Digital Disruptions Newsletter

Point Of View

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What We've Learned From Designing Alongside AI

From team brainstorming to rapid prototyping, we explore the creative potential of AI—without losing the human touch.

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AI has quickly become the default in some of our workflows, from traditional search to more in-depth research. But are we using it intentionally, or just reacting to whichever tool is trending on our LinkedIn feeds?

Before diving in, **it's worth distinguishing traditional AI from Generative AI**. While traditional AI powers features like predictive text, Gen AI brings new capabilities, like generating design variations or synthetic insights, **pushing designers to move beyond automation into co-creating with Gen AI.**

Using AI without a clear strategy can reinforce the prediction that autonomous AI tools may one day replace design expertise. Instead, we advocate being more intentional on how to apply AI, ensuring it supports and extends designers' capabilities rather than substituting them.

The design team at Digital Disruptions has developed an AI-powered approach that aligns with its internal workflows and innovation processes. We explain below how we put that thinking into practice across three key areas: **user research, partner ideation, and user-facing outputs.**

User Research

In our experience conducting qualitative design research in over a dozen countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, gathering and analyzing insights has been a lengthy and labor-intensive process. It requires multiple rounds of user interviews, interview transcription, synthesis, pattern recognition, and insight generation. **AI is helping identify themes faster, freeing researchers to focus on interpretation rather than transcription.**

Our Experience Using Dovetail

We applied this AI-enhanced approach while working with a regional credit start-up in Latin America that wanted to optimize its loan application process for underserved customers.

For the research phase, the team conducted 20 one-on-one, in-person, in-depth interviews (IDIs) with local micro-entrepreneurs to uncover barriers and pain points in their credit application journey. Dovetail's AI-powered tools helped us:

- Transcribe 40+ hours of Spanish audio interview recordings, and provide summaries in English.

- Filter and organize key themes using its "intelligent clustering" inside canvas views. (While the AI did surface potential patterns, we still had to manually refine and arrange the information to ensure deeper contextual understanding.)

This **balance between AI-assisted pattern recognition and human interpretation** allowed us to map pain points and behavioral insights that directly informed UX and service design improvements. Furthermore, it significantly cut down synthesis time from weeks to days, enabling faster iterations and better alignment with business goals.
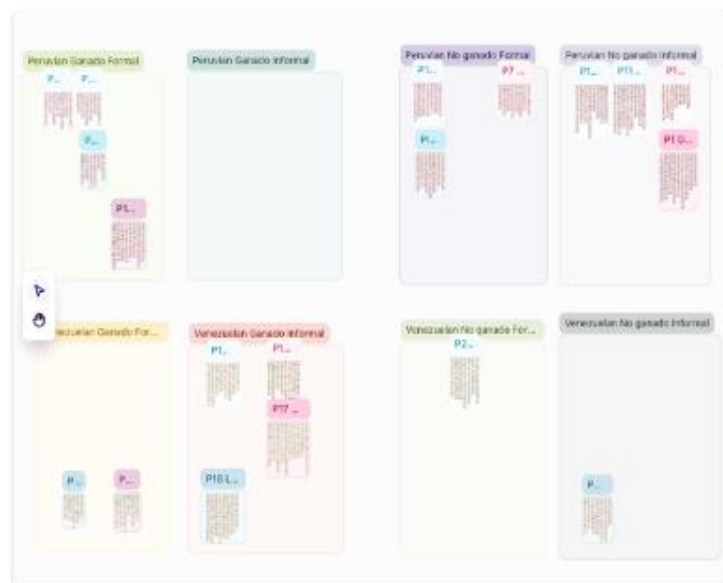
Excerpts of transcripts in Dovetail from various participants clustered along key patterns

Partner Collaboration and Ideation

For a recent remittances project with a large bank, we used ChatGPT as a "parallel participant" during ideation sessions. For each of eight features we were designing, we crafted "How Might We" questions based on prior research, and prompted the AI for ideas. As part of our two-week design sprint process, we then kicked-off an idea generation session using Miro with the client team using the same prompt. To avoid bias, ChatGPT's responses were only revealed after the live session concluded, and only Digital Disruptions' lead facilitator was aware of the answers.

While the AI didn't replace human insights, it added a valuable layer: at times aligning with participant ideas, and in other cases offering unexpected concepts. In fact, our view is that **the tendency of Gen AI's often maligned "hallucinations" might well be an advantage in an idea generation setting**, as it tends to introduce unconventional and non-linear solutions. Moreover, unlike ChatGPT, newer tools like Cove AI support real-time, collaborative ideation, hinting at what's next for AI-enhanced brainstorming.

Miro board of a brainstorming session, with ChatGPT ideas revealed after Digital Disruptions and the client team generated their own ideas

User-Facing Outputs

In addition to streamlining research, Gen AI has become a powerful tool in the creation of user-facing outputs, such as marketing collateral, UI elements, and product prototypes. **By integrating Gen AI into the design workflow, teams can rapidly generate and iterate on content while maintaining creative control.**

Our Experience Using VEED and Canva

During the same bank remittances project, a key feature Digital Disruptions had to build was a marketing campaign with a banking professional explaining the new product. In order to validate messaging, visuals, and channel medium, we decided to craft a high-fidelity prototype using an avatar that would convey the look and feel to our client in a more concrete manner.

Used in combination, the two tools we selected, **VEED and Canva**, allowed us to rapidly streamline content creation without requiring highly technical expertise:

- VEED's Gen AI-generated avatars allowed for regional accents and diverse personas of the campaign script we developed, enhancing relatability for different segments;
- Canva enabled us to effortlessly edit videos and create dynamic animations in various formats. (Note that while these particular functionalities are not necessarily AI-powered, Canva does integrate AI in its multiple tools.)
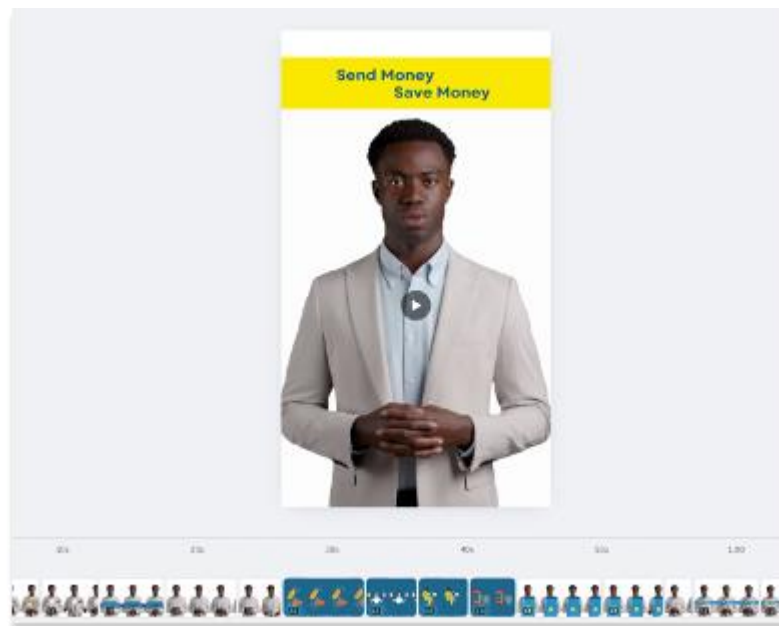
Prototype of a social media campaign using AI-generated avatar

Looking Ahead: AI in Design, and Designing for AI

As AI evolves, we're keeping an eye out on two trends. The first is the rise of **vibe coding**, an emerging approach where anyone can use AI-generated code to prototype logic, flow, and behavior. While the jury is still out on its effectiveness, it holds promise for enabling high-fidelity, developer-light prototyping.

The second trend we're noticing is **the importance of UX on engagement of AI tools themselves**. From conversational tools such as ChatGPT to collaborative platforms like Cove AI, and newer models like Deepseek that show their step-by-step "thinking out loud", intuitive interfaces will be critical to how users interact with Gen AI.

In our next Point-of-View newsletter, we'll discuss how **AI is turbocharging the fintech business model**. In the meantime, if you have any comments or want to explore how we can support your broader innovation efforts, please contact us.

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