

Using placeholder text

The text for a project isn't always finished yet when a designer needs to begin the design process. In this case, designers use placeholder text to mock up design and type specifications before the actual text to be used in a project is finished. If "real" text is used, perhaps recycled from a similar project, those who must approve the design may get distracted by the text, compromising the evaluation process. For this reason, designers often incorporate "nonsense" text as placeholders. The most popular is the common "Lorem

Ipsum" text, which is Latin text that is meaningless to most readers, but looks natural since it uses an English-like distribution of characters.

- If you use QuarkXPress, you can download and install the free "Jabberwocky" XTension from www.quark.com. This add-on for QuarkXPress lets you fill text boxes with nonsense text in English, Esperanto, Klingon, or Latin.
- If you use InDesign, select a text frame and choose *Type > Fill with Placeholder*

Text. The frame will be filled with Latin text.

- Visit www.lipsum.com to generate Latin text for other software programs. Specify the number of words or paragraphs that you want, and the Web site returns a file of "Lorem Ipsum" text. You can then copy and paste this into the program of your choice.

Keith Gilbert provides training & support services to help graphic designers and communicators convey print and Web messages effectively. Gilbert Consulting, 651 633-7148 www.gilbertconsulting.com