SIDE TITLES

Its function as a filler or as a tool for comparing the visual impression of different typefaces

Dummy text is text that is used in the publishing industry or by web designers to occupy the space which will later be , lled with %real+ content. This is required when, for example, the , nal text is not yet available.

Dummy text is also known as %ll text.+It is said that song composers of the past used dummy texts as lyrics when writing melodies in order to have a %ready-made+ text to sing with the melody. Dummy texts have been in use by typesetters since the 16th century.

The usefulness of nonsensical content

Dummy text is also used to demonstrate the appearance of different typefaces and layouts, and in general the content of dummy text is nonsensical. Due to its widespread use as , ller text for layouts, non-readability is of great importance: human perception is tuned to recognize certain patterns and repetitions in texts.

If the distribution of letters and %words+ is random, the reader will not be distracted from making a neutral judgement on the visual impact and readability of the typefaces (typography), or the distribution of text on the page (layout or type area).

˝ For this reason, dummy text usually consists of a more or less random series of words or syllables.

˝ This prevents repetitive patterns from impairing the overall visual impression and facilitates the comparison of different typefaces.

˝ Furthermore, it is advantageous when the dummy text is relatively realistic so that the layout impression of the , nal publication is not compromised.

Incomprehensibility or readability?

The most well-known dummy text is the "Lorem Ipsum," which is said to have originated in the 16th century. Lorem Ipsum is composed in a pseudo-Latin language which more or less corresponds to "proper" Latin. It contains a series of real Latin words.

This ancient dummy text is also incomprehensible, but it imitates the rhythm of most European languages in Latin script. The advantage of its Latin origin and the relative meaninglessness of Lorum Ipsum is that the text does not attract attention to itself or distract the viewer's attention from the layout.

One disadvantage of Lorum Ipsum is that in Latin certain letters appear more frequently than others · which creates a distinct visual impression. Moreover, in Latin only words at the beginning of sentences are capitalized; this means that Lorem Ipsum cannot accurately represent, for example, German, in which all nouns are capitalized. Thus, Lorem Ipsum has only limited suitability as a visual , ller for German texts.

If the , ll text is intended to illustrate the characteristics of different typefaces, it sometimes makes sense to select texts containing the various letters and symbols speci, c to the output language.

There is now an abundance of readable dummy texts. These are usually used when a text is required purely to , ll a space. These alternatives to the classic Lorem Ipsum texts are often amusing and tell short, funny or nonsensical stories.

Origin and meaning of the Lorem Ipsum text

According to most sources, Lorum Ipsum can be traced back to a text composed by Cicero in 45 BC. Allegedly, a Latin scholar established the origin of the text by compiling all the instances of the unusual word "consectetur" he could , nd and eventually recognized it as a passage

from "De , nibus bonorum et malorum" (On the extremes of Good and Evil) by Cicero, a book that was very popular in the Middle Ages:

"Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum, quia dolor sit, amet, consectetur, adipisci velit."

Nor is there anyone who loves or pursues or desires to obtain pain of itself, because it is pain. A typical Lorem Ipsum text goes like this:

"Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisici elit, sed eiusmod tempor incidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim."

It seems that only fragments of the original text remain in the Lorem Ipsum texts used today. One may speculate that over the course of time certain letters were added or deleted at various positions within the text. This might also explain why one can now , nd slightly different versions.

1. Due to the age of the Lorem Ipsum text there are no copyright issues to contend with.

2. In the 1960s, the text suddenly became known beyond the professional circle of typesetters and layout designers when it was used for Letraset sheets (adhesive letters on transparent , lm, popular until the 1980s).

Versions of the text were subsequently included in DTP programs.

Automatic recognition of Lorem Ipsum during the pre-press workflow

The spread of computers and layout programs thus made dummy text better known. While in earlier times several lines of the Lorem Ipsum text were repeated in the creation of dummy texts, today the full text of Cicero's "De , nibus" serves as the basis for many dummy text or Lorem Ipsum generators. Based on "De , nibus," these generators au-

tomatically create longer sections of the Lorem Ipsum text or various other , ller texts.

The phrasal sequence of the Lorem Ipsum text is now so widespread and commonplace that many DTP programs can generate dummy text using the starting sequence %Lorem ipsum.+

Fortunately, the phrase %Lorem Ipsum+is now recognized by electronic pre-press systems and, when found, an alarm can be raised. This avoids a publication going to print with overlooked dummy text.

Certain internet providers exploit the fact that , ll text cannot be recognized by automatic search engines · meaningful information cannot be distinguished from meaningless: Target-generated dummy text mixed with a certain combination of search terms can lead to an increased frequency of visits by search machine users. As a consequence, advertising revenues, which rely on website %hits,+are increased.