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FROM IMAGOTYPE TO ISOTYPE
Transformation of visual identity in the digital algorithmic ecosystem

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ABSTRACT
The evolution of brand visual identity, increasingly managed within the context of social media, reveals a progressive synthesis from the imagotype toward the isotype as a response to the technical, aesthetic, and algorithmic conditions of the digital graphic ecosystem. In this scenario, the isotype emerges as a central visual unit, capable of operating within corporate contexts that rely on highly technified creative processes. Overall, this study contributes to a reassessment of the guiding principles of contemporary corporate communication, alongside brand design practices on digital platforms governed by algorithmic processes (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

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1. Introduction: Brand Image

Algorithms have become the primary source language underpinning operational requirements associated with cognitive routines shaped by analytical processes whose extraordinary complexity derives mainly from quantitative factors and methods. Like other communicative forms, images—across their various variants and iconographic techniques—incorporate the creative and procedural advances characteristic of artificial intelligence (AI) systems. The variables that determine nuances of space, form, and color in visual composition are thus governed by algorithmic processes that generate them, resulting in compositions that originate from a textual code or *prompt* carefully adjusted through grammatical precision.

A century before this still "recent" digital incursion, disciplines of clear graphic imprint, such as brand image design—situated midway between artistic practice and corporate communication—found in figures like Peter Behrens, the rationale, the method, and indeed the aesthetic foundation of the symbolism that articulated corporate personality and the quality of its products. In 1900, under Behrens' guidance, the renowned German electrical company Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG) adopted a modernist, all-capitals typeface for its corporate visual identity, which was substantially modified in 1908 and 1912 with the inclusion of new serif characters. Two decades later, "the most famous designers would not explore new concepts, but new forms. Herbert Bayer is a clear example of concern for form, and of belief in the principle of unity and simplicity as a guarantee of beauty and functionality" (Frascara, 2002, p. 19).

In the context of the Bauhaus, both Bayer and other great contemporary masters created typefaces with simple, economical, and coherent anatomy, which at times sacrificed the most natural legibility—achieved, practically, by the mid-twentieth century thanks to advances in design that, in other communicative domains, were carried out by authors of the stature of David Ogilvy. Synchronous with this, in "the modernist era of graphic design," George Bokhua (2022, p. 24) notes, "the goal of logo design was to simplify form to achieve its most functional appearance. Rational solutions were favored over expressive ones."

In the vein of Behrens, with the first half of the twentieth century having passed—an era in which Alan Turing authored "the first modern paper addressing the possibility of mechanizing intelligence in a human-like manner" (Nilsson, 2004, p. 8)—other design scholars, such as the Frenchman Raymond Loewy and the American Paul Rand, contributed to the corporate creative endeavor by producing exemplary graphic models of brand identity during a period in which the various tiers it would assume, based on compositional attributes, were still being defined. Text and image, whether isolated or combined, would shortly thereafter form the nomenclature of the idiosyncratic taxonomy of brands, expressed in the forms of logotype, isotype, isologo, and imagotype.

Thus, while Rand was outlining, in the mid-1950s, the fully technological profile of IBM's typefaces—"a very illustrative example of visual identity," according to Tony Allen and John Simmons (Brujó et al., 2010, p. 143)—and the French designer Loewy was redesigning in 1971 the iconic Shell logo, originally created by Marcus Samuel (1891), in Spain, Alberto Corazón masterfully integrated text, geometry, and nature in the Paradores de Turismo isologo, dated 1985, and J. María Cruz Novillo reinterpreted the Repsol imagotype, created by Wolff Olins in 1988, depicting the orange sun on the horizon reflected in red over a blue band representing the sea. Regarding the Shell emblem, Lisa Silver (2001, p. 30) observes that "since its appearance in the early 1900s, this logo has become increasingly stylized, reflecting the trend toward simplicity in graphic design over recent decades." Indeed, Silver continues, "it has become so recognizable that it often appears without the company name to identify it" (p. 30), thus fulfilling the specific requirements of the isotype.

A genealogy and categorization that has proven dynamic since then, concretizing the graphic and argumentative standards of brand image through procedures, tools, and a creative rhetoric, which today find an interesting catalyst in AI generative routines aimed at "creating new content or data based on the learning data used" (Muñoz, 2024, p. 65). The autonomy and creative principles of authors such as those previously cited have been key in establishing the procedural and stylistic foundations that currently find in AI applications a powerful tool, resolving the creation of all that symbolism which translates into a precise visual impact representing the company's mission, vision, and values, as well as the functional and emotional qualities of its products. Not surprisingly, texts in Roman characters, with sans-serif variants or script fonts, along with generally flat—but sometimes pictorial—color schemes, and pronounced formal geometry, have detailed the items and corresponding systematization

processes that generative AI now implements, producing "new data similar to an existing dataset, such as images, music, and text" (Muñoz, 2024, p. 65). Its algorithms have been "trained" with futuristic and Helvetica typefaces, additive and subtractive color palettes, and both regular and asymmetrical shapes, providing a syntax that demands an unavoidable study of the constitutive values of the entity, of the brand, primarily in terms of branding and naming: "logos and symbols, as well as names, awaken deep and sometimes conflicting emotions" (Olins, 2009, p. 87). Frank Memelsdorff (2004) reveals that "a product can exist without a symbol, but without a brand you cannot name it, you cannot talk about it" (p. 86).

AI, Santiago Tejedor (2023, p. 24) states, "has become a growing field that has found in communication a setting in which to design and promote various initiatives." The present research explores the graphic territory that new technologies, driven in this instance by AI, unfold around the communicative disciplines. Specifically, it focuses on the space occupied by the particular assets of corporate visual identity, constituted by "its expressive symbolism" (Losada, 1998, p. 127) and here mediated by the graphic standards representative of a brand mentioned in previous paragraphs, but concentrating on the iconographic and communicative, syntactic, and semantic attributes claimed by the isotype, derived from a broader corporate graphic model, such as the imagotype.

As Fernando Galindo (2004) notes, in this digital habitat, "an excellent range of possibilities opens up to complement the communication strategies of companies and institutions through the development, from within the organization itself, of corporate audiovisual products" (p. 187).

1.1. Imagotype and Isotype: Design and Communication Paradigms

Today, conceiving corporate visual identity involves seeing it as more than a mere sketch: it is, in essence, a complex system of iconic, linguistic, and chromatic signs that allows organizations not only to differentiate but also to achieve a coherent symbolic space (Costa, 2004; Wheeler, 2018). From a semiotic perspective, these graphic elements act as mediators, connecting what the company is (its identity) with what the public perceives (its image), shaping values and promises through visual forms (Floch, 1993).

According to Galindo (2004, p. 142), "graphics become a major assistant to the corporate message, as they allow the transmission and implementation of the company's or institution's visual identity among the organization's audiences." The author cites M. H. Westphalen (1993), who attributed to corporate visual identity the functions of "identification, differentiation, impact, and affiliation" (p. 173), affirming its validity within graphic design.

The imagotype, as a combination of symbol and typography, has been the model for ensuring that a message is clear and memorable over time. However, with the rise of information and communication technologies, a paradigm shift has occurred. The way users access media today has transformed reading and perception conditions, testing traditional graphic identity frameworks and paving the way for the formal reduction dictated by the isotype.

The primary difference is functional in nature. Thus, while the imagotype relies on the relationship between text and image, the isotype moves toward abstraction by dispensing with words and entrusting the entire weight of meaning to an autonomous visual sign (Costa, 2011). This configuration entails not only an aesthetic change but also a firm communication strategy. The imagotype offers explicit and easily readable personalization, whereas the isotype, to be correctly interpreted, requires the viewer to possess a certain degree of familiarity or prior relationship with the brand. The isotype, understood on the one hand as a pictorial sign, becomes, as Bokhua (2022) explains, "an icon endowed with meaning as the primary identifier of the brand" (p. 28), and, on the other hand, as an abstract sign, "offers an undefined and subjective, yet suggestive, idea of the brand" (p. 35).

Silver (2001) reveals that "most logos tend to simplify their design over time" (p. 36), and along these same lines one might argue for an acceleration toward visual synthesis stemming from this historical conception that considers the transition from imagotype to isotype as an indicator of communicational maturity. Traditionally, only brands with an established positioning possessed the capacity to dispense with their verbal denomination without compromising recognition (Kapferer, 2012). However, in the contemporary digital ecosystem, "where major changes have taken place in the field of brands, placing them under the scrutiny of the entire world" (Olins, 2009, p. 6), this logic has undergone a structural reconfiguration. As K. Müller (2023) maintains, the saturation of stimuli—or "attention economy"—on mobile devices compels organizations toward extreme simplification. Under these circumstances, the

isotype ceases to be merely a symbol of prestige and becomes instead a tool of technical survival, indispensable for ensuring legibility within reduced interface dimensions.

At present, a phenomenon of "dematerialization" of the verbal component can be observed. A significant body of scholarship refers to the adaptive design of graphic brands as one of the most prominent trends in the digital strategy of contemporary corporate visual identity. The isotype adapts to new digital environments and consolidates itself as a salient graphic indicator. Within this paradigm, identifiers substantially modify their features in order to adjust to the sizes and resolutions of different screens and mobile devices, thereby enhancing legibility (Suárez-Carballo et al., 2020). Supported by this graphic and communicational narrative—where new technologies emerge both as instrument and purpose in the communication of brand values—generative AI has propelled this synthesis toward advanced levels of abstraction.

At this point, Robert Kozinets (2022) clarifies that contemporary branding has entered an algorithmic phase in which digital platforms and their technological assemblages assess the visibility, circulation, and interpretation of brands. Consequently, the value of visual identity is no longer defined exclusively by human memorability, but by its capacity to operate effectively within contexts governed by automated systems, thereby redefining the criteria of isotype effectiveness in complex digital environments characteristic of Web 4.0.

1.2. Digital Visual Ecosystem and Algorithmic Logic

"The world is changing. Companies are changing. You are changing. Redesigning is changing; it means siding with change" (Memelsdorff, 2024, pp. 14–15). In an extraordinarily accelerated era, which, according to Andy Hobsbawm, involves a "world of digital information that generates incessant and vertiginous change" (Brujó et al., 2010, p. 245), where "we all produce data derived from our digital activities, for example, when we use social media or when we purchase products online" (Coeckelbergh, 2021, p. 79), it is no longer possible to understand brand design without analyzing its sphere of action—specifically, digital platforms. These interactive spaces, particularly social networks, configure a visual ecosystem governed by algorithms that not only distribute content but also hierarchize it according to speed of consumption and adaptability to diverse formats (Manovich, 2020). Within this logic, the effectiveness of visual identity depends not strictly on its aesthetic attributes, but also on its algorithmic performance.

Designing the graphic and communicative structure that underpins a brand's idiosyncrasy now entails accepting the conditions imposed by technology. Among these are extreme legibility on diminutive screens, adaptability to circular or square frames, and, above all, the capacity to be recognized within a fraction of a second as users scroll (Lupton, 2017). These technological demands imply that the iconic sign—the isotype—assumes greater prominence, displacing complex logotype models of typographic anatomy, which tend to dissipate in saturated environments where they lose visual distinctiveness and connotative force.

As a strategy of visual communication, the trend toward graphic synthesis does not respond merely to an aesthetic preference, but to a strategic reaction to an increasingly restrictive attention economy (Citton, 2014). In this regard, J. Stern (2023) argues that, in the face of stimulus saturation, the isotype functions as a "cognitive shortcut." By reducing visual noise, the brand ensures transversal and efficient identification, preserving its integrity across wearable devices (such as smartwatches) as well as large-format digital media.

Indeed, analyses of recent rebranding interventions reveal a systematic inclination toward the elimination of ornamental details, the rejection of complex typefaces, and the simplification of compositions, prioritizing instead pure geometric forms and scalable monochromes (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Mollerup, 2013). This process, in a certain minimalist sense, has evolved toward what L. Ortega-Ruiz (2024) terms "visual elasticity." For this author, successful identities are those whose symbols possess the capacity to animate and respond to user behavior, adapting to tactile and gestural interfaces without sacrificing their institutional essence. As Wally Olins (2009) affirms, "symbols are immensely powerful. They act as visual triggers that operate much faster and more effectively than words in embedding ideas in the mind" (p. 30).

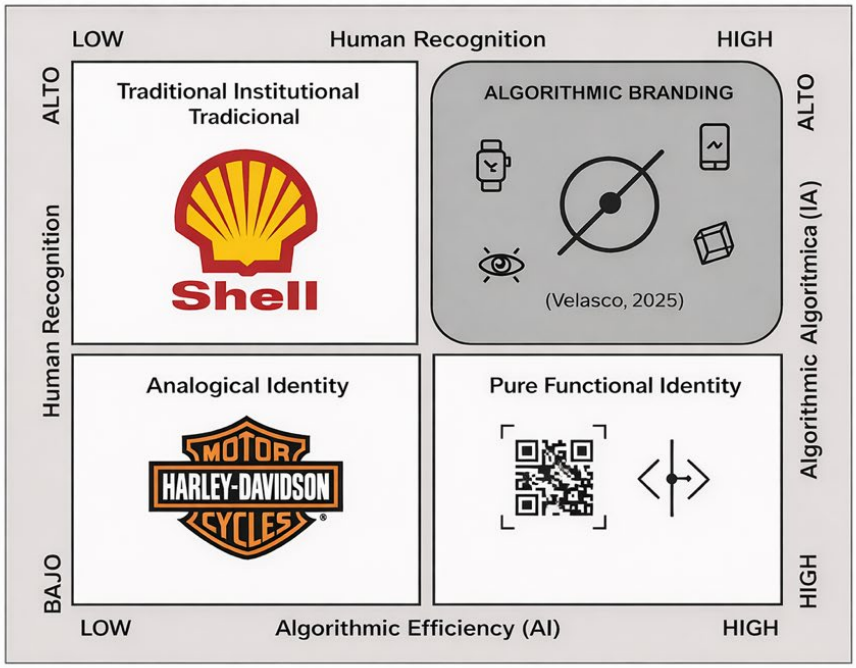
Digital evolution reaches a turning point with the incorporation of AI into methods of visual content arbitration. Various studies indicate that contemporary branding is beginning to operate under algorithmic and predictive logics in which graphic synthesis, from a formal standpoint, seeks not only

optimization for human perception but also affinity with automated systems of visual classification. Hence, a functional isotype is one that can be immediately processed, categorized, and associated by algorithms with specific symbolic and emotional values. In this way, the growing formal simplification that characterizes corporate visual identity in the transition from imagotype toward particular configurations of the isotype does not imply any diminishment of communicative value; rather, it constitutes a reconfiguration of the visual system aimed at interacting effectively with the logic of data, platforms, and contemporary algorithmic environments (Deryl et al., 2023).

Along these same lines and moving toward an analysis of brand performance within the contemporary digital ecosystem, a matrix (Figure 1) is presented below. It articulates two fundamental axes grounded in the agent and the method—that is, in human recognition and algorithmic efficiency. This representation allows us to observe how brands are positioned according to their visual identity, their degree of automation, and their relationship with artificial intelligence systems.

The matrix is structured around two axes: the vertical axis represents the level of human recognition, while the horizontal axis indicates the degree of algorithmic efficiency. Their intersections generate four quadrants corresponding to different types of brand identity: traditional institutional identity, analog identity, pure functional identity, and algorithmic branding. Each quadrant illustrates a distinct systematic approach to brand construction and management within the aforementioned digital habitat, revealing the transition from traditional models centered on human perception toward strategies increasingly shaped by algorithmic procedures and AI.

Figure 1. Brand performance matrix in the digital ecosystem.



Source: Authors, 2026.

Ultimately, the matrix functions not only as a descriptive tool, but also as a conceptual interpretation that enables reflection on the transformations of brand identity within digital contexts.

2. Objectives: Tradition and Innovation

"Identity accompanies all taxonomic aspects of brands, such as the emblem or logotype, icons, typefaces, and colors. But it also includes the spirit, atmosphere, and perception that the product generates in the consumer" (Mono, 2006, p. 8). Within this framework, the analysis of brand categories (logotype, isotype, isologo, and imagotype) and the corresponding creative graphic variables (form, color, and text) that constitute the representative standards of the brand requires a procedural and theoretical review whose timeline is situated—at its leftmost end—in the earliest origins of the communicative discipline concerned with corporate visual identity.

While the theoretical and methodological erudition surrounding this field—undoubtedly fostered by its leading scholars—is widely acknowledged, at the opposite end, in today's technological era shaped by the dynamics imposed by AI, the production of brand iconography is, in many cases, entrusted to ideation and conceptualization articulated through prompts and materialized by algorithms that generate visual renders using the graphic engines embedded in AI tools. For this reason, the overarching aim of this research is to examine this creative transition—almost a graphic interpolation—that extends from tradition to the digital consequence of the corporate resource.

Furthermore, the specific objectives are primarily focused on:

Analyzing the process and outcomes that trigger the formal, chromatic, and typographic synthesis evolving from the graphic structure of the imagotype to its transformation into an isotype, adapted to the corporate profile of the entity within social media environments.

Verifying the isotype as a graphic asset fully aligned with the brand's corporate culture, preserving intact the constitutive values of the entity it represents, following the formal synthesis it undergoes from its genesis as an imagotype.

Supervising the creative process mediated by AI tools, in order to explore and identify a possible standardization of results that may occasionally operate negatively—not only in creative terms, but also in relation to the necessary graphic and communicative characterization that distinguishes each corporate visual identity from its counterparts.

3. Methodology: AI-Driven Branding

The methodological framework of this study involves a series of interventions grounded in a case-study approach, considering that its essence resides in the portfolio of graphic assets that constitute corporate visual identity. As R. E. Stake (2007, p. 89) observes, "the human construction of knowledge appears to begin with the sensory experience of external stimuli." Such sensory experience emerges from any corporate graphic model, transcribed into "pictorial signs, [which] are potent brand identifiers and represent its essence either directly or metaphorically" (Bokhua, 2022, p. 28).

The research considers the following operations:

- Compilation of a comparative table comprising 30 brands drawn from the Brand Finance Global 500 ranking (2025) that underwent changes in their corporate visual identity between 2016 and 2020.
- Selection of two representative brands from this table—specifically, Mastercard and Microsoft—to examine the evolution of their corporate visual identity, focusing on the transition from imagotype to isotype as reflected in their respective social media profiles.
- As Memelsdorff (2004) states, "a methodology, however good, does not design, but it can save time and prevent errors" (pp. 64–65). Following this assertion, a prompt will be drafted concerning the two selected brands, instructing the design of an isotype across three AI platforms: ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot. The outputs will produce a series of corporate iconographies for Mastercard and Microsoft, which will be transcribed into a taxonomy of items categorized according to the creative variables of form, color, and composition.
- Finally, in line with this analytical approach, a third brand, created by one of the authors, will be introduced. The same prompt will be applied, and the AI tools will be instructed to synthesize the brand graphic into an isotype. This intervention allows for an expanded comparative scope, providing an explicitly illustrated extension of the present study.

4. Results: Toward a Corporate Formal Synthesis

Allen and Simmons argue that "the visual identities of early twenty-first-century digital businesses—Facebook, iTunes, YouTube, Google, Bebo, Flickr, among others—emerged from individual, spontaneous, global, and barrier-free participation on the Web" (Brujó et al., 2010, p. 147). A few years later, the period between 2016 and 2020 procedurally delineates a turning point in the evolution of corporate visual identity, coinciding with the consolidation of social media as predominant environments for visibility, interaction, and symbolic brand construction. During this interval, the visual identity associated with an organization ceases to respond primarily to traditional graphic logic and instead adapts to a digital ecosystem characterized by reduced scales, interface standardization, and the algorithmic mediation of attention (Wheeler, 2018).

One of the most relevant features of this transformation is the progressive shift from the combination mark (imagotype) toward the symbol (isotype) as the dominant form of identification. This phenomenon can be explained by the need to operate effectively in visual contexts marked by high spatial and temporal constraints—such as avatars, app icons, thumbnails, and social media feeds—where extensive typographic presence proves impractical (Manovich, 2017).

From a methodological perspective, the primacy of the four-year period between 2016 and 2020 is grounded in the convergence of three structural factors. First, the hegemony of mobile consumption redefined criteria of legibility and formal simplicity, favoring autonomous graphic solutions with strong visual impact (Ambrose & Harris, 2017). Second, the standardization of visual formats imposed by platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter conditioned the configuration of visual identities, limiting the use of the full combination mark and reinforcing the prominence of the symbol. Finally, the algorithmic logic of social media prioritizes immediate content identification, increasing the strategic value of the isotype as a perceptual trigger for brand recognition (Manovich, 2017).

As an example of this paradigmatic formal reduction, and in accordance with the objectives established in this study, the following table systematizes a selection of thirty brands included in the Brand Finance Global 500 ranking (2025) that, during the aforementioned period from 2016 to 2020, implemented documented changes to their corporate visual identity. The focus is placed primarily on cases in which adaptation to digital environments reveals a graphic translation of corporate visual identity from combination mark (imagotype) to symbol (isotype).

Table 1. Brands in the *Brand Finance Global 500* ranking (2025) with changes in their corporate visual identity between 2016 and 2020.

Brand	Year	Description of the redesign	Source
Google	2016	Consolidation of the "G" isotype as the primary identifier in *apps* and mobile environments.	Google Brand Guidelines
YouTube	2017	Functional separation symbol-text; emphasis on the isotype (*play icon*).	YouTube Official Blog
Mastercard	2016	Simplification of the visual system; Progressive elimination of the typographic logo.	Mastercard Brand Center
Mastercard	2019	Exclusive use of the isotype without denomination.	Mastercard Brand Center
Instagram	2016	Replacement of the imagotype with a simplified and adaptable isotype.	Instagram Press
Airbnb	2016	Consolidation of the symbol "Bélo" as the central isotype.	Airbnb Design
Uber	2018	Redesign aimed at greater readability and digital coherence.	Uber Newsroom
Microsoft	2017	Refinement of the *Fluent Design system* and emphasis on the isotype.	Microsoft Design
Facebook	2019	Hierarchization of the "f" isotype in digital products.	Facebook Brand Resources
BMW	2020	Flat version of the isotype oriented to digital environments.	BMW Group Press
Volkswagen	2019	Flat redesign of the isotype optimized for screens.	Volkswagen Newsroom
Nissan	2020	Simplification of the isotype and *digital-first approach*.	Nissan Global
Toyota	2020	Introduction of the flat isotype for digital communication.	Toyota Global News
Audi	2016–18	Progressive transition to flat and monochromatic isotype.	Audi MediaCenter

Brand	Year	Description of the redesign	Source
Pepsi	2016	Reorganization of the visual system and reinforcement of the symbol.	PepsiCo Design
Coca-Cola	2018	Adjustments to the global visual system and greater symbolic prominence.	Coca-Cola Design
Spotify	2017	Consolidation of the circular isotype as the dominant identifier.	Spotify Design
Starbucks	2017	Name removal; isotype as a complete identity.	Starbucks Stories
Adidas	2017–19	Predominance of the symbol as a visual signature.	Adidas Brand Assets
Shell	2016–19	Autonomous use of the symbol without denomination.	Shell Brand Centre
McDonald's	2016–20	Centrality of the golden arch as the dominant isotype.	McDonald's Brand Center
Intel	2020	Typographic redesign and *digital-first visual system*.	Intel Newsroom
PayPal	2016	Simplification of the monogram and improvement of mobile readability.	PayPal Brand Resources
Visa	2019	Typographic reduction and symbolic reinforcement.	Visa Brand Center
Renault	2019	Simplification of the isotype as a prelude to the global redesign.	Renault Group
Peugeot	2018–19	Radical change of the symbol with digital emphasis.	Peugeot Media
General Motors (GM)	2020	Corporate redesign aligned with digital communication.	GM Newsroom
Nike	2016–20	Exclusive use of the *swoosh* as a visual signature.	Nike Brand Guidelines
Jordan Brand (Nike)	2016–20	Total autonomy of the "Jumpman" isotype.	Nike Brand Guidelines

Source: Authors, 2026.

The analysis of the changes in the corporate visual identity of the brands listed in the table during the period from 2016 to 2020 reveals a clear trend toward the simplification of visual elements and the optimization of identity systems for performance in digital environments. This transformation reflects formal reduction and economy, prioritizing high-impact visual signs capable of operating effectively in microformats and fast-consumption platforms. Cases such as Netflix and Google are particularly illustrative: although both retain a typographic logotype as part of their identity core, they privilege the use of their respective initials (N and G) as fully autonomous elements, functionally and expressively equivalent to an isotype.

These interventions demonstrate the progressive conversion of the combination mark (imagotype) into simplified visual solutions aligned with a functional and minimalist logic, responding to the communicative demands imposed by technological advancement and the algorithmic mediation of contemporary digital ecosystems. If in the 1920s and 1930s "coherence, economy, and simplicity were highly valued at the Bauhaus" (Frascara, 2002, p. 41), today these same principles are aligned with the imperatives of AI to ensure their integration into digital environments as expansive as social media: "AI is created and used by information technology and internet companies (…) For example, Facebook uses AI for targeted advertising and photo tagging" (Coeckelbergh, 2021, p. 18). In the advertising domain, N. Paula Veloz (2024, p. 598) states that "the use of generative artificial intelligence is justified by its capacity to generate personalized, creative messages capable of effectively capturing consumers' attention, since it knows their tastes, beliefs, attitudes, and needs."

Based on these patterns, two firms—Mastercard and Microsoft—have been selected as case studies for a more detailed analysis of the evolution of corporate visual identity within the aforementioned time

frame. The selection of these brands responds to methodological and strategic criteria, as both are international corporations of prominent standing with clearly documented visual transformation processes and identity systems capable of articulating cohesion, flexibility, and recognition across multiple digital platforms. In the case of Mastercard, the gradual elimination of the typographic component, culminating in the consolidation of the isotype as the principal signature, constitutes an exemplary instance of the shift from combination mark to symbol examined in this article. Microsoft, for its part, embodies a model of systemic evolution in which the symbol is integrated into a broad, modular, and scalable visual ecosystem aligned with products, services, and digital experiences. The comparative analysis of both cases enables a deeper exploration of differentiated strategies of visual adaptation, providing relevant evidence for understanding the contemporary construction of corporate identities in the digital landscape.

Observing the process of formal simplification implemented by both brands—through the removal of typographic assets and the adoption of isotype models constructed from essential forms and color as strategic constants—an optimization becomes evident, oriented toward consolidating consumer visual memory and ensuring efficient adaptation across multiple digital platforms. Various studies in visual identity design indicate that formal reduction and chromatic consistency enhance memorability, recall, and scalability in complex digital environments (Wheeler, 2018; Olins, 2008). Likewise, this visual synthesis facilitates automated recognition by AI-based algorithmic systems that operate through the identification of recurrent formal and chromatic patterns, thereby optimizing classification and visual recognition processes (Goodfellow et al., 2016). In this context, translating visual analysis into structured language appears pertinent, enabling the drafting of a prompt as a methodological operation that articulates design and AI through defined components (role, task, context, reasoning, and output format), in accordance with the principles of visual grammar and algorithmic mediation in contemporary communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Paradigmatically, these objectives now introduce the case study of the visual identities of Mastercard and Microsoft, preceded by a prompt executed on the AI platforms ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot, with the aim of exploring brand redesign oriented toward a more efficient isotype. This prompt is formulated according to the following principles:

Table 2. Prompt structure and design.

Role	*Act as a senior graphic designer specialized in corporate visual identity, with over 20 years of experience in the redesign of global brands and in the formal synthesis of identity systems for digital environments.*
Task	*Develop a strategic and disruptive reinterpretation of the corporate visual identity of [brand name] by creating a new, highly simplified isotype, conceived as a controlled formal break from its historical symbol, prioritizing geometric synthesis, visual pregnancies, brand recall, and scalability in digital and multiplatform ecosystems, avoiding the literal or stylized reproduction of the traditional symbol.*
Background	*The proposal must constitute a non-literal conceptual evolution of the current visual identity of [brand name], preserving its symbolic capital, its historical values and its global recognition, and adapting to the visual, technical and algorithmic demands of the contemporary digital environment, including mobile interfaces, micro formats, digital payment systems and platforms governed by artificial intelligence.*
Reasoning	*It generates this visual proposal by critically analyzing the formal, structural and chromatic elements that characterize the identity of [brand name], considering geometry, proportion, compositional relationships and visual balance, as well as the strategic use of its corporate colors as non-literal identity codes, with the aim of ensuring that the resulting isotype is innovative, Easily recognizable, reproducible in different sizes, functional in digital environments and compatible with automated visual recognition systems based on artificial intelligence.*
Output Format	*Generate only the proposed isotype in JPEG format, on a white background, with a focused composition, using solid colors derived from the chromatic identity of [brand name], without typography or explanatory texts, without three-dimensional effects or decorative resources, guaranteeing high legibility, visual clarity and coherence with a contemporary visual language oriented to digital corporate identity systems.*

Source: Authors, 2026.

Once the prompt has been structured, it concludes with the following text, ready for execution on the aforementioned AI platforms:

> *Act as a senior graphic designer specialized in corporate visual identity and digital brand systems, with over 20 years of experience in the strategic redesign of global brands and develop a strategic and disruptive reinterpretation of the corporate visual identity of [brand name] through the creation of a new highly simplified isotype, conceived as a controlled formal rupture from its historical symbol. This proposal should prioritize geometric synthesis, visual pregnance, brand recall, and scalability across digital and multiplatform ecosystems. The outcome must constitute a non-literal conceptual evolution of the brand's current visual identity, preserving its symbolic capital, historical values, and global recognition, while adapting to the visual, technical, and algorithmic demands of the contemporary digital environment, including mobile interfaces, microformats, and AI-governed platforms. Generate this visual proposal by critically analyzing the formal, structural, and chromatic elements that characterize the identity of [brand name], considering geometry, proportion, compositional relationships, visual balance, and the strategic use of corporate colors as non-literal identity codes. Ensure that the resulting isotype is innovative, easily recognizable, reproducible at different scales, functional in digital environments, and compatible with automated visual recognition systems.*
>
> *Finally, generate the proposed isotype in JPEG format, on a white background, with a centered composition, using solid colors derived from the brand's chromatic identity, without typography, explanatory text, or decorative effects, ensuring high legibility, visual clarity, and coherence, expressed through a contemporary visual language oriented toward digital corporate identity systems.*

Table 3. Mastercard brand results obtained after executing the *prompt*.

Platform	Form	Color	Composition
ChatGPT	▫ Curvilinearity ▫ Intersection ▫ Continuity	▫ Red ▫ Orange ▫ Gradation	▫ Overlay ▫ Fluidity ▫ Symbolic unity
Gemini	▫ Circularity ▫ Duality ▫ Link	▫ Red ▫ Orange ▫ Warm contrast	▫ Convergence ▫ Balance ▫ Synthetic abstraction
Copilot	▫ Curved modularity ▫ Simplification ▫ Volume	▫ Red ▫ Orange ▫ Flat saturation	▫ Segmentation ▫ Alignment ▫ Pregnancy
As evidenced by the AI outputs, the symbolic stability of Mastercard is confirmed. The AI converges toward structures of intersection and duality, demonstrating a closed, synthetic, and autonomous identity that is easily translatable into an isotype.			

Source: Authors, 2026.

Table 4. Microsoft-branded results obtained after running the *prompt*.

Platform	Form	Color	Composition
ChatGPT	▫ Hybridization ▫ Organicity ▫ Flow	▫ Polychromy ▫ Transition ▫ Gradient	▫ Overlay ▫ Dynamism ▫ Open system
Gemini	▫ Modular geometry ▫ Symmetry ▫ Petalization	▫ Blue ▫ Red ▫ Green	▫ Intersection ▫ Central core ▫ Radial balance
Copilot	▫ Fragmentation ▫ Crossover ▫ Geometric simplification	▫ Blue ▫ Yellow ▫ Contrast	▫ Axial Arrangement ▫ Flexibility ▫ Formal rehearsal
In the case of Microsoft, a heterogeneous algorithmic behavior can be observed. The AI does not consolidate a dominant isotype; rather, it explores variations, amplifying the brand's polysemic and systemic nature.			

Source: Authors, 2026.

4.1. Mastercard and Microsoft: Graphic Comparison and Algorithmic Interpretation of Visual Identity

The graphic results obtained from executing the prompt in ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot demonstrate how the same strategic brief can lead to different formal interpretations while still preserving the essential symbolic capital of the brands.

Experimentation with AI applied to identity design makes it possible to observe not only formal outcomes, but also the implicit criteria through which algorithmic systems interpret established brands. Running the same prompt in these AI applications reveals that, even when starting from a shared instruction, the visual translation of an identity is never neutral. It responds to symbolic consistency, visual history, and the degree of abstraction that each brand has built over time.

The comparison between Mastercard and Microsoft provides a particularly relevant framework for analyzing how AI approaches the transition from imagotype to isotype, and to what extent this operation depends less on the technology itself than on the nature of the pre-existing identity system.

In the case of Mastercard, the proposals generated by the three platforms converge with remarkable consistency. Intersection, duality, and overlap appear as dominant symbolic structures, reproduced without the need to resort to typographic literalness. The abstraction relies on curved forms and chromatic relationships, where red and orange function as internalized cultural signs rather than as isolated graphic elements. In this sense, AI seems to recognize in Mastercard a brand whose identity has achieved independence from the logotype, facilitating the production of autonomous isotypes with high recognizability.

Microsoft, by contrast, presents a more ambiguous scenario. The proposals oscillate between reinterpretations of the historical modular grid and more organic, dynamic formal explorations that place tension on the brand's traditional geometry. Although color continues to operate as an identity anchor, its visual fragmentation refers to the complexity of the Microsoft ecosystem, composed of multiple products, platforms, and technological narratives. Here, AI does not converge; rather, it tests and explores possibilities without consolidating a single dominant symbol.

This difference highlights a key point from a critical perspective: more synthetic and symbolically closed visual identities, such as Mastercard's, are more easily translatable into algorithmic language. Conversely, broad and polysemic systems, such as Microsoft's, invite multiple interpretations, demonstrating that AI does not simplify brand complexity, but rather amplifies it.

From a digital usage standpoint, both cases respond adequately to criteria of scalability, legibility, and adaptation to micro-formats. However, while Mastercard formal reduction reinforces pregnance and visual memory, in Microsoft simplification operates more as a resource for systemic flexibility than as the construction of a univocal icon.

In conclusion, rather than a purely technical demonstration, this exercise functions as a connector for critical reflection on the current state of identity design in algorithmic contexts. Far from operating as a neutral tool, AI interprets, prioritizes, and reorganizes the visual values of each brand according to its pre-existing graphic DNA.

The results show that AI can play a relevant role as an assistant in identity redesign processes, but they also warn of the limits of its creative independence. The coherence, symbolic depth, and narrative strength of a brand still depend on human judgment, which evaluates not only form, but also context, culture, and meaning.

The comparison between Mastercard and Microsoft suggests that the impact of AI on design lies not only in the quality of the prompt, but also in the solidity of the identity system offered as a starting point. In this sense, AI does not replace the designer; rather, it challenges them, compelling a more attentive reading of brands and a more precise definition of what truly makes them recognizable.

4.2. Generative (and Illustrative) AI Toward a Graphic Synthesis of the Brand

In line with the methodological procedure and as the final stage of the proposed comparative approach, a third brand is incorporated into the analysis. Unlike the previous cases—associated with international corporations possessing fully consolidated identities—the inclusion of this new brand responds to the need to broaden the scope of the study by introducing a small-scale business identity system.

This approach makes it possible to examine how AI tools respond to an exercise in visual synthesis that does not originate from a closed corporate imaginary, but rather from a more expressive graphic

language. Maintaining this dynamic, the same prompt used in the Mastercard and Microsoft trials is entered into ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot.

Figure 2. Logo used as the studio's third brand.



Source: Authors, 2026

The graphical results obtained from the execution of the *prompt* are:

Table 5. Results obtained after executing the *prompt*.

	Original	ChatGPT	Gemini	Copilot
				
Form	▫ Organicity ▫ Fluidity ▫ Implicit spiral	▫ Organic intersection ▫ Continuous bending ▫ Formal synthesis	▫ Organic volumetry ▫ Soft Modeling ▫ Circularity	▫ Geometric simplification ▫ Explicit spiral ▫ Formal reduction
Color	▫ Green ▫ Orange ▫ Yellow	▫ Green ▫ Orange ▫ Yellow	▫ Warm polychromy ▫ Gradation ▫ Saturation	▫ Core Integration ▫ Plastic cohesion ▫ Formal density
Composition	▫ Dynamic Balance ▫ Continuity ▫ Imagotype–isotype relationship	▫ Overlay ▫ Dynamic unit ▫ Rotational Center	▫ Green ▫ Orange ▫ Flat contrast	▫ Centrality ▫ Circular rhythm ▫ High pregnancy

Source: Authors, 2026.

In general terms, the results confirm that the effectiveness of algorithmic synthesis in visual identity processes depends less on the technological routines employed and more on the structural and symbolic solidity of the original graphic system. Formal clarity, internal coherence, and the pre-existing degree of abstraction determine AI's ability to generate functional, recognizable, and scalable isotypes in digital environments.

A comparison of the three monitored brands (Mastercard, Microsoft, and Spirole) shows that more synthetic identities favor consistent interpretations, while complex systems encourage exploratory solutions. In this context, AI consolidates its role as a non-neutral interpretive agent, whose potential requires human judgment within the creative sphere of contemporary digital corporate communication.

5. Discussion: The Algorithm as a Creative Intangible

A future projection of this research would suggest, on the professional front, an increased integration of AI tools into the design process of corporate visual identity projects, while still requiring a careful review of the creative sequence to ensure the communicative and graphic stability of the result, always aligned with the brand's essence. In this regard, the preliminary stage will need a solid historiographic, theoretical, and procedural contribution within the context of communication and design, engaging directly with the language of corporate visual identity—particularly in the construction and management of the brand, its corporate culture, or its verbal identity, among other aspects affected by this significant creative process.

Whether for a synthetic conversion of corporate iconography adapted to social media profiles, as carried out in this research, or for a more substantial project development within this communication category, it is considered essential to maintain a reflective balance throughout the phases of study, ideation, conceptualization, as well as the formal and compositional treatment of the corporate graphic asset. This measured approach limits full intervention by AI tools, favoring the erudition and creative correspondence established between author and work, and avoiding, in some cases, solutions that are openly standardized in both narrative content and perceived form.

The advancement of visual identity in the digital ecosystem allows this study to conclude that the transition from imagotype to isotype is not merely an aesthetic phenomenon but an adaptive response to new information consumption logics. While traditional theoretical foundations positioned the isotype as the culmination of a brand's maturity process, contemporary reality demonstrates that graphic synthesis is now a technical condition indispensable for survival in saturated environments. As happened with Bauhaus designers, who, according to Frascara (2002), "sought simplicity, rather than finding it as the result of a certain methodological approach focused on bare functionality; what initially appeared as a consequence of methodology later became a design criterion" (p. 41). This design principle now aligns with the primacy of a technology identified as AI, which quantifies and qualifies the creative process, streamlines systematic approaches and development times, segments audiences with remarkable precision, and efficiently accesses the channels where they operate.

Logos, Edwin Tan (Shaoqiang, 2022) asserts, "are becoming increasingly simple, to the point where we wonder if it is possible to simplify them even further" (p. 9). For the creative editor of Bravo Creative, a branding and design consultancy, one of the main reasons "logos are becoming quieter and say less is the existence of social media" (p. 9).

Characterized as "a finite and discrete series of instructions that receive input and produce output" (Hogan, 2015), the algorithm has become an emerging and valuable design variable: an intangible that operates alongside other variables, such as form, color, or typography. In this practice, drawing on the testimony of V. Mora de la Torre and L. López Martín (2024, p. 18), "the participation of experts from diverse disciplines in the formulation of algorithms and generative AI tools ensures a multidimensional perspective, enriching the functionality and applicability of this technology."

Within this context, AI functions primarily as a process automation tool, contributing to greater efficiency in time management within the design practice. Its usefulness is particularly visible in identifying recurring formal and chromatic patterns, which has facilitated the trend toward brand simplification and the progressive adoption of the isotype as the core identity element. Nonetheless, the redesign and adaptation of visual identity continue to depend heavily, throughout the entire process, on the human factor: the designer's intervention remains irreplaceable for interpreting cultural, symbolic, and emotional contexts that influence both product consumption and its communicative construction.

From this perspective, a certain inherent creative limitation in AI systems becomes apparent, as their operation relies on reproducing and recombining patterns previously generated by design professionals and disseminated through digital repositories and databases. In this way, AI functions primarily as a mechanism for reiterating algorithmically defined schemes that analyze user behaviors, uses, and searches, ultimately delegating the capacity for differentiation and standing out in a saturated visual environment to the designer's creativity, judgment, and conceptual responsibility.

Even so, although still under human domain, a brand's effectiveness no longer depends exclusively on human interpretation but also on its capacity to be processed and interpreted by digital tools, adapting to new interfaces. In this binary space, the "dematerialization" of typography in favor of iconic symbols allows the visual identity to be elastic and functional across multiple devices—from mobile terminals to immersive virtual and augmented reality environments.

The integration of AI and predictive branding redefines the designer's role. Graphic simplification now acts as a "cognitive shortcut" that facilitates immediate connection between the brand and the user, "because a simple logo helps meet most of the other requirements of iconic design" (Airey, 2015, p. 38). This formal synthesis should not be understood as a contraction of corporate essence but rather as the sophistication of a visual language that pursues maximum communicative efficiency, in an era increasingly defined by the economy of form and the attention of a new user profile.

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