WEEK 04 · Monday, October 5, 2026

Graphic Design I: Identity & Asset Generation

Research the territory with a language model. Design it in Adobe.

How did the homework go?

Your two grids and your theyseeyourphotos result, posted to Notion.

THE GRIDS

Who kept showing up?

- Where did your two models agree, and where did they differ?
- What showed up that you never asked for?

THEYSEEYOURPHOTOS

What did it think you were?

- What did it guess, and what did it get wrong?
- How did it feel to be read that way?

Since we last met.

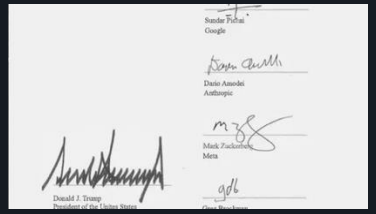
REPLACE: one sentence that ties this week's news together.



SEP 29 · OPENAI DEVDAY

Dots takes on Meta's Muse

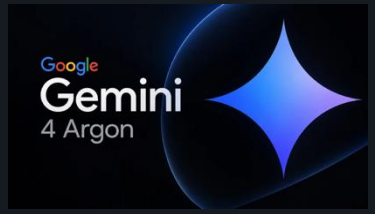
Always-on agents with a cloud computer and 4,000+ app connections, like Muse. Eligible Pro and Business plans get one free.



SEP 29 · WHITE HOUSE

AI leaders sign Trump's safety accord

Google, Anthropic, Meta, OpenAI, xAI and Nvidia pledged to self-police with internal controls and outside audits. It's voluntary, with no penalties.



SEP 30 · GOOGLE

Google launches Gemini 4 Argon

Built for long-horizon enterprise work, software engineering and cyber defense. Only vetted cyber defenders can use it so far.



THIS WEEK · HOLLYWOOD

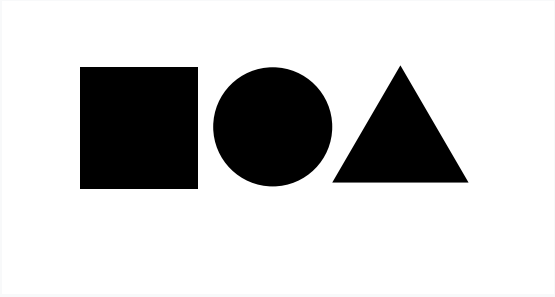
Hollywood puts AI on screen

Netflix's Wonka show uses an AI Gene Wilder voice. Ben Affleck used AI on Animals, and Danny Boyle's Ink drew backlash for it.

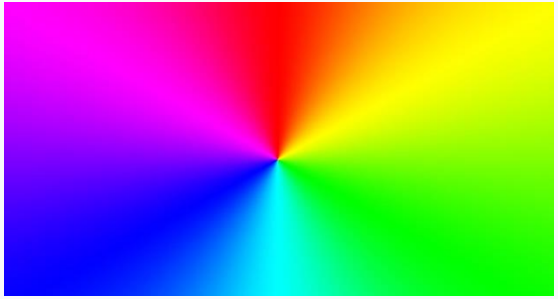
IDENTITY
You already know how to do this.

Six decisions. None of them changed this year.

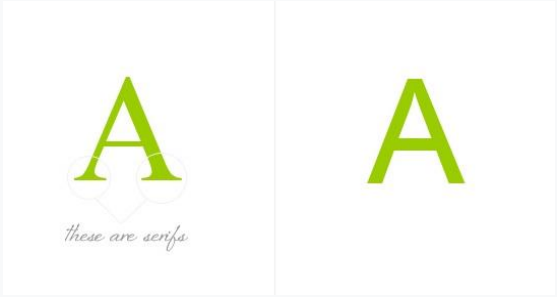
Six decisions.



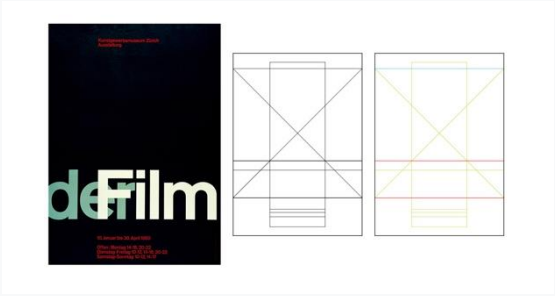
Form



Color



Type



Grid



Mark



Rules

What changed is how fast you can see options. Not what makes one good.

Three kinds of logo.



Symbol



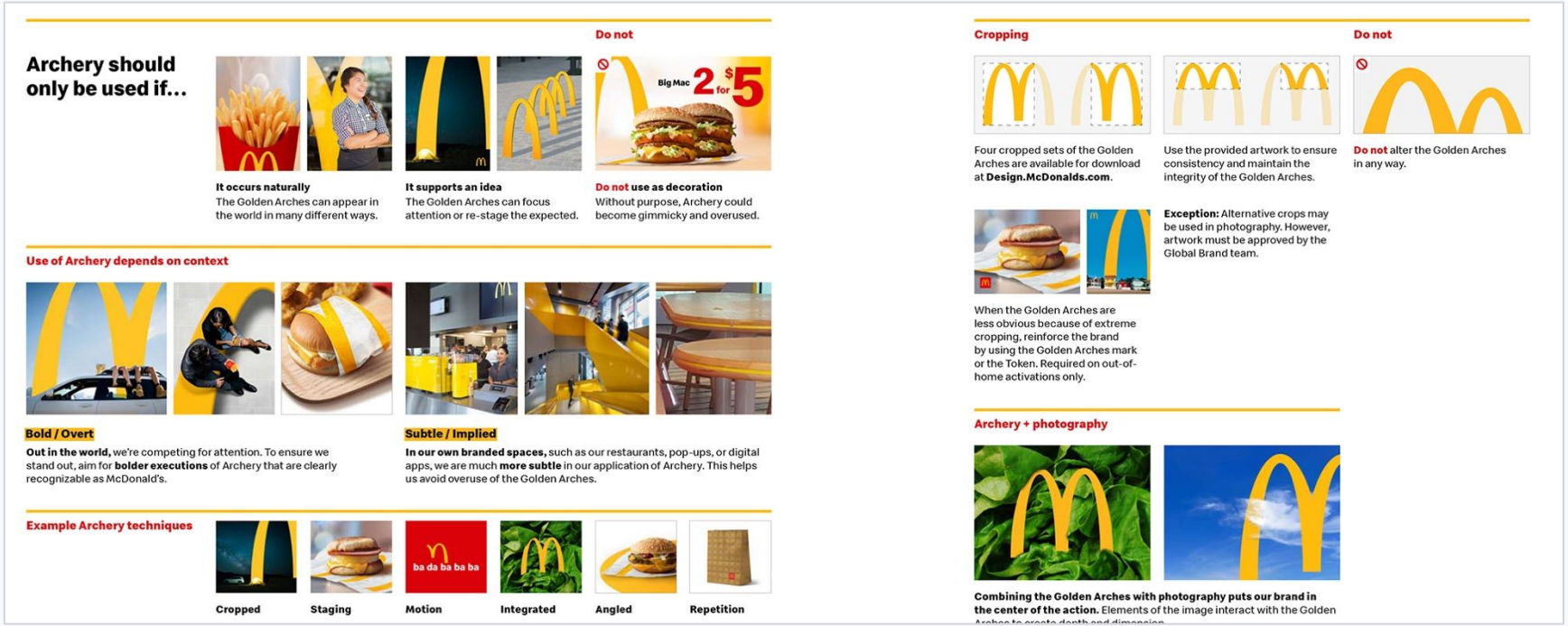
Wordmark



Combination

Decide which kind you want before you prompt for it.

A system, not a logo.

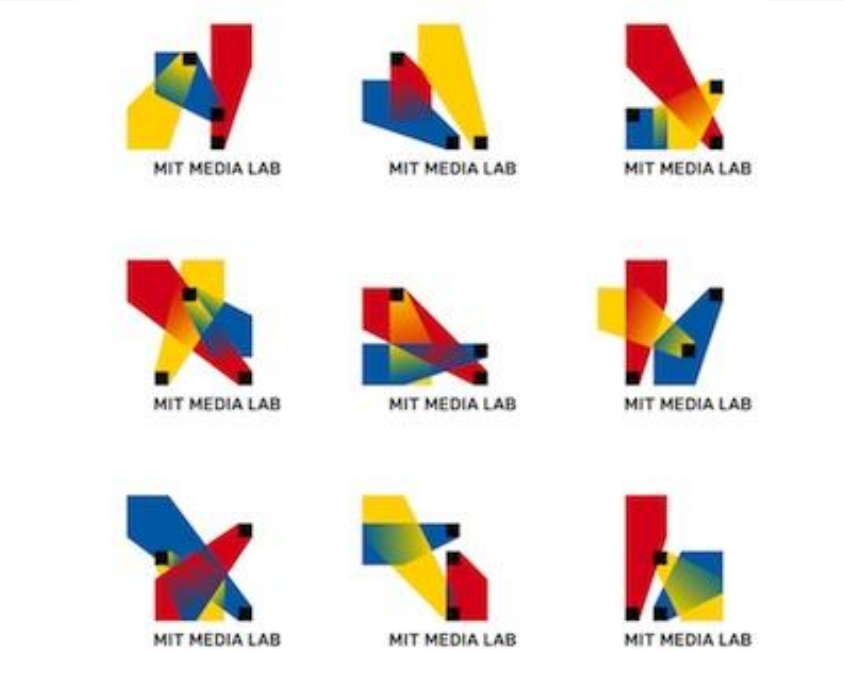


Source: https://brandingstyleguides.com/guide/mc-donalds-2019/

Some identity systems are generated.



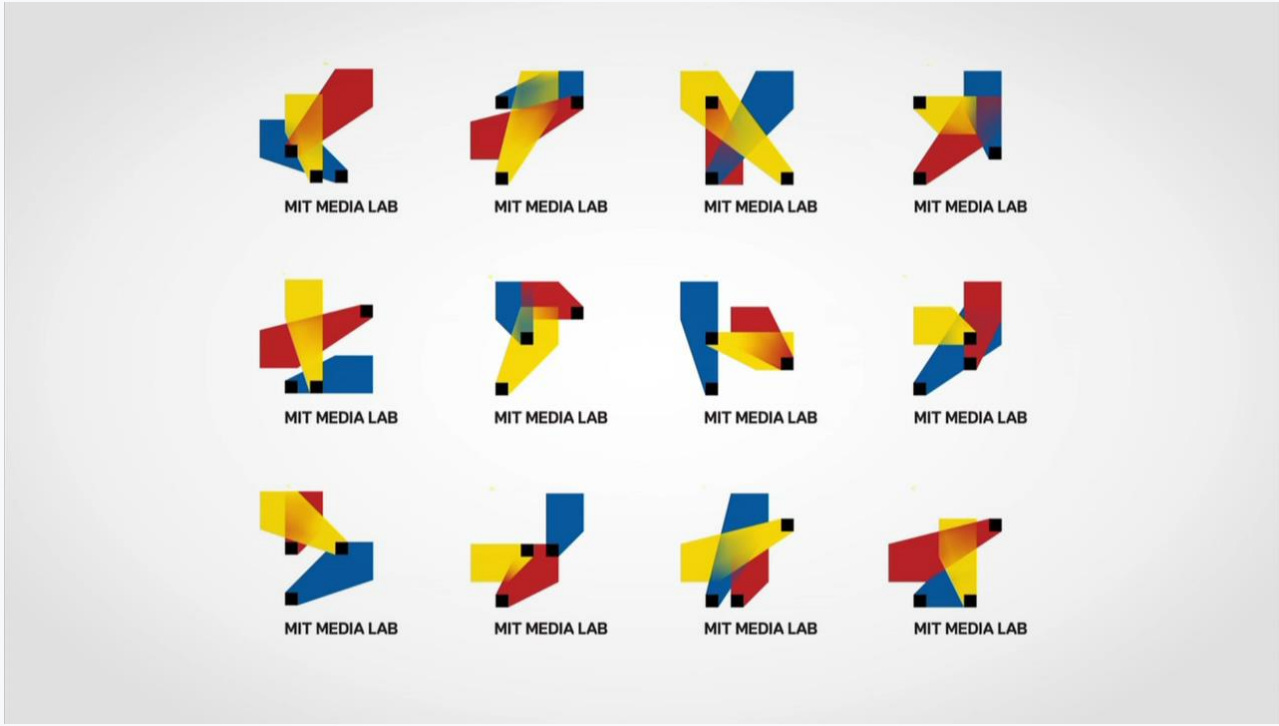
The variations



The rules

Rules made by people, variations made by code. That idea is older than AI.

Some identity systems are generated.



Rules made by people, variations made by code. That idea is older than AI.

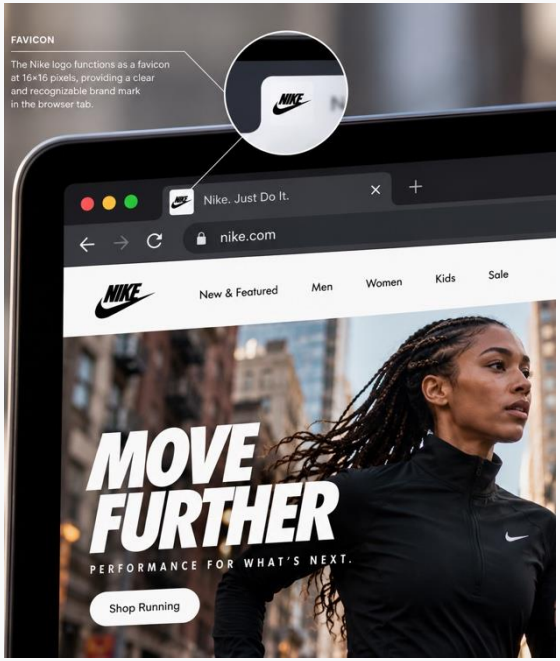
Does it survive?



Big



Rough



Tiny

A generator won't warn you about any of these. Note: Images generated using ChatGPT

THE HONEST FRAME
Options were never the hard part.

Choosing was. Defending the choice was. Every hour after this one is about the second thing.

Where the tools actually fit.

The same four phases. Very different amounts of help at each one.

DISCOVER	DEFINE	DESIGN	DEVELOP
Genuinely useful	**Useful, with a leash**	**Where today lives**	**Barely there yet**
Landscape scans, naming runs, positioning language. Verify every claim.	Moodboards and reference gathering. The brief stays yours.	Marks, palettes, applied assets, mockups. Fast, plentiful, uneven.	Production files, vector cleanup, the guideline document. Mostly you.
Lab, step 1	Written in Week 2	Lab, steps 2–5	Week 5

The tools are strongest at the ends of Discover and the start of Design. The squeeze in the middle is where judgment lives.

DISCOVER and DEFINE
Start with words.

A language model is good at names and bad at facts.

Give the chat what Discovery found.

WHAT DISCOVERY FOUND (EXAMPLE: BIKE SHOP)

Audience
Year-round commuters, 25 to 45

Positioning
Dependable, unfussy, local

Competitors
City Cycle and Bike Depot sound generic

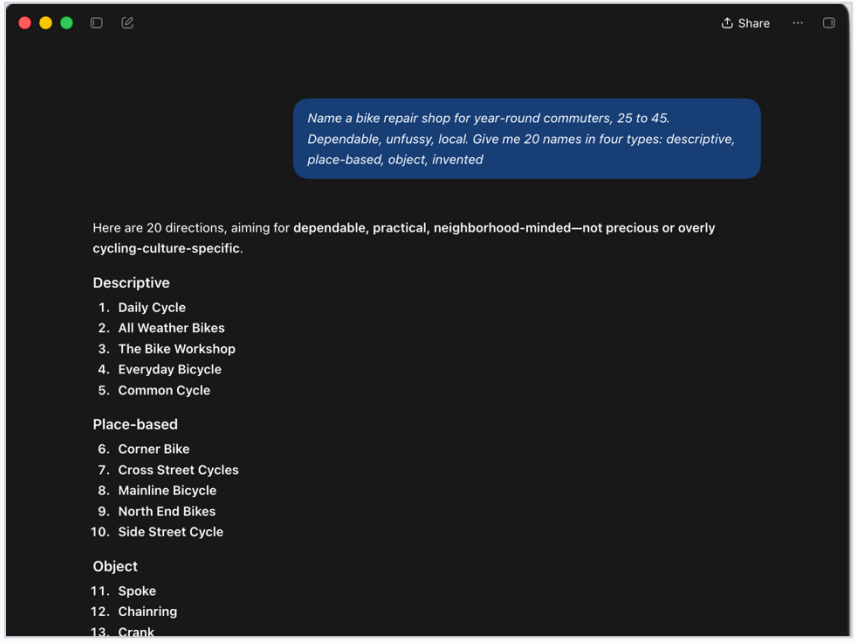
Constraints
Short enough for a shop sign

WHAT YOU GIVE THE CHAT

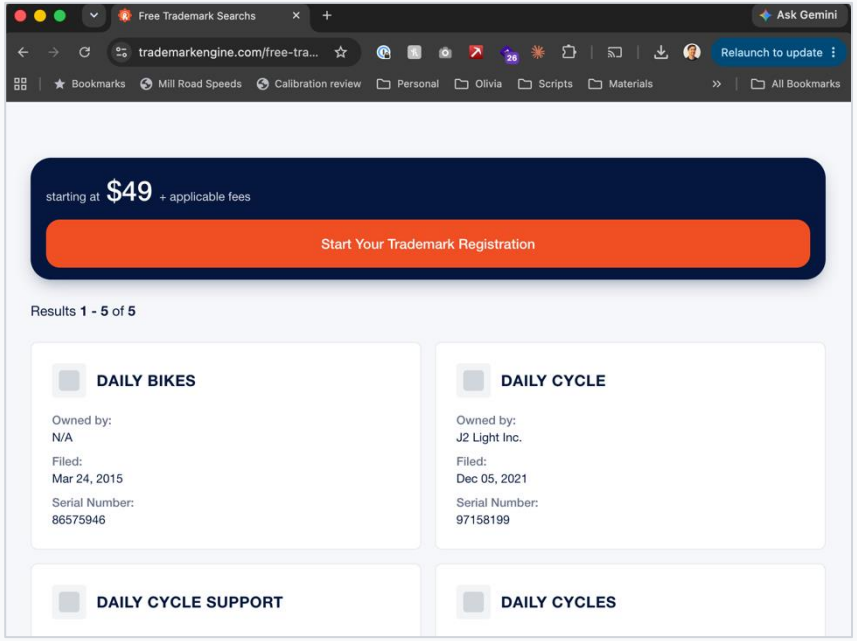
Name a bike repair shop for **year-round commuters, 25 to 45**. The feel is **dependable, unfussy and local**. The two nearby competitors, **City Cycle and Bike Depot**, sound generic. Names must be **short enough for a shop sign**. Give me 20, in four types.

The bold words came straight from Discovery. Without them, the chat returns the average brand.

Ask for 20 names, then cut hard.



The long list



The checks

Ask wide, then cut. Say each name aloud, spell it from hearing, and search it before you keep it.

Ask for nouns, not logos.

spoke	**bell**
chain link	tire patch
kickstand	**tread**

Nouns are drawable
“Dependable” can’t be drawn. A chain link can.

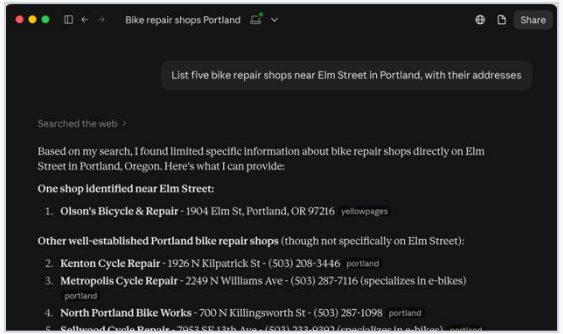
Tie them to the findings
Ask for objects, places and materials from your audience’s day, not logo clichés.

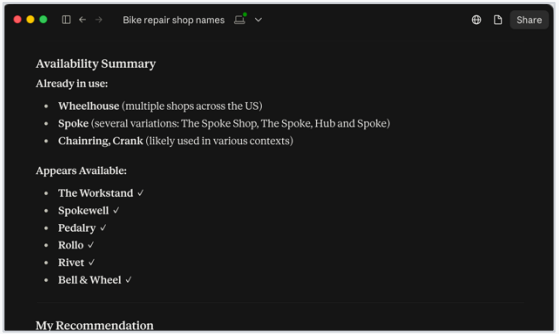
Pick three
Each one becomes a prompt for Text to Vector Graphic in Illustrator.

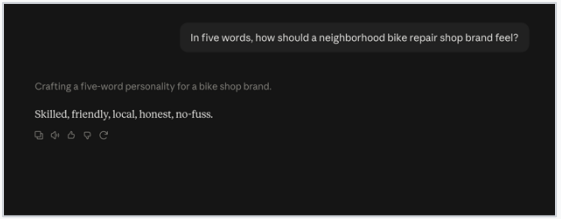
Nouns the chat returned. Highlighted: the three picked.

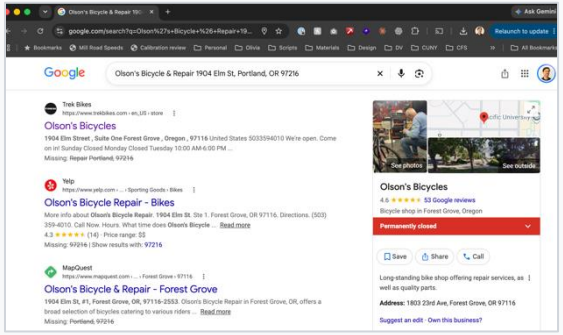
The chat suggests the words. You choose which three become marks.

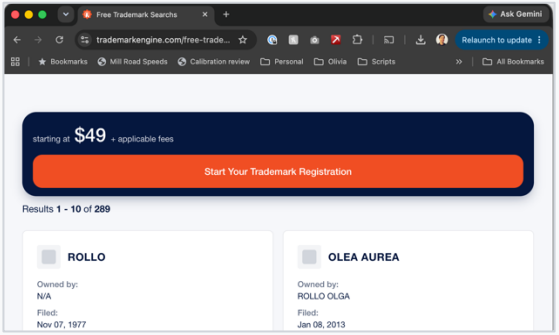
Three ways the chat will mislead you.

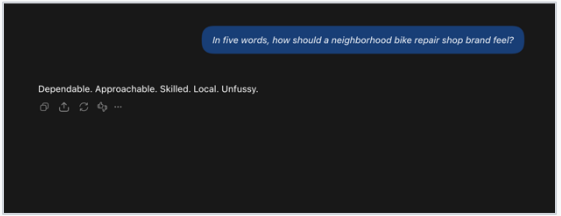


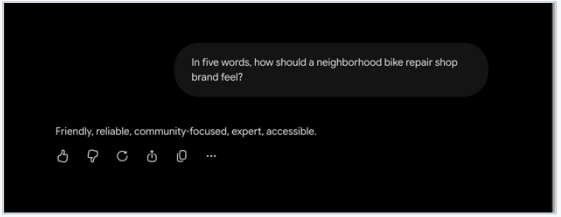












Companies that aren't

Names already taken

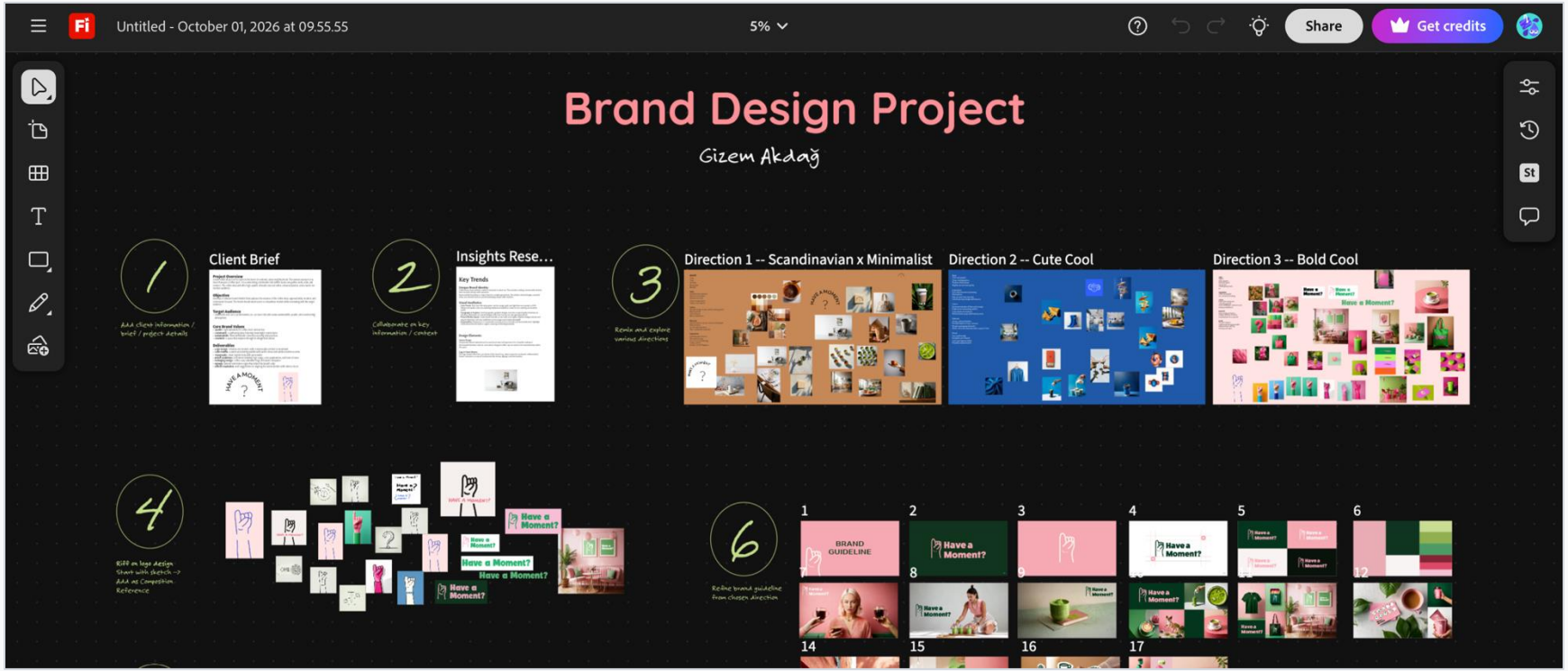
The safe middle

Search to catch the first two. Only your own opinion catches the third.

THE ADOBE HALF
You have used these apps for years.

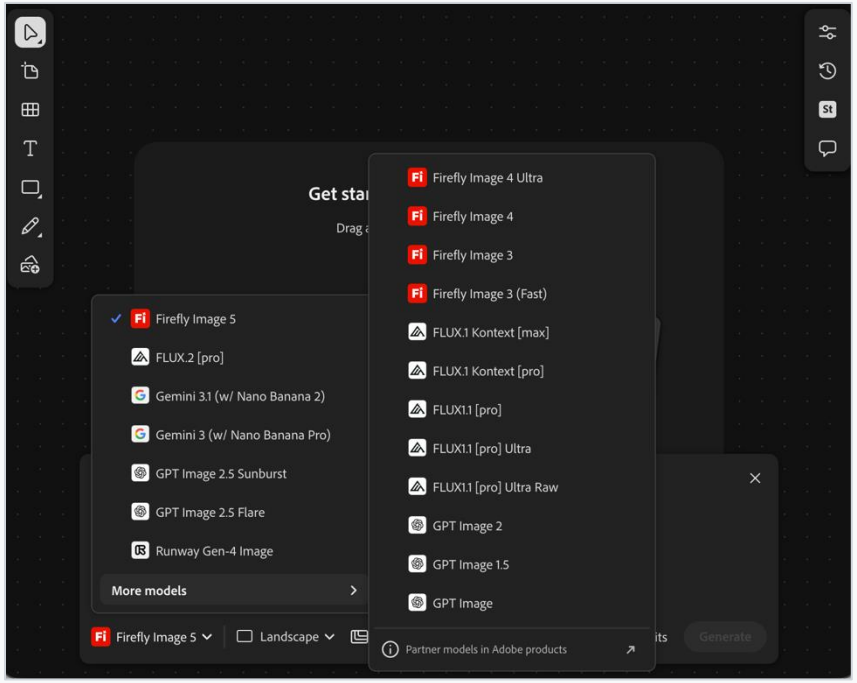
What is new is the generative layer inside them.

Firefly Boards.

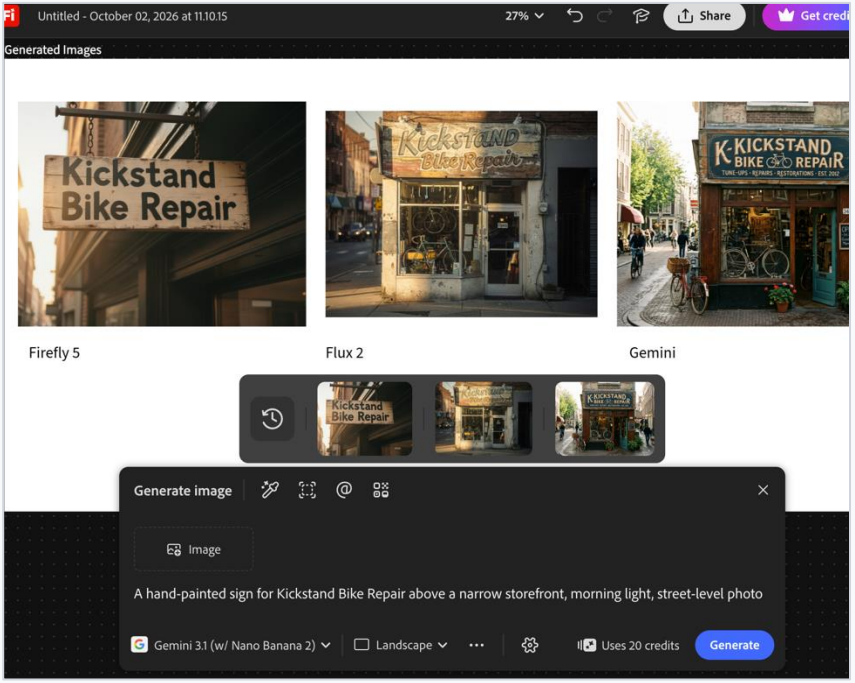


Keep what's real and what's generated apart.

Same prompt, different model.



The picker



Three answers

Write down which model you used. You can't find out later.

One photo, three Photoshop edits.



Original

Shot on a phone, portrait 3:4.



Generative Expand

Canvas widened to landscape. Photoshop painted in more shore, trees and water on both sides.



Generative Remove

Brushed over the dead fish. The beach fills in behind it.



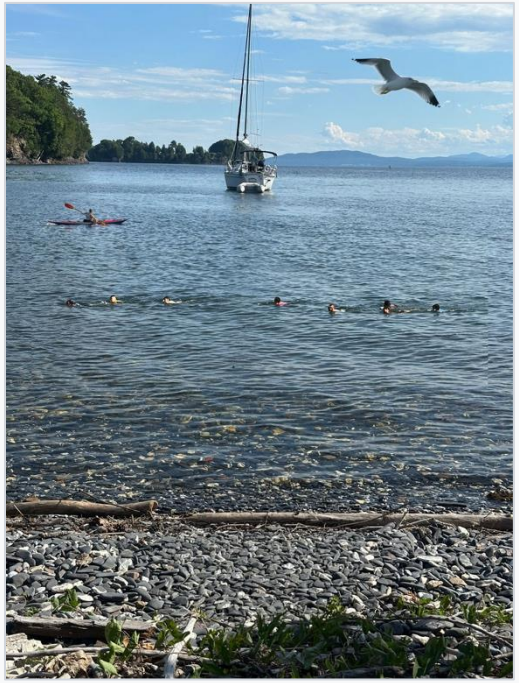
Generative Fill

Added a gull, a kayaker and a line of swimmers.

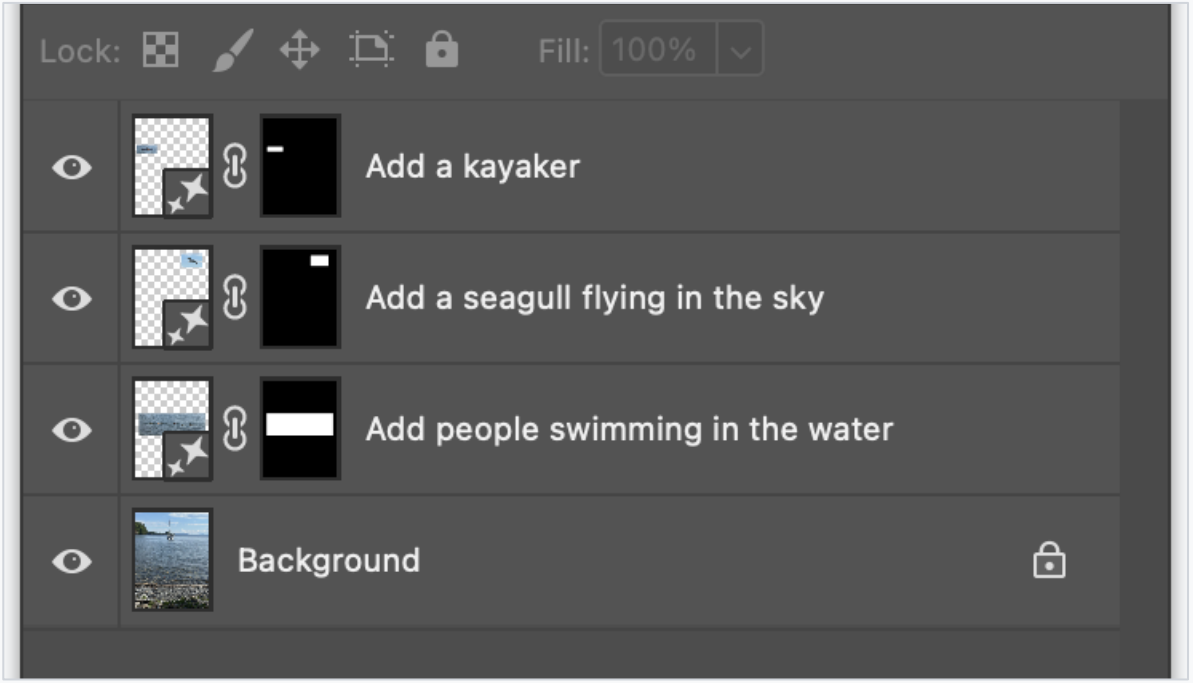
Each edit invents pixels that weren't there. Check the seams as its not perfect every time.

Want the latest features first? Download **Photoshop (Beta)** from the Creative Cloud app.

Now open the Layers panel.



What you see



What Photoshop keeps: one layer per prompt

Each fill sits on its own masked layer. Hide one and the original photo is still there.

Photoshop: Generative Upscale.



Inset: the original at true size. Behind it: the 4x upscale.

Firefly Upscaler

Adobe’s own model. Natural result, a little soft at 4x.

Topaz Gigapixel

Partner model for real photos. Sharper, recovers faces, can look over-processed in hair and texture.

Topaz Bloom

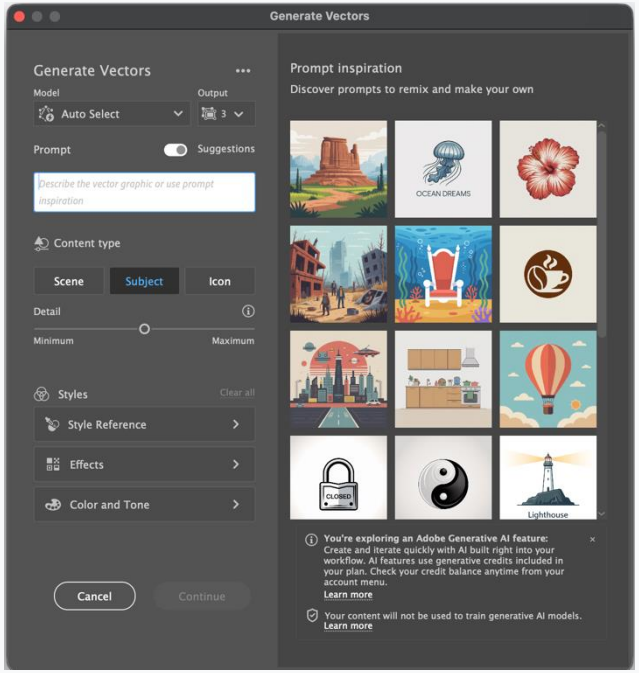
Partner model for AI-generated images. Invents new detail and keeps the layout.

Partner models use more generative credits than Firefly. Pick the model for the image, not the other way round.

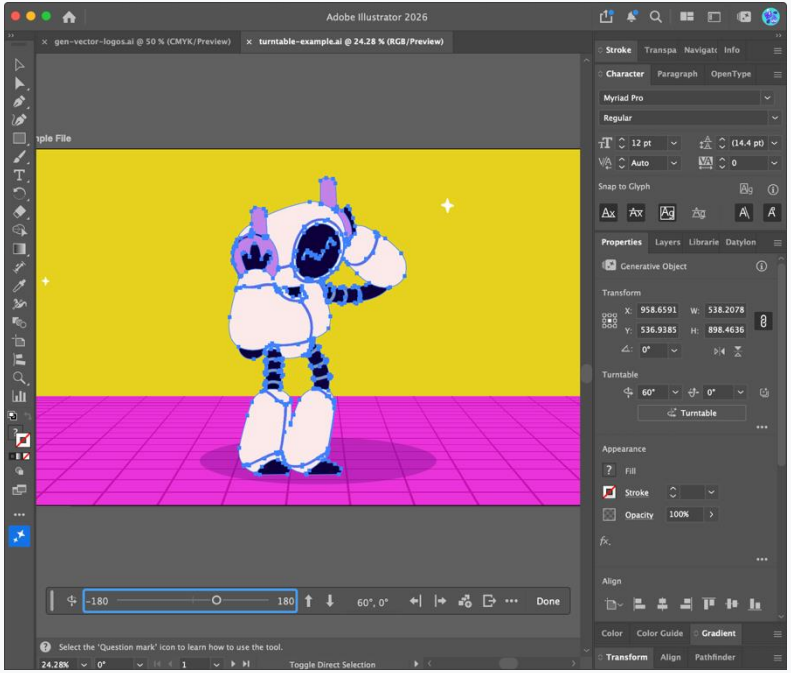
Source: Photoshop 2026 (version 27.0, October 2025); Photoshop Essentials; PhotoshopCAFE; Fstoppers.

Adobe Illustrator: Generative Vectors

TEXT TO VECTOR GRAPHIC



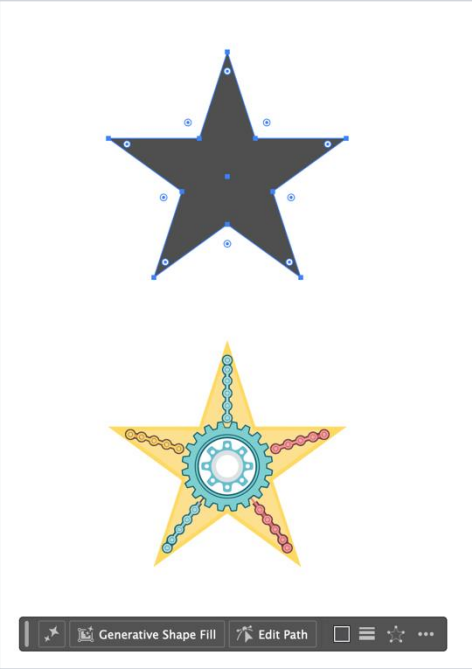
TURNTABLE



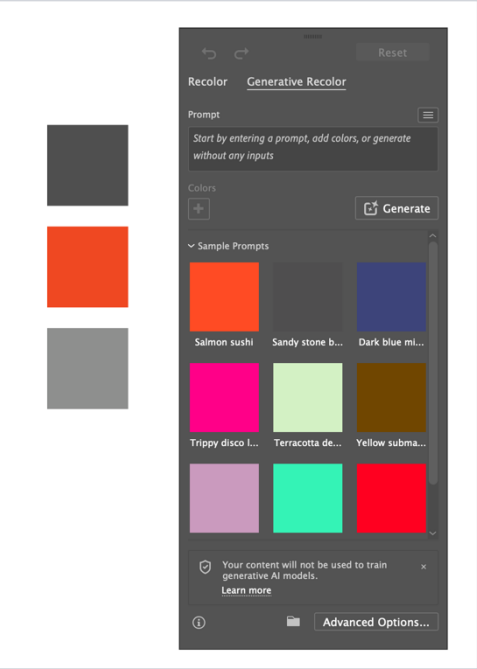
The only app today that hands back something a printer can use.

Shape Fill and Recolor.

GENERATIVE SHAPE FILL



GENERATIVE RECOLOR

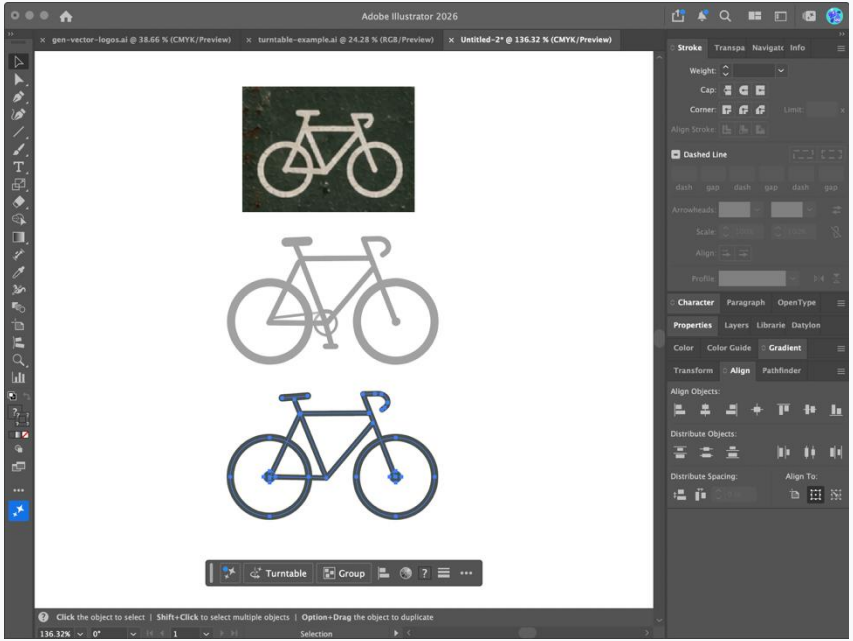


These work on a shape you made.

Exploratory, or production-ready?



Made to think with (ChatGPT Generated)

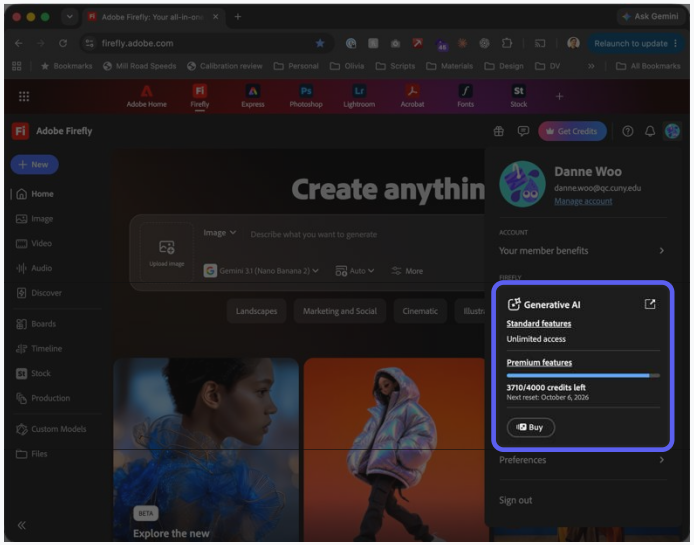


Made to hand over (Firefly Generated, Human Refined)

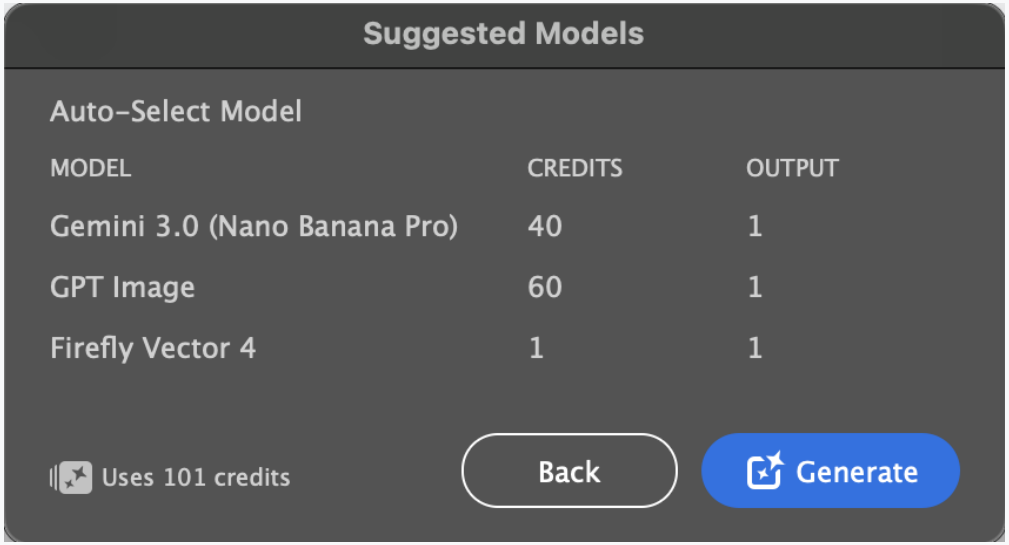
Generate widely, choose hard, redraw the winner.

What a generation costs.

YOUR MONTHLY CREDITS

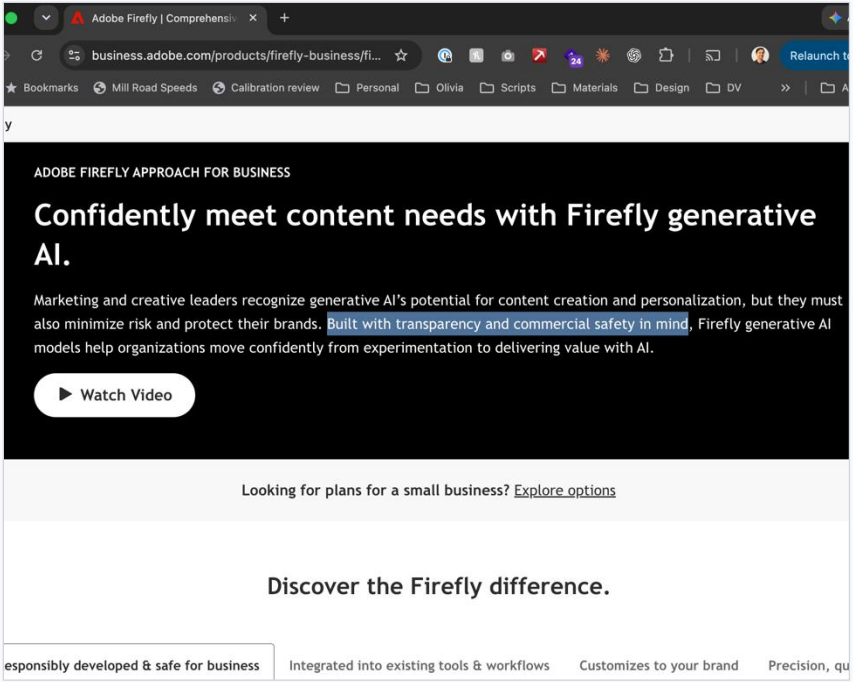


WHAT EACH MODEL COSTS

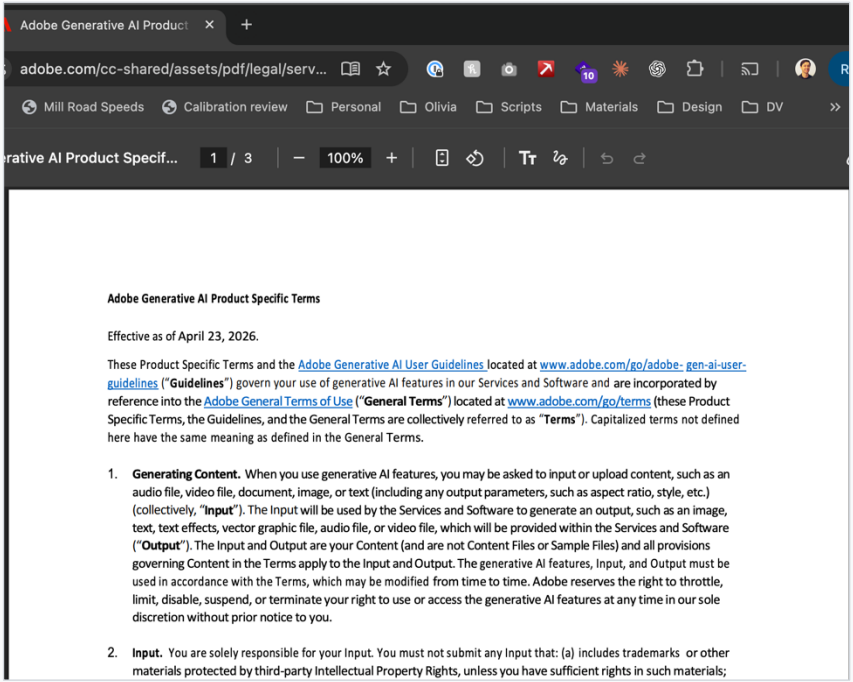


Standard features cost about one credit. Partner models and video cost many.

“Commercially safe”: read the terms.



What the page says · Adobe: Firefly AI approach



What the terms say · Adobe: Generative AI terms (PDF)

A partner model inside Firefly isn't covered by Adobe's claim.

BEYOND THE SUITE
Everything else must earn its place.

You are not obliged to use a tool because it exists, and a workflow with fewer tools in it is usually better.

One prompt turns research into a mood board.



Use the board to agree on a feel, not as final imagery.

Source: generated with ChatGPT Images 2.5, October 4, 2026, from one mood board prompt.

Feed it the research

Audience, feel and nouns from Discovery went straight into the prompt.

Name the palette

Five named colors came back as swatches you can sample.

Change one word

Swap “dawn” for “night” to get a second direction in a minute.

React, don’t publish

The scenes are invented. Treat them as reference, then shoot real photos.

ChatGPT Images 2.5: edit one thing.



Targeted edit: before and after

Targeted edits

Change one element, such as a product or line of copy. End the prompt with something like: *“Keep the person, lighting, background and logo exactly the same.”*

Multi-turn consistency

Earlier edits carry through, and each new edit builds on the last without losing quality.

Reference fidelity

Faces and products keep their identity when moved into a new setting or style.

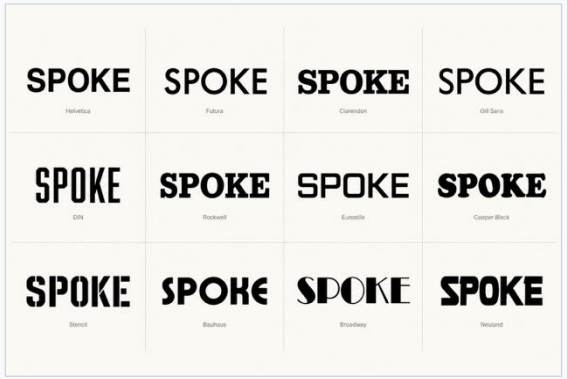
Comments and Sketch

Mark a region on the image to steer an edit, or draw a layout for ChatGPT to finish.

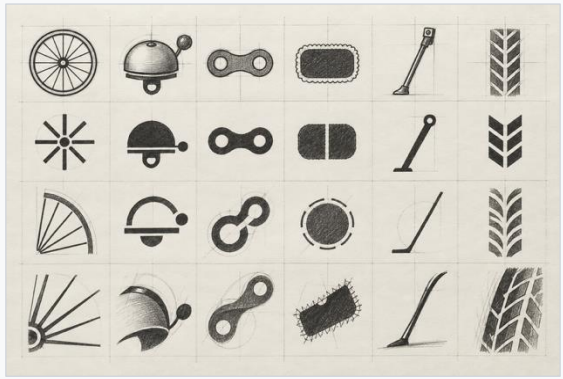
Also new: Templates, shared prompts, up to 50% faster generation, and two API models.

Source: OpenAI, “Introducing ChatGPT Images 2.5,” September 8, 2026. API models: GPT-Image-2.5 Flare and Sunburst.

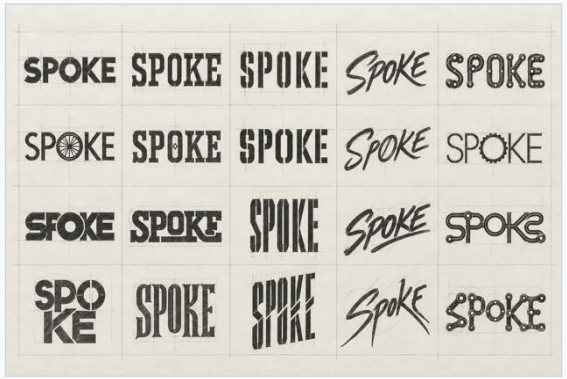
Three prompts, 56 logo directions.



Typefaces · 12 named faces



Marks · 6 nouns, safe to strange



Wordmarks · 5 styles, safe to strange

Ask for a grid

One prompt returns 12 to 24 directions to react to.

Run safe to strange

Rows from literal to experimental show the range before you commit.

Check every letter

The wordmark sheet came back with “SFOKE” and “SPOKS.”

Finish by hand

Pick two or three, then rebuild them in Text to Vector Graphic or by hand.

The model does the volume. You do the choosing and refining.

Source: generated with ChatGPT Images 2.5, October 4, 2026, from three prompts (typefaces, marks, wordmarks).

Before AI, every direction was drawn by hand.



Paul Rand's UPS studies: many sketches, one mark.

Source: Paul Rand, UPS logo studies and final mark, 1961.



Before: UPS shield, 1937



After: Rand's mark, 1961

Every idea drawn by hand

Pencil, ink and tracing paper, one sketch at a time.

Each variation redrawn

A new direction meant starting the whole drawing over on fresh paper.

Narrowed to one

Rand pared his studies down to the shield and bow.

The choosing hasn't changed

AI speeds up the volume. Picking the one still takes a trained eye.

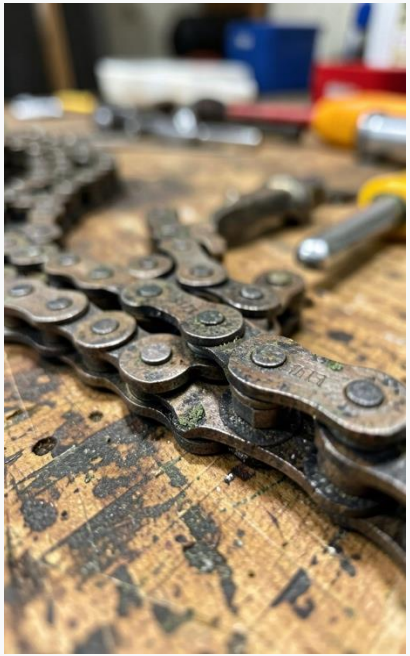
Where other tools earn their place.



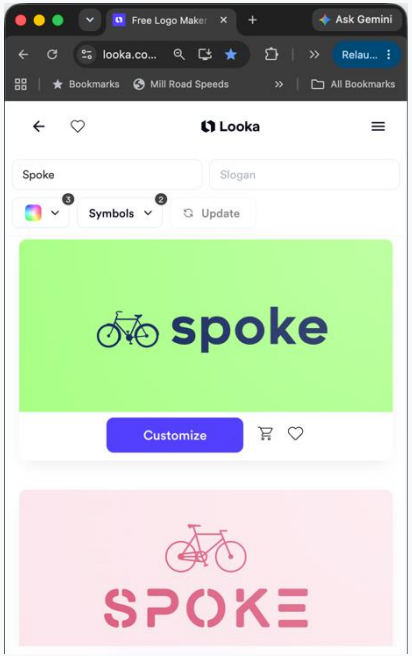
Midjourney
Mood, not assets



Ideogram
It renders type



FLUX
Runs locally



Logo generators
Templates for sale

Pick tools because the job needs them, not because they were in your feed.

LAB
One brand.
Build an identity.

Start with words. Then make it in Adobe.

Week 4 In-Class Lab

Build an identity, one step at a time

Start with words. Then make it in Adobe.

1. Open the brief you wrote in Week 2 (no brief? pick a small local business). Ask a language model for 20 names and 3 nouns that could help with a mark. Pick one of each, then check the name isn't taken in the Trademark Engine search.
2. Make a moodboard in Firefly Boards. Mix images you generate with real references you find, and keep the two groups apart.
3. Ask ChatGPT for an image of a grid of sketched marks, wordmarks and typefaces based on the nouns and research related to your company. This is for ideation only.
4. In Illustrator, use Text to Vector Graphic to make 3 different logo ideas. Pick one and clean it up by hand.
5. Choose a color palette and a typeface that go with your logo. Try Generative Recolor if you get stuck.
6. Put your logo on one real thing, like a sign, a bag or a cup, using Generative Fill in Photoshop, ChatGPT or another model of your choosing.

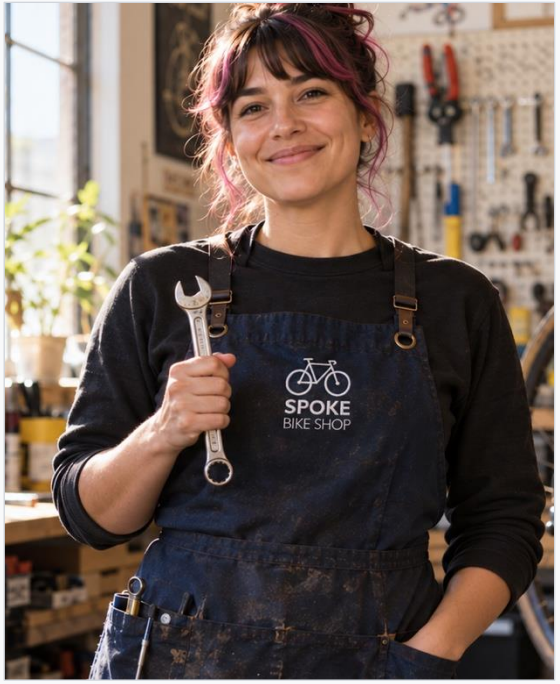
What counts as a direction.

SPOKE
BIKE SHOP

A logo

Charcoal #4F4F4F
Orange #EF4823
Concrete #8D8D8D

A palette and typeface



One mockup

If two of your three share a palette and a typeface, you have two directions.

Week 4 Homework Assignment

Three directions

Due at the start of Week 5 (Tuesday, October 13).

1. Make two more directions for the same brand, so you have three. Each one needs a logo, a palette and typeface, and one mockup.
2. Make the three really different, not the same logo in new colors. If two share a palette and a typeface, change one.
3. Put all three side by side on one Notion page. Which one would you show a client, and why?
4. Label every image on a Firefly board: exploratory (for ideas only) or production-ready (could go to a client). Add one line on why.
5. Add your in-class steps and a 150–300 word reflection to the same Notion page.

Ethics Position Paper

Take a position

Assigned today. Due at the start of Week 6.

1. Pick one ethical issue from the first four weeks. Choose a specific case: a lawsuit, a policy change, a company's terms of use, or an artist's response to AI.
2. Decide what you think about it. Argue for that position in 500 words.
3. Use sources and cite them. This is your opinion, backed up, not a summary.
4. Stuck? Start from your Week 3 grids, your theyseeyourphotos result, or the terms of use you read this week.