Design Professionals Roundtable Recap: Artificial Intelligence: Risk, Responsibility, and Best Practices for Design Firms

By Howard P. Goldberg

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On April 28, 2026, MG+M The Law Firm hosted a Design Professionals Roundtable on the evolving use of artificial intelligence (AI) in architecture and engineering practice.

Moderated by MG+M Partner Howard Goldberg, the session featured a multidisciplinary panel:

+ Jared de Jonge, AIA, LEED AP, Director of Design Technology, Elkus Manfredi Architects
+ James Clark, PE, LEP, Senior Principal, GZA, GeoEnvironmental, Inc.
+ Jerome Hajjar, PhD, PE, CDM Smith Professor and University Distinguished Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Northeastern University
+ Dan Gallivan, Chief Information Officer, Elkus Manfredi Architects

The panel discussed AI's growing role in design workflows—from modeling and drafting to research and data analysis—and how its use intersects with the professional standard of care, contractual obligations, confidentiality and ethical considerations. The discussion also highlighted key risks and opportunities, offering practical guidance for firms looking to integrate AI responsibly while managing liability exposure.

Key Takeaways

+ **AI is already embedded in design workflows**, supporting functions such as modeling, drafting, research, and data analysis, with adoption expected to continue accelerating.
+ **The use of AI intersects directly with the professional standard of care**, requiring practitioners to evaluate how these tools fit within existing obligations and expectations.
+ **Human judgment and oversight remain essential**, particularly in validating outputs and ensuring accuracy in design and decision-making.
+ **AI use raises important contractual and risk allocation considerations**, including how responsibilities are defined and addressed between project stakeholders.
+ **Confidentiality and data security are ongoing concerns**, especially when using third-party platforms or incorporating sensitive project information.
+ **Clear internal policies and consistent practices are critical**, including guidance on appropriate use, review processes, and documentation.
+ **Documentation will be increasingly important** in demonstrating how AI tools are used and supporting defensible project decisions.
+ **Firms must balance innovation with risk management**, taking a thoughtful approach to integrating AI while managing potential liability exposure.

MG+M attorneys regularly advise design professionals nationwide on liability, insurance and contractual risk, including issues arising from AI adoption. We work with clients to evaluate emerging risks, develop practical risk management strategies and implement internal frameworks that support responsible innovation while maintaining defensible professional practice.

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Remaining 2026 Schedule

MG+M's 2026 Design Professionals Roundtable series continues throughout the year with four additional interactive programs.

+ June 11 | 12 p.m. ET – Arguing Motions (Virtual)
+ August 5 | 8 a.m. ET – Contracts 201 (Virtual)
+ September 30 | 3 p.m. ET – Alternative Delivery Methods (Hybrid, cocktail reception to follow)

Save the date. Registration details coming soon.

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