



AI Part 3 – AI tools for image creation

In this third week of the Management Development Programme, delivered by **Evan Mangan** on behalf of the **Local Enterprise Office South Cork**, the focus shifted to the creative side of artificial intelligence.

The session provided a comprehensive overview of how businesses can use AI to **create, edit, and manipulate images** for marketing purposes, covering a range of tools from free models to professional-grade software.

Overview of AI Image Creation Tools

Evan introduced several tools, comparing their effectiveness, speed, and cost for business use. He explained that AI allows for the creation of specific imagery that stock photo websites might lack, such as a "Dachshund on a purple lilo," and clarified that there are currently no copyright issues preventing legal use of these images.

- **ChatGPT vs Gemini (Nano Banana):** Evan compared these two popular tools by using identical prompts. He noted that **Gemini** (originally code-named Nano Banana) is roughly twice as fast as ChatGPT and offers **unlimited free image generation**, whereas the free version of ChatGPT limits users to three images per day.
- **Midjourney:** Widely considered the highest quality tool, Midjourney is a paid service (\$10/month). Evan highlighted its advanced "aesthetic" settings, including **stylization** (for a professional/glamorous look), **weirdness** (for unusual shots), and **variety** (to get diverse results from one prompt).
- **OpenArt.ai:** This tool acts as an **aggregator**, pulling in various models like Flux and Sea Dream into one interface. Evan found it particularly useful for testing different "looks" without signing up for multiple services.
- **Grok (by xAI):** Evan pointed out that Elon Musk's AI, Grok, has recently become competitive, offering **free image and video generation** with a high volume of variants per prompt.

Creating a Consistent Character

One of the most powerful marketing applications Evan discussed was the creation of a **consistent character**. This allows a business to use the same person—whether it is the business owner, a colleague, or a non-existent AI person—across all marketing materials without the need for multiple photoshoots.

The Process in OpenArt:

1. **Photography:** Evan advised taking 10 to 20 photos of the subject from various angles and distances.
2. **Training the AI:** These photos are uploaded to OpenArt to "train" the model on the person's features.
3. **Prompting:** Using a specific command (e.g., "@Harvey"), the user can then place that character in any scenario, such as a Roman gladiator or a Viking on a ship.
4. **Settings:** Evan explained that users must balance "prompt adherence" (how closely the AI follows the description) and "character weight" (how much it looks like the person) to get natural results.

Image Manipulation with Gemini (Nano Banana)

Evan demonstrated that AI is not just for creating images from scratch but also for **sophisticated editing** through simple descriptions.

- **Product Placement:** Evan showed how to take a photo of a simple product, like a Nutri-Grain bar, and ask the AI to place it in a "lifestyle photography" setting, such as a breakfast table with fruit and linen.
- **Object and Person Removal:** He demonstrated removing a jogger from a background or erasing all tourists from a photo of a Dublin landmark simply by typing the command.
- **Atmospheric Changes:** Evan changed the weather in a photo to a blizzard and adjusted lighting from midday to sunset or sunrise.
- **Fashion and Retail Edits:** He showed how to change a dress colour from red to black or ask the AI to show the same model from a different side-angle view.

Canva AI and Background Removal

Evan addressed the 75% of participants who already use **Canva**. He explained that while Canva has its own AI hub (Magic Studio), he believed it had fallen slightly behind tools like Gemini for complex image manipulation.

However, he highlighted the **Background Remover** as a vital tool. For those without the paid version of Canva, Evan recommended the website **remove.bg** as a free alternative to create

transparent images before layering them onto new backgrounds. Evan also showed the **Magic Eraser** and **Background Generator** in Canva, which allow users to replace backgrounds with descriptions like "white marble floor" for product shots.

Nano Banana Pro vs. Free

For more advanced users, Evan explored **Gemini Pro** (\$18.99/month), which offers significantly more power.

- **Creative Text:** Pro can generate accurate and highly creative text, such as words made of "knitting needles and wool" or "chopped firewood".
- **Infographics:** Evan demonstrated how Pro could read a 4-page document and automatically convert the data into a visually appealing infographic with a specific colour scheme.
- **Translation:** Pro can take an image with text and translate the content into different languages (like Polish or Chinese) while maintaining the original design.

Ethics and the EU AI Act

Evan dedicated time to discussing the **EU AI Act** and the importance of **integrity** in marketing. He noted that the goal of the Act is to prevent citizens from being deceived.

- **When to Declare:** Evan said that minor edits (like changing a dress colour) generally do not need a disclaimer. However, if an image features a person who does not exist or a significant atmospheric change that could mislead, it should be labelled as "**AI-generated**" or "**AI-assisted**".
- **Trust:** He emphasised that being honest with customers builds long-term trust and that most people welcome transparency regarding AI use.

Participant Action Point List

- **Explore Free Creation Tools:** Start by using **Gemini (Nano Banana)** and **Grok** to practice generating images from scratch. Compare the variants provided to see which fits your brand's "look".
- **Test Background Removal:** If you have product photos, use **remove.bg** or the **Canva BG Remover** to isolate your product and place it on a clean, professional background like "white marble".
- **Experiment with Edits:** Take an existing marketing photo and upload it to Gemini. Practice commands like "change the weather to a sunny day" or "remove the car from the background" to clean up your imagery.
- **Develop a Consistent Character:** If your brand relies on a specific spokesperson, take 20 photos of them from different angles and try building a character profile in **OpenArt**.
- **Review Ethics:** Check your current AI-generated content. If it features non-existent people or significantly altered realities, add a small disclaimer or hashtag like **#AIassisted** to maintain customer trust.
- **Prepare for Week 4:** Download any images you are happy with, as the next session will cover turning these static images into **marketing videos** using tools like Grok.

This was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues 😊