



Episode 96

Why is AI Controversial in Interior Design



**Jason: (00:00)**

Hello, and welcome to Designer Discussions with Jason, Miriam, and Maria. Today, we are talking about why AI is controversial in the interior design industry.

Intro: [00:10]

Welcome to the designer discussions podcast with Jason, Maria, and Mirjam. Tune in each week where we talk about marketing, PR, and business advice for design professionals. Are you wondering where to start marketing your interior design business? We are opening the Designer Discussions Marketing Studio, a monthly series of indepth actionable content to guide your marketing, PR and business development. We want to help you transform your business and elevate it to work with your dream clients. You are going to want to hear this episode. Jason is going to tell you how to get your new website paid for and include all the bells and whistles that you're going to need for 2023. Let's get out there and let's update that interior design website.

Maria: (00:47)

Hey, everybody. I don't know if you've listened to our last podcast about AI, but I love it and I'm super excited about it. I know that is not the norm across the industry. So we're going to talk about it today, how to use it, the rules behind it, and how it actually can help out your business. Let's start. I've been getting a few questions and a lot of people say, What are AI? Images. Ai images? So AI is short for Artificial Intelligence, and they are images that are created through programs like Dall-E or Midjourney. And there's even been a few more that have come out. Canva has a plugin where you can add an AI image into an existing image, or you can also use Photoshop and you can circle an area and say, add in something into that space. Ai is here and it's going to be here forever. We need to learn how to embrace it and how to use it for our businesses. First things first. Anything unknown is scary. I get it. We don't know how this is going to play out in our industry, and we don't know how it is going to affect the interior design industry. What we're going to do is talk about the parallels between AI and the interior design industry. We're going to help clarify why it seems like it's scary and why you shouldn't be scared of it. Okay? Number one, the interior design industry has not accepted AI as a valuable tool for their business. I'm going to say 90% of the content that came out immediately after it was released was that it's scary. There's shame associated with using it and that it is going to take over the interior design industry. So neither of those are actually correct. We're going to cover how and why those messages are being sent to the design industry and how they are not benefiting you.



Maria: (03:07)

There are a few people out there who like to jockey around social media and point out when an interior designer has used an AI image or someone who doesn't have an interior design degree or an interior design business is using an AI image to convey a design interior. So first things first. An AI image is actually not intellectual property. And anything that has an intellectual property value to it, the US Copyright Office will copyright it. And if you're using an AI-generated image, that image does not contain the copyright rules that an image that is like a photograph of a design space or a rendering or drawing that an interior designer is creating. We all understand that using copyrighted images is illegal and that you can be sued for it. Think about AI images as something that you can use freely, you can share freely, and that it could be something that is used to leverage in social media for your blog post and those types of areas. So this is actually beneficial and this is good. The people that are out there saying, hey, that is an AI image. This person is not an interior designer, and they're trying to pretend like they're an interior designer by using AI images. All that does is perpetuate fear. It helps accentuate that shame and fear, a scaredness associated with even considering using an AI image as an interior designer. And so I want you to know that that mentality benefits their business and does not benefit your business. Remember, AI is here to stay. It is already integrated into a lot of the programs that we love and that we use for our business. And that AI is actually going to be a good tool for us. And if someone is out there pointing out and shaming people for using those images, just ignore them. They're not actually helping you. And holding you back from using AI is not beneficial to you. And remember, I'm here for you. I want to talk to you about your business. I don't want to create a hierarchy of who's better and who's more important based on if a AI image is used. If you are delaying the use of technology, it is just going to hold you back. And any of those people that are instilling any fear in you, you need to just block out and move on from. Like I said earlier, the unknown is scary. Let's go over what the rules are. Number one, it is not an intellectual property. It does not own or contain a copyright. Any AI images that you want to use are free to use. That includes ones other people are sharing and you can reshare it and not have to worry about any copyright infringement. That is actually good and beneficial because you can create content other people can share and they don't have to fear or they don't have to be fearful of copyright infringement. Number 2, you do have to write AI-generated content. This is not a shameful thing. This is not something to be afraid of. Just like if you were promoting something, you would have to say sponsored post. That's all you have to do. You can put it further down in your social media. You can hashtag it whatever you want to do. All you have to type in is AI-generated content. And all of this is from the US Copyright Office. These are the rules for using it. It's called sighting, just like we did when we wrote research papers in school. You're just going to cite that it is an AI-generated content. None of that is scary.

**Maria: (07:07)**

None of that is concerning. None of that is going to create a burden for your design business. Okay? So don't worry about it. Don't be fearful. Don't be scared to use these images. You are totally welcome to use them. And until something changes, you're able to use these images for your business and not be afraid to use it. And even if someone wants to run around and shame people for using an AI image in the future, if you have AI-generated content anywhere in your post, they're in the wrong and that you are right. So feel free to just use the programs, try them out and not be afraid. Why is AI actually a benefit to your business? Well, I got three questions for you, and if you've ever asked yourself this, I can tell you that you've been hoping for this program to help you with your business. Number one, how do I generate more content? You know you've thought that. You know you've looked back at what all everybody's posting. And they've got a team of designers and they're cranking out five and six more projects for each one that you're producing. I get it. We're all there. So you've asked yourself, How do I create more content? This is a pretty good solution. Number two, I've been wanting to create a style guide. I hear a style guide is like the number one lead magnet for interior designers on their website and shared on Pinterest. Then you're asking yourself, Well, shoot. How do I create a really good style guide of images, of spaces where I'm not borrowing images from a copyrighted library or just resharing an Adobe image or something off of one of these creative websites where you buy stock imagery. This is an easy way to achieve that goal without infringing in copywriting. Think about it. Number three, how can I have images that I can add to my blog that will convey my message without having to spend a day resourcing and researching other people's copyrighted images and requesting permission to use them on your website? Ai is actually the answer to all three of those questions. You might be asking yourself, shoot. The AI images that I've seen have looked like cartoon images or illustrations, or I tried it back in April and it really just looked goofy and the prompts were really big and odorous. I mean, you had to say what kind lens, the camera was taking the picture and what the quality of the resolution was that you needed. Well, let me say that now it's August and it's way easier to use. And the quality of the images are 10 times better. And you don't have to know those crazy prompts. You don't have to say any of those things. How else can you use it besides creating that style guide, besides having it in your blog? You can also use it for other stuff. There's a couple of programs out there that will generate 20 headshots for you if you plug in a photograph of your face. That's an easy thing. You can add in branded imagery for your design business. You could just ask it, Can you create pictures of Florals with peonies and this thing? And then you could take that image, put it in Canva, background, remove it. You could have objects and things associated with your business that are exclusive to you and are high quality images. It would be like creating a branding photoshoot for yourself without having to spend \$5,000 or \$6,000. Remember, this is a quick generating tool.



Maria: (11:07)

The program is fast. It's a little bit of a learning curve. You have to type in a prompt, forward slash, imagine, and then it'll give you the box and then you type in, I'm looking for a single gold base or a gold urn with handles and peonies in it in the shade of pinks. And I'd like it to have a blue background and then, boom, it's done. Think about how you could start implementing these things for your business in a way that's actually fun and easy to do. A lot of the images that you'll see online are actually blended design concepts like Safari Game Room or Gothic Cathedral Kitchen. You can add different design styles. You could say I want Art Deco space with a round window with whatever color sofas. And it'll just generate something. It's not going to be accurate, so that's one of the drawbacks of the use of the program. I have a couple more. But those are benefits to your design business. You got to look at it from, Yay, this is fun to use, but gosh, Dogit, it's not going to actually take over my job. All of the drawbacks are benefits to you. Number one, it's not accurate. Number two, it currently doesn't allow modifications upon previous images. If I was to ask it to draw something for me, I can't ask it to fix stuff. You would have to put it into Photoshop and do all that work yourself. You can't have it fixed. Take out that second kitchen sink, remove the island that is 18 inches away from the perimeter of the kitchen in this drawing. You can't ask it. You can't build upon an image. You can't say, Hey, I like this image, and I'd love for you to show it to me in a blue cabinet, a white cabinet, a gray cabinet, and a black cabinet. You can't do those things, but you could do them in Photoshop or even probably Canva at this point. I'm not 100 % sure, but their AI beta integration is pretty easy to use and it can do a lot of stuff. Then the third thing is you don't have control over what it's going to produce. Once again, it is a drawback. If you're thinking you're going to have complete and total control over the images it's going to create, but it is a benefit to your design business that you don't have total control over the images it's going to create. They're hypothetical, they're imagined. And so all of those things can help your business by creating these images that help with branding or create a style guide, all those things that are just playful and fun to integrate into social media content. All of those things you can do with this program, but you're never going to get that perfect certain sofa with the French marble surround, and you're not going to get that. You're not going to get those beautiful blue and white Peruvian tiles and the backslash of your kitchen. Those things aren't going to show up, but you could probably modify the images yourself to integrate the things that are really important to you or fix some of the things that are off to create a more realistic image. And even then, with you making those modifications, I don't know if it would still be intellectual property. I do think that those images would probably get reshared because you would have to disclose that it is AI-generated content. Okay. So what are some of the benefits to your business besides its drawbacks? Well, first, the images are created so quickly you can be on there for 30 minutes and create 10 images.

**Maria: (15:07)**

So if you thought that it's something that you wouldn't have time to do, I think actually you don't have time not to do it. I think that you need the pins. I think you need the blog post content. I think you need some interactive carousels and your social media to help you just interact with your clientele. Do you like this or that? Do you like this or do you like that? Those are the things that you could put into your stories. And people would find it fun to interact with you and you'd be getting audience feedback on what they want to see more of. Are you scared of adding more color or do you still like the all white look? You could have one image that has a use of color and one that's all white. And this is a this and that thing that you all used to see on social media a long time ago. But now those things have fallen by the wayside because nobody wants to deal with copyright issues and everybody was just stealing Pinterest pins and stealing images from other designers and using those for those this and that. Once again, those terrible cartoon illustrations that came right off the first iteration of AI are no longer there. You're getting things that look a little bit more photorealistic. The prompts are no longer long. It's rather easy to use and pretty user friendly. I think now is the time if you haven't thought about trying it to try it. I know you guys are online on Sundays because that's when all the downloads for my software program come through. You interior designers love seeking new software and playing around with it on Sundays days. So this is a Sunday thing. You can have your laptop out, you can be watching TV and you can play around with it and spend a few minutes just seeing what it is that it can create. And in that, start looking at ways that you can use it in your business and be really open minded about it because all you have to do is include that note just like this is a sponsored ad would be if you are putting together an advertisement for a brand partnership. So you all are already familiar with all of this stuff and you can use these images. And you can also reshare other people's AI images, which is also a benefit to your business. All right, so get out there, look at these AI programs like Dolly. I like Midjourney because you can already see what other people are creating and how to build upon that. And just look at it from a perspective of what could you share with your audience that would entertain them and educate them through these programs? Because this is a language and this is a language of design and a language of visuals that can help your business and can be that additional social media content and can be those additional images that you want to share with your audience. All right. Well, thank you for joining us to learn about why AI is controversial and how it actually can help out your interior design business. And we hope to see you in two weeks whenever we have our next episode. We are super excited to announce that the Marketing Studio is open. We are providing simple and easy to use resources to help keep your marketing, PR, and client communication the best that it can be. Go to designerdiscussions.com/marketingstudio to get started.

**Maria: (19:07)**

We hope you've enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions and all of the helpful information. Subscribe to our podcast, leave us a review and share it with your friends. We look forward to having you back next week. For more information on the podcast and the marketing studio, visit designordiscussions.com and follow us on social media.





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