

LogoGeek

LOGO TOOLS

A guide to the tools you'll
need to design logos.

By Ian Paget



If you want to design logos like a pro there's a few tools you'll need before you can get started.

Thankfully most homes have access to the basic tools already, meaning you'll be able to start designing logos right away.

Here's a handy tick-list of the tools you'll need. Keep reading for an explanation of each item.

Must have tools:

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A Pencil

This is pretty obvious, but one of the main tools you'll need for logo design is a pen and/or a pencil of some kind.

I recommend using **a mechanical pencil** as you can continue to sketch and brainstorm without the need to constantly sharpen the tip.

As an extra optional item I'd also recommend a **separate coloured pencil or highlighter pen** that can be used to circle the best ideas from your sketchbook for further development.

A Sketchbook (a piece of paper will do!)

Although the final logo files will be developed on a computer, paper is where the magic happens. It's where you will brainstorm and develop your ideas.

Some designers might feel the need to develop their ideas directly on a computer, but they're making a mistake.

The sheer freedom and speed that comes from sketching makes it the best way to develop ideas. There's been so many times when I've scribbled down an idea only for a 'happy accident' to happen, which ends up being developed into a stronger idea that I would never have considered in my mind alone.

The basic thing you'll need is a blank sheet of paper, however, (and this is totally optional) I recommend getting yourself a couple of different sketchbooks if you want to be a pro. Lets take a closer look at what I use...

A3 (or bigger) Sketchbook for your desk

Depending on the size of your work area, a larger sketchpad (A3 to A1 size) is incredible for those times when you really want to focus down on brainstorming ideas.

The large size means you're able to **see all of your ideas on a single sheet of paper** rather than having to flick back and forth through lots of smaller pages.

Pocket sized sketchbook

I also recommend having a separate pocket sized sketchbook that you can keep with you when out and about, or by your bedside.

There's been so many times when I've thought of a great idea when driving, going for a walk, or just before sleeping...

Great ideas can come at any point, but they can so easily drift away, so having something to hand to document the ideas as they come along is an absolute must!

A Computer

Once you have a number of solid ideas, to prepare professional artwork you'll need a software and the appropriate software.

The exact type of computer you get will depend on your budget and preferences, however, luckily the software needed is not too processor heavy, therefore the average computer will do the job. Be sure to double check the system requirements of your chosen software.

Vector Graphics Software

Once you have a computer you will also need the right software.

For logo design you'll need a vector graphics editor.

Unlike raster images, which are made up of pixels, Vector graphics are based on paths, points, lines, curves and shapes using mathematical equations, which mean they can be scaled indefinitely without any loss of quality.

The industry standard vector software is **Adobe Illustrator**, however, there are other options available, including those that are free.

Lets take a closer look...

Adobe Illustrator

As already mentioned, the industry standard vector graphics software is Adobe Illustrator, therefore, if you're serious about designing logos professionally this should be your preferred choice.

It's feature rich, with powerful tools that allow you to easily build and edit any shape you can imagine.

Illustrator also has a wide range of plug-ins available that extend the capabilities. [LiveSurface](#), [VectorScribe](#) and [Logo Package Express](#) are some I recommend checking out.

At the time of writing this book, Adobe Illustrator is the most expensive option on this list, costing £19.97 per month for individuals or £16.24/month if you're a student.

Alternatively, it can be purchased within the full Adobe Suite should you also wish to use design software such as Photoshop and InDesign.

To learn Adobe Illustrator, SkillShare have a wide range of fantastic tutorials. You can get a free 2 month trial here: logogeek.uk/skillshare

Affinity Designer

Affinity Designer (which is part of the “Affinity trinity” alongside Affinity Photo and Affinity Publisher) is quickly becoming a serious alternative to Illustrator, with new features coming out frequently.

With a one off cost of £38.99 for Mac and PC, and only £15.99 for iPad it’s understandable why.

Inkscape (Free)

The closest free alternative to Adobe Illustrator is Inkscape, which have a range of similar drawing tools such as the pencil and pen tool, along with the text and colour tools you’ll need to design logos.

Inkscape also allows you to create the correct file formats for logo design too, such as PDF, EPS and PNG.

It also has a lot of resources available online to help you learn to use it. As a starting point, check out: <https://inkscape.org/en/learn/tutorials/>

Fonts

Almost every logo design you will ever design will make use of fonts, so you'll need to start building up a library of your own.

There are millions of fonts out there. Some are free, and others you pay for a licence to use them.

Firstly, lets look at the free options available...

Free fonts

The internet is full of “free” fonts, however, most of them are available for personal use only, meaning they cannot be used within a logo. If you want to use the font for logo design, it will need to have a **commercial license**.

Thankfully there are plenty of free commercial options out there.

One website that's done the hard work of discovering all the free high-quality free commercial fonts is [Font Squirrel](#), who also make it easy to search, view and download them.

The [Google Fonts](#) library is another fantastic resource for logo designers as all the fonts are free to use commercially. Here's a quote from the license:

All of the fonts are Open Source. This means that you are free to share your favourites with friends and colleagues. You can even customize them for your own use, or collaborate with the original designer to improve them. And you can use them in every way you want, privately or commercially — in print, on your computer, or in your websites.

Blogs such as CreativeBloq frequently collate the best free fonts from the web, so it's worth keeping an eye out for these and downloading them for future use.

A quick Google search for 'free commercial fonts' will lead you to many such posts.

Buying Fonts

Well designed fonts are a worthwhile investment.

If you have an Adobe Creative Cloud Subscription you'll have access to Adobe Fonts, so at no extra cost you'll have access to 1000's of fonts that are all licensed for commercial use.

If you don't have that luxury, or need to purchase specific fonts, here's a few of the places I look to discover and buy new fonts...

My Fonts

[MyFonts](#) is described as 'a digital fonts distributor', meaning you can browse through, test and purchase fonts from designers and foundries around the world.

HypeForType

[HypeForType](#) also source and supply fonts from designers around the globe, organising them into over 40 different categories, making it easy to locate the specific style needed for a logo design. They also frequently have hugely discounted bundles, which are worth keeping an eye on...

FontShop

[FontShop](#) is another font distributor, which has a really slick website making it easy to browse and test its collection of high-quality fonts.

I particularly like the 'tryout' feature, which lets you test the font in different sizes, colours and layouts before purchasing the font.

Design Cuts

Although not a font foundry, the team at [DesignCuts](#) often release discounted bundles of fonts and other design resources.

Throughout the year you'll be able to purchase hundreds of high-quality font families for \$29, which normally cost thousands.

A few nice to haves that are worth the investment:

iPad Pro + Pen

Whilst I'm a huge advocate of paper and pen it's hard to ignore just how good the digital equivalent is getting!

An [iPad Pro](#) with an [Apple Pencil](#) feels almost exactly like you're drawing on paper, but... you have the added benefit of being able to do so much more.

Recommended apps include [Pro Create](#) for digital illustration, and [Astro Pad](#) to turn your iPad into a professional graphics tablet.

Astute Graphics

[Astute Graphics](#) provide a range of tools that enhances the features already available within Adobe Illustrator.

VectorScribe is one tool I couldn't live without. A feature that I use on every project is the **Smart Removal Brush** tool, which automatically removes excess anchor points within your artwork. This makes it easier to edit, reduces the file size, and most importantly... ensures that your artwork has a professional finish!

Astute Graphics have a range of other helpful tools that enhance the features already in Illustrator. Find out more about the tools and how to purchase them [here](#).

Logo Package Express Extension

One of the most time consuming tasks that every logo designer will need to perform is the preparation of logo files.

If like me you provide multiple lockups in a wide range of formats for web and print this task could take a few hours to complete. But now there's a faster way to do it...

How does 2 minutes sound?

[Logo Package Express](#) is an incredible Adobe Illustrator extension that speeds up the process of creating and exporting multiple logo file formats.

Rather than having to modify and export the files one at a time, Logo Package Express will do it all for you. It will also conveniently sort the files into folders, each carefully labelled so it's easy for the clients to find exactly what they need.

You can buy Logo Package Express [here](#), and if you use the discount code 'logogeek', you'll get 20% off.

[**logogeek.uk/extension**](https://logogeek.uk/extension)

Useful Reference Books

When brainstorming ideas I frequently reference logo design books. Here's a few of my favourites that I can highly recommend.

Logo Modernism

This book is probably the biggest logo design book you'll ever get your hands on, and if you're a logo designer it'll be one of the best £30 investments you'll ever make. It's packed full of great logo designs including over 6,000 trademarks, focused on the period 1940-1980.

[Amazon.com](#) | [Amazon UK](#)

Logo: The Reference Guide to Symbols and Logotypes

There are 2 versions of this book. The standard sized version, and a mini version. I personally have the mini, and I love it. It's a visual collection of some of the worlds greatest logo designs ever made, and is a book that I often turn to, and benchmark my work against.

[Amazon.com](#) | [Amazon UK](#)

Yasaburo Kuwayama Logo Gallery Books

Although rare and not easy to find (and when you do they're expensive) my all time favourite logo inspiration books are those from Yasaburo Kuwayama. Thankfully you can view one of his books from start to finish on this website: <http://trademarksandsymbols.com/>

Want to learn more?

This series of free eBooks has grown into a full, 322-page guide called ***Make a Living Designing Logos***.

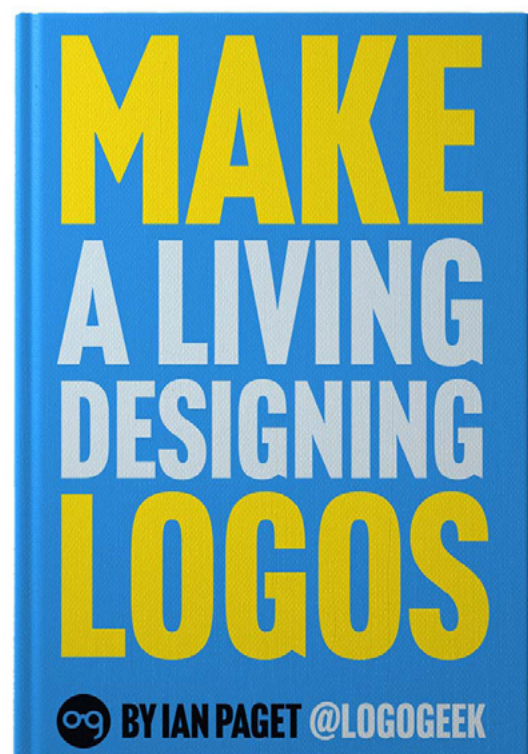
Ever dreamed of turning your logo design skills into a full-time income? I've been there, and I'd love to help you get there too.

In this book, **I share the journey of how I went from hobbyist to full-time logo designer**. It's packed with personal stories, practical advice, and the exact strategies that helped me build a successful career doing what I love.

Across 322 pages, I walk you through everything... from mastering the logo design process, to finding clients, to building a strong reputation in the industry.

I've written it as if I'm talking to a friend, being as honest and transparent as possible... no gatekeeping, no fluff. Just real insights that I hope will help you reach your own creative goals.

Make a Living Designing Logos is available worldwide through Amazon as a print-on-demand book, [in full colour](#) or a more budget-friendly [black and white version](#). And if you prefer to listen, there's also an [audiobook version on Audible](#) and other popular platforms.



About The Author

Ian Paget is a graphic designer with over 20 years experience working across designs for web and print.



Logo Geek started as a fun side project, which sparked the beginning of a passion that has now become his main source of income. Through Logo Geek Ian designs brand identities for clients, hosts a popular podcast, and runs a thriving community for those who love logo design.

Connect with Ian here and be sure to listen to the podcast:



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Join the Logo Geek Community

Join over 10,000 logo designers in [The Logo Geek Community](#), a free Facebook Group where graphic designers from around the world can 'geek out' about logos, get feedback, learn and improve.