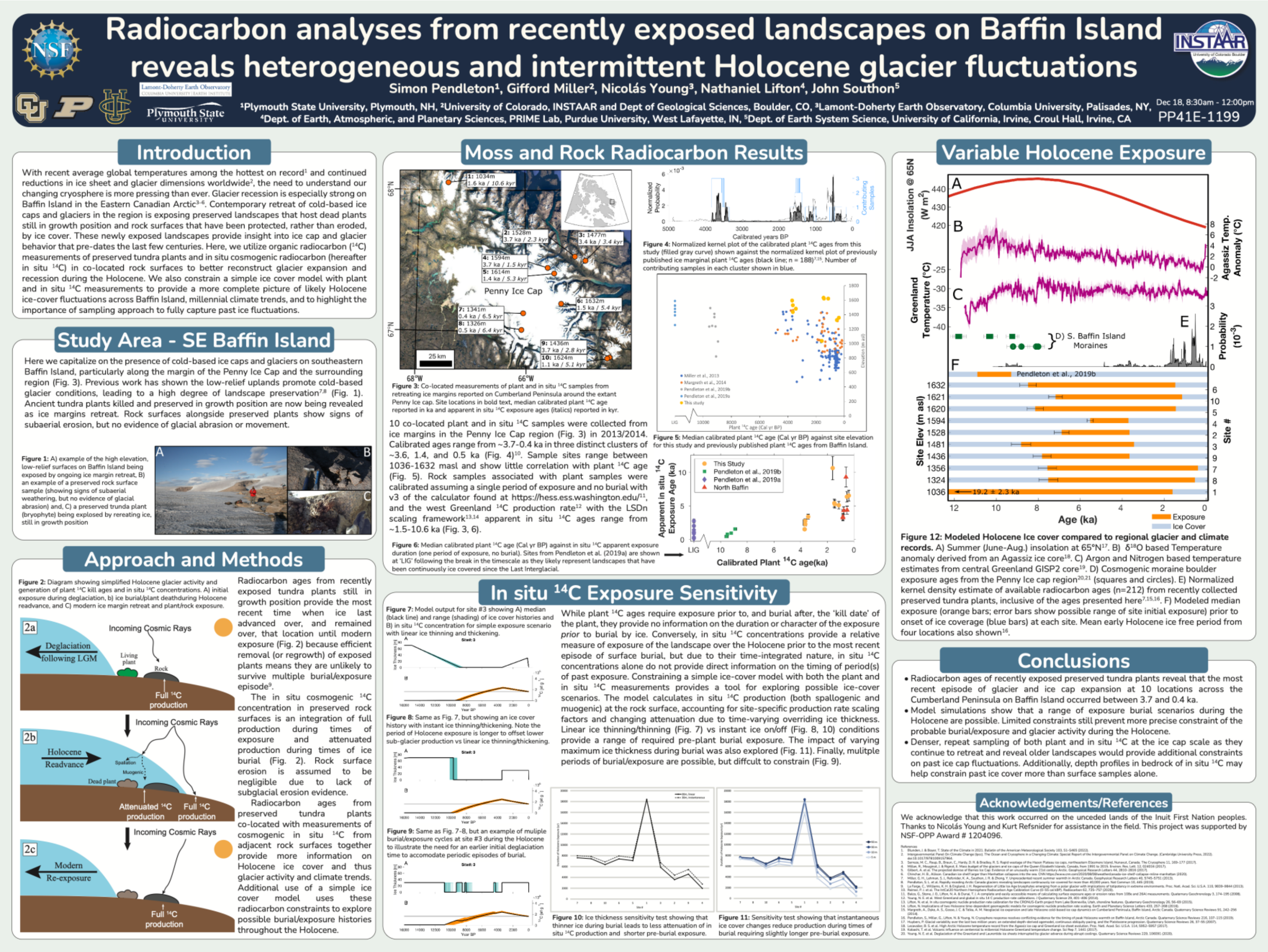
  - **5 aspects that you would do differently** and **why**

- What did you find?:

Scientific Poster: The basic components



Wait! Before you start your poster!

Before you start

Check the poster guidelines from your institution or conference:

FONT

DIMENSIONS

COLORS

LOGO USAGE

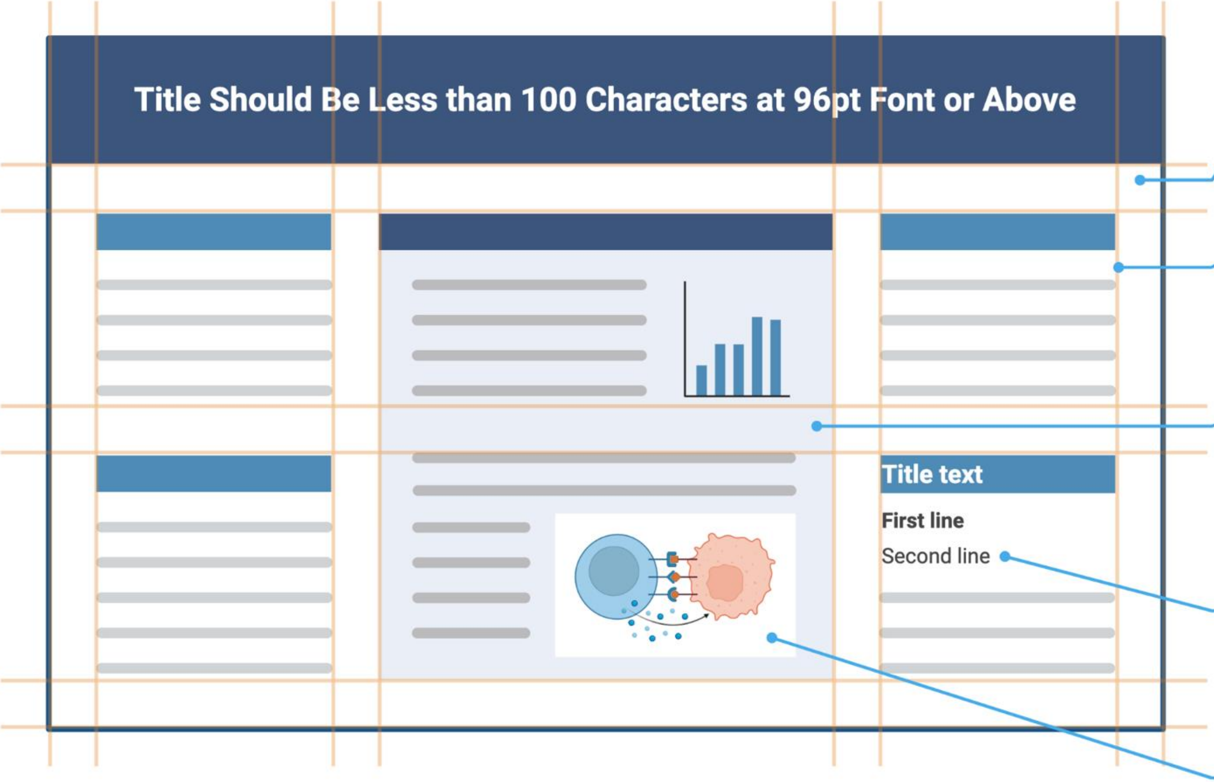
Also consider...

The submission date. Prepare at least a few weeks in advance. Think about how much time it takes to design the poster, ask for feedback, and print. A good tip to ensure enough time is to work backwards from the due date.

Your audience. Who will be looking at your poster? How much do they know about your topic? Pick the aspect of your research that is most relevant and comprehensible for your audience.

Your research. What information do you want to include? What is the key topic or result that you want to highlight?

Top Tips for Poster Design



There are many different layout options for posters (portrait, landscape, square, or billboard style), pick one that works best for you and your research!

1. **Keep margins/padding consistent**
   Equal spacing between sections helps reduce clutter and improve readability of the content.

2. **Arrange sections in a grid**
   Grid organization helps the audience quickly locate information on a poster. Information should flow from left to right, top to bottom.

3. **Pick 1 section to highlight (TL;DR format)**
   What is one key area of your research that you want the audience to focus on? Draw attention to that section by giving it a different colored background or section header.

4. **Apply text hierarchy**
   Highlight section titles or key information by bolding or increasing the font size. Ensure the text is large enough to read at a distance.

5. **Format figures specifically for posters**
   Look at all figures as a whole; the colors, labels, arrows should all be consistent from one figure to another. Make sure the figures are high resolution so they look nice and clear when printed.

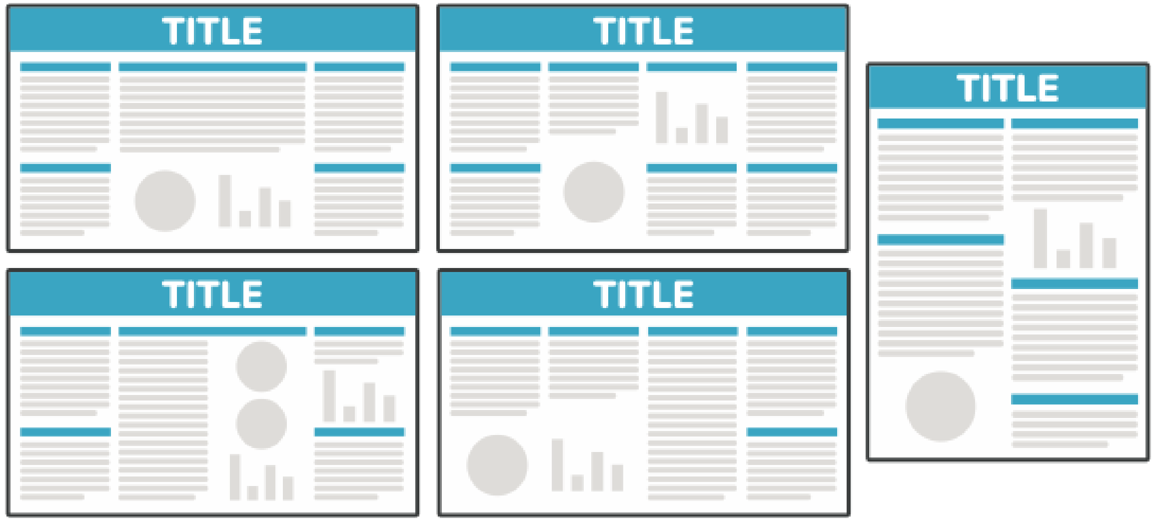
Avoid these:

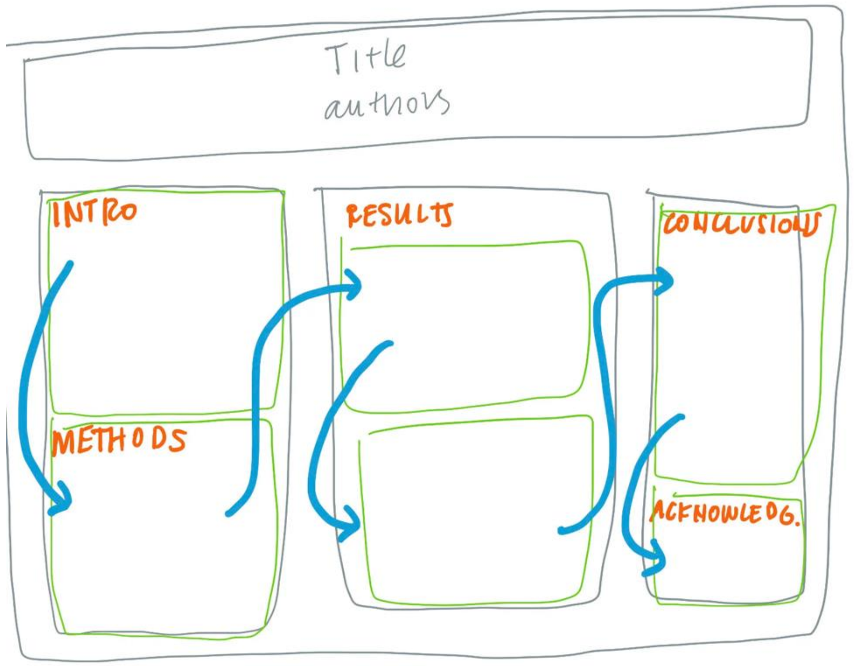
- Rounded corners to box sections
- Gradients or patterns as background
- Using too many fonts (try to limit to ≤2 fonts)
- Drop shadows and word art
- Logos with non-transparent background or poor contrast with backdrop

Layout

- *****Check the size and any formatting requirements of your conference first and make sure you set up your poster to the correct size. A common poster size is 36x48in (landscape orientation)***

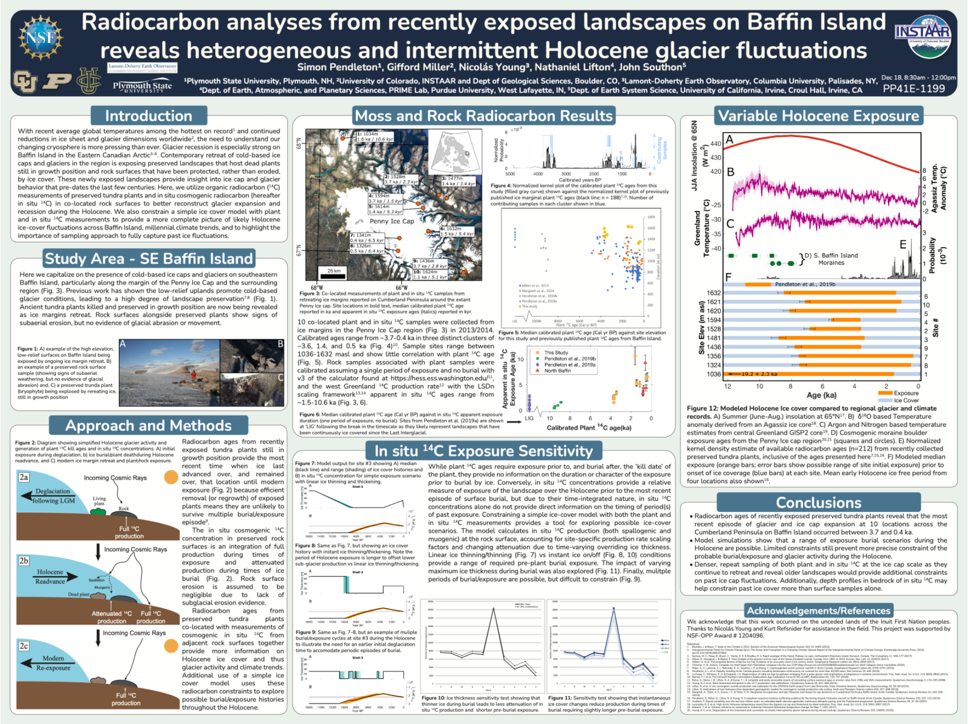
- 2-4 columns is common, with 3 being the most. However, this should not dissuade you from exploring other layouts; use whatever fits your content, narrative, and logical flow!





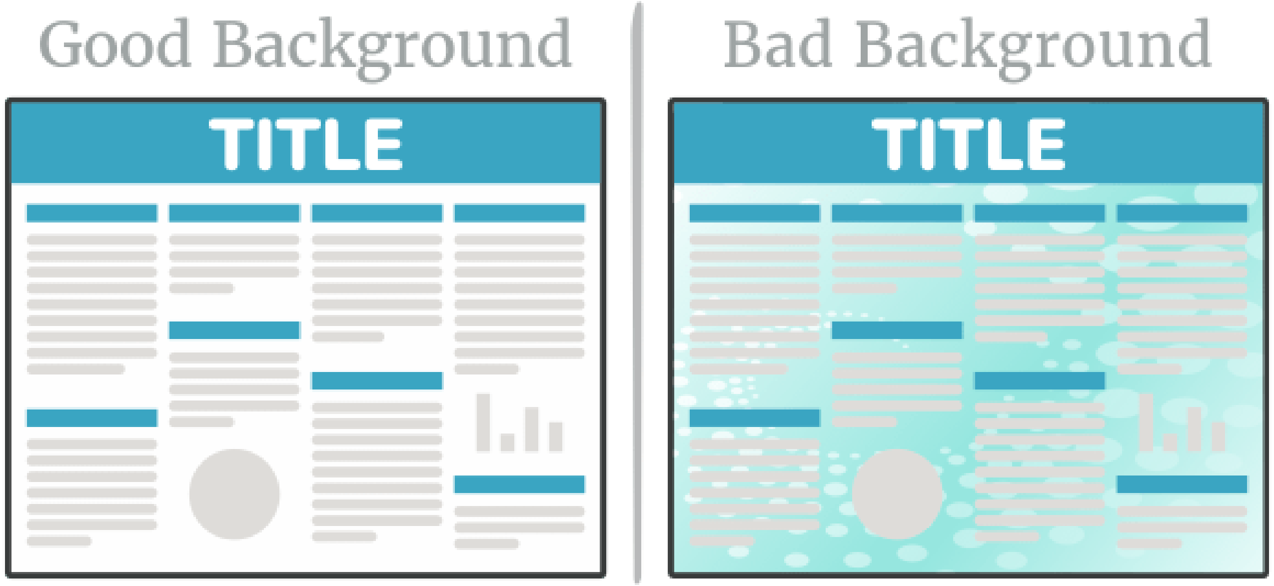
Design

- Simple is good
- Make important information stand out
- Line things up
- Don't make it crowded



Background

- Keep it non-distracting!
- White, or a solid color that doesn't command your audience's eyes
- Avoid gradients, photos, patterns



Titles, Fonts, and Font Size

- Generally no hard and fast rules except to make your fonts/text easy to read!
- Can make title and heading text one font and body text another (see examples to the right)

- Also no rules about font size except you want it easily readable from a normal distance (a few feet away)
- Line spacing of 1.25-1.5 makes the text more comfortable to read

Title/Headings: **Bree Serif**
Body Text: Open Sans

Title/Headings: **Montserrat**
Body Text: Domine

Title/Headings: Amaranth
Body Text: Titillium Web

Title/Headings: **Libre Baskerville**
Body Text: Montserrat

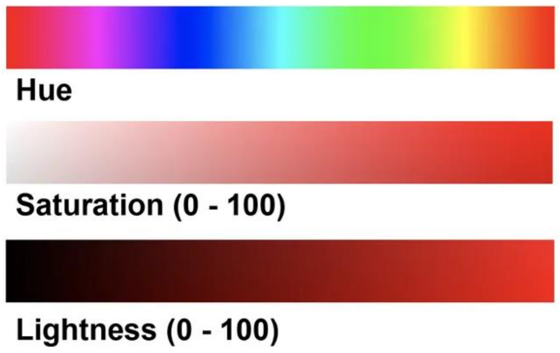
Title/Headings: Quattrocento
Body Text: Quattrocento Sans

Title/Headings: **Nunito**
Body Text: Open Sans

Colors

- Color is Incredibly important!
- Use it improve audience comprehension AND make your work accessible to individuals with color blindness/deficiency

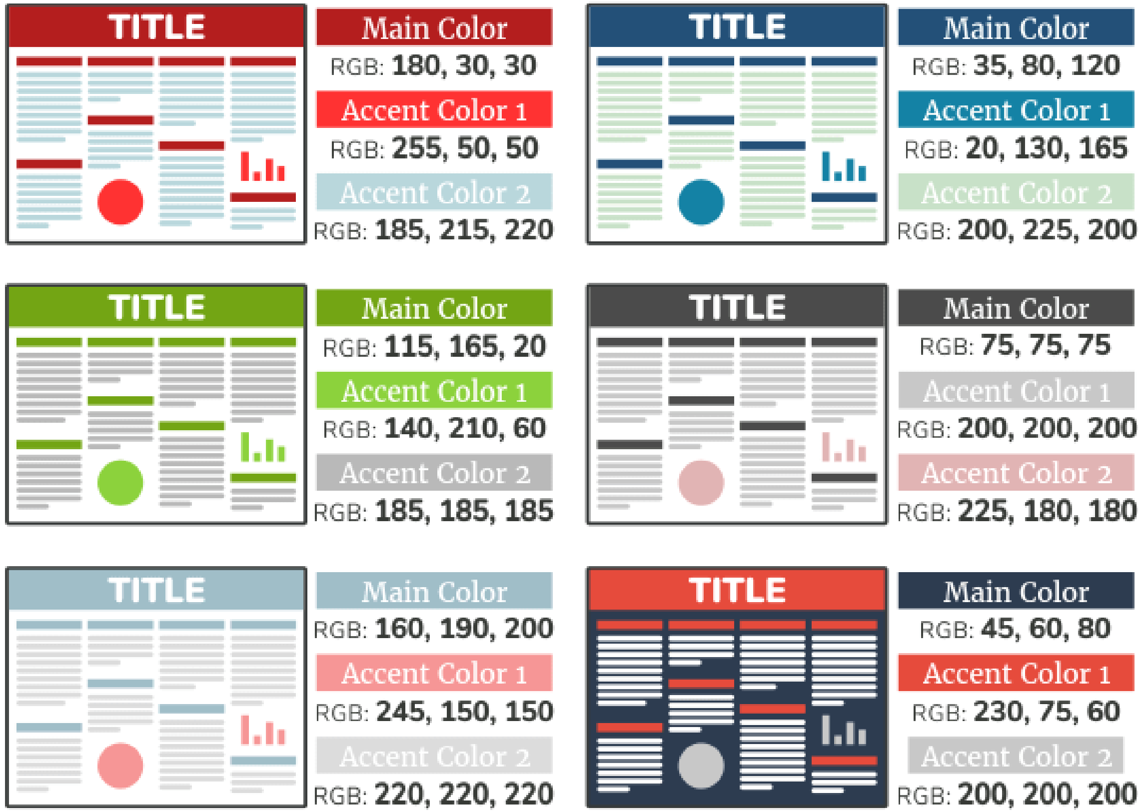
Choose colors from opposing sides of the color wheel for a color blind audience



Using saturation and lightness to create contrast

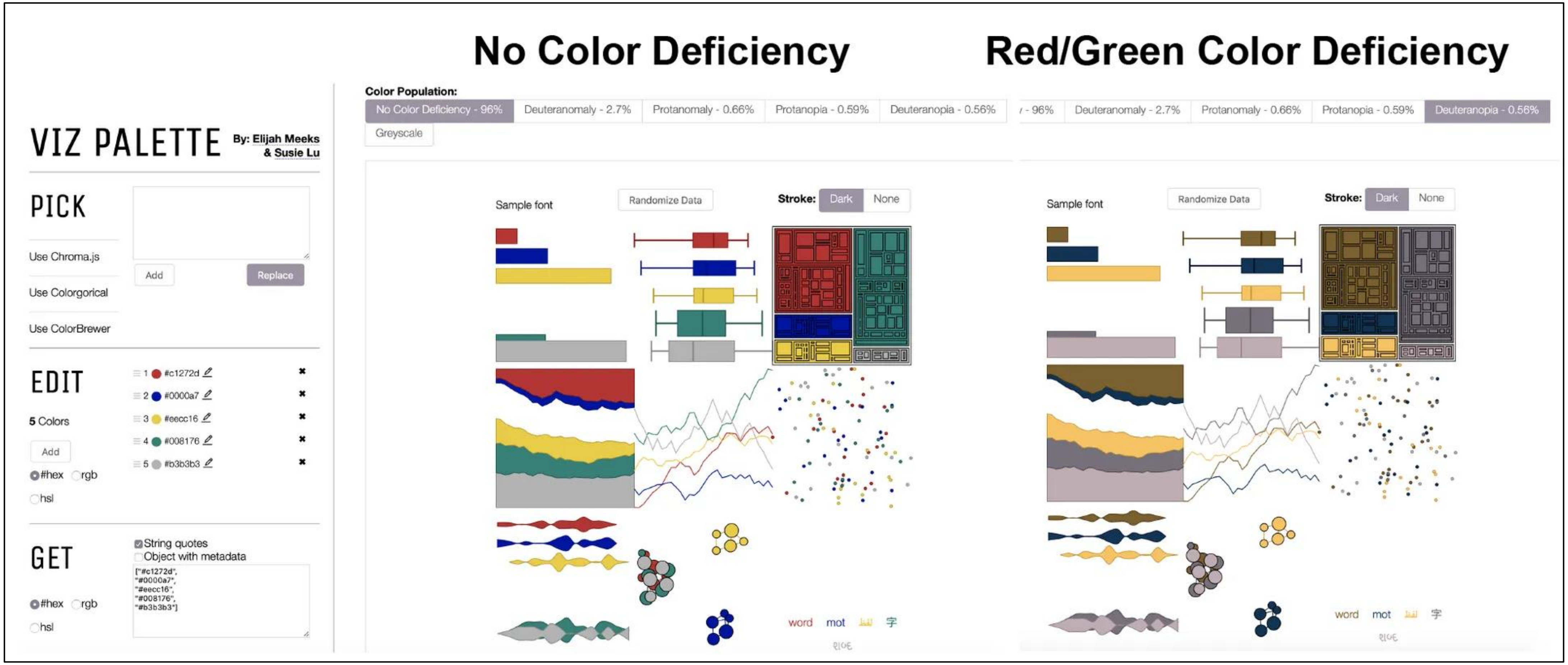
Don't do this

Do this



Testing for color accessibility

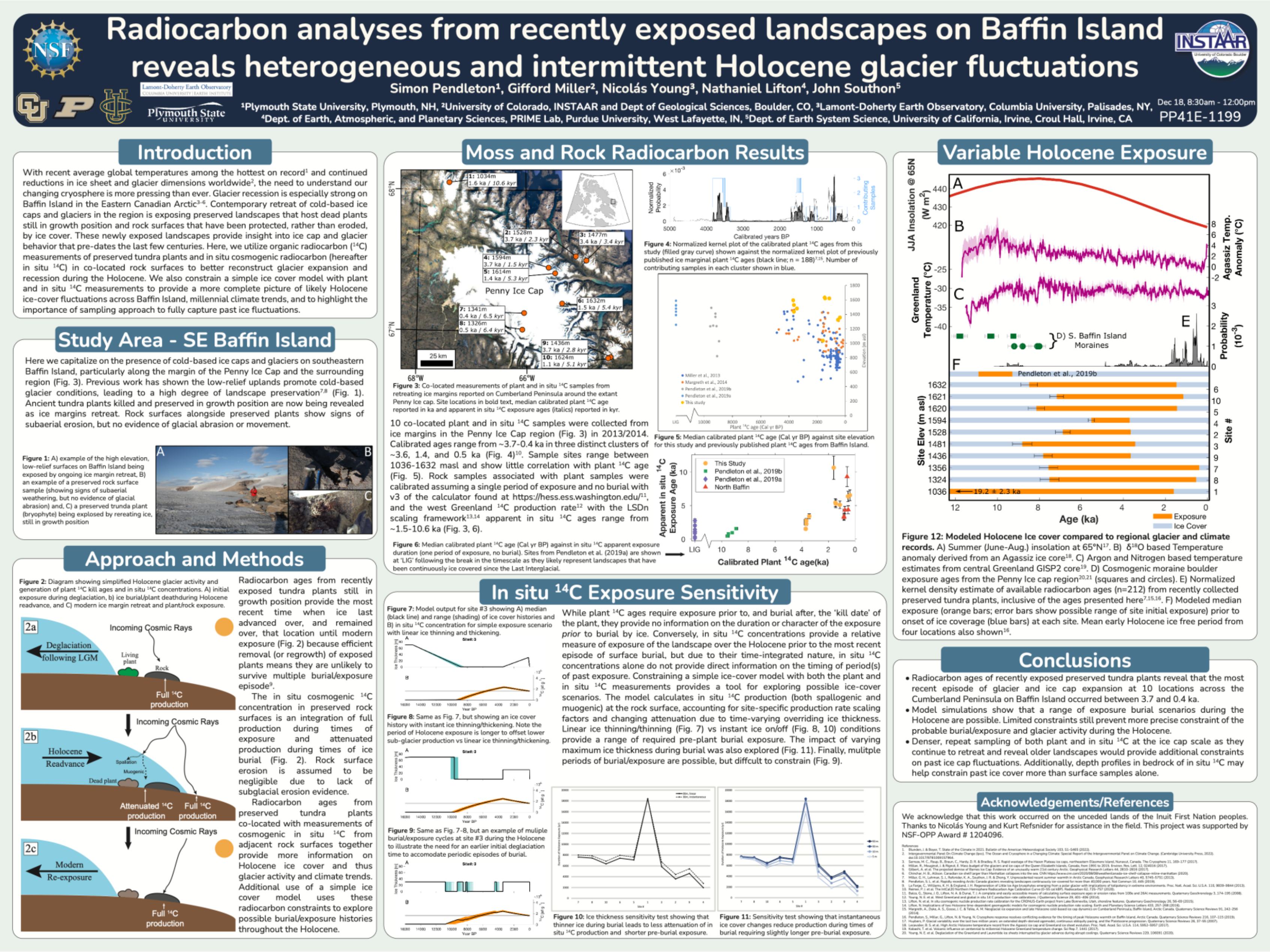
- The "Viz Palette" (https://projects.susielu.com/viz-palette) can check your color palette for color accessibility:



Alignment and Whitespace

- The human eye picks up on unaligned objects immediately – align your poster content (Tip: use the ‘align’ tool in PowerPoint or Illustrator)
- You can also lock objects in place, so you don’t accidentally move them as you construct your poster
- You want enough space between poster content…but not too much. Each poster is different and you will need to place with the spacing to find what fits yours

Let’s Review!



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Poster Presentation Format and Tips

- Duration: a poster session is typically 2-4 hrs. long (talks are ~12min).
  - Wear conference appropriate clothing but make sure it is comfortable. Wear COMFROTABLE shoes.
  - Stay hydrated (but not too much!)
  - Don’t come to your poster session hungry!
- Setting: you will likely have hundreds (if not thousands) of other posters/presenters around you. It can be overwhelming!
  - Practicing your poster presentation beforehand will make easier
- Interactions
  - Poster sessions facilitate more personal 1-on-1 conversations (rather than you talking at and audience).
  - Prepare a concise but engaging rundown of your poster. Use your poster, point at it, incorporate its content into you pitch
  - Leave room for folks to ask questions!

Practice Practice Practice!

Final activity: Start your own poster!

- Using what we have discussed and the resources below, use the time remaining to begin your own poster! *(these links can be found in the slides that have been shared with you).*

- Overall guide to making posters
  - Templates available on this site also
- More templates
- Specific article on color palettes (especially on accessible color palettes)
- Here is another about color palettes
- How to make an ugly poster
- An introverts guide to surviving a poster session

I am here to assist, answer questions, etc!

Reminders

- **NH-LIFT**
  - Register your research poster for the August 12-13 summit by **August 4th!**

- **NH-INBRE**
  - Submit your summit poster presentation abstract for the August 17-18 summit by **July 27th!**