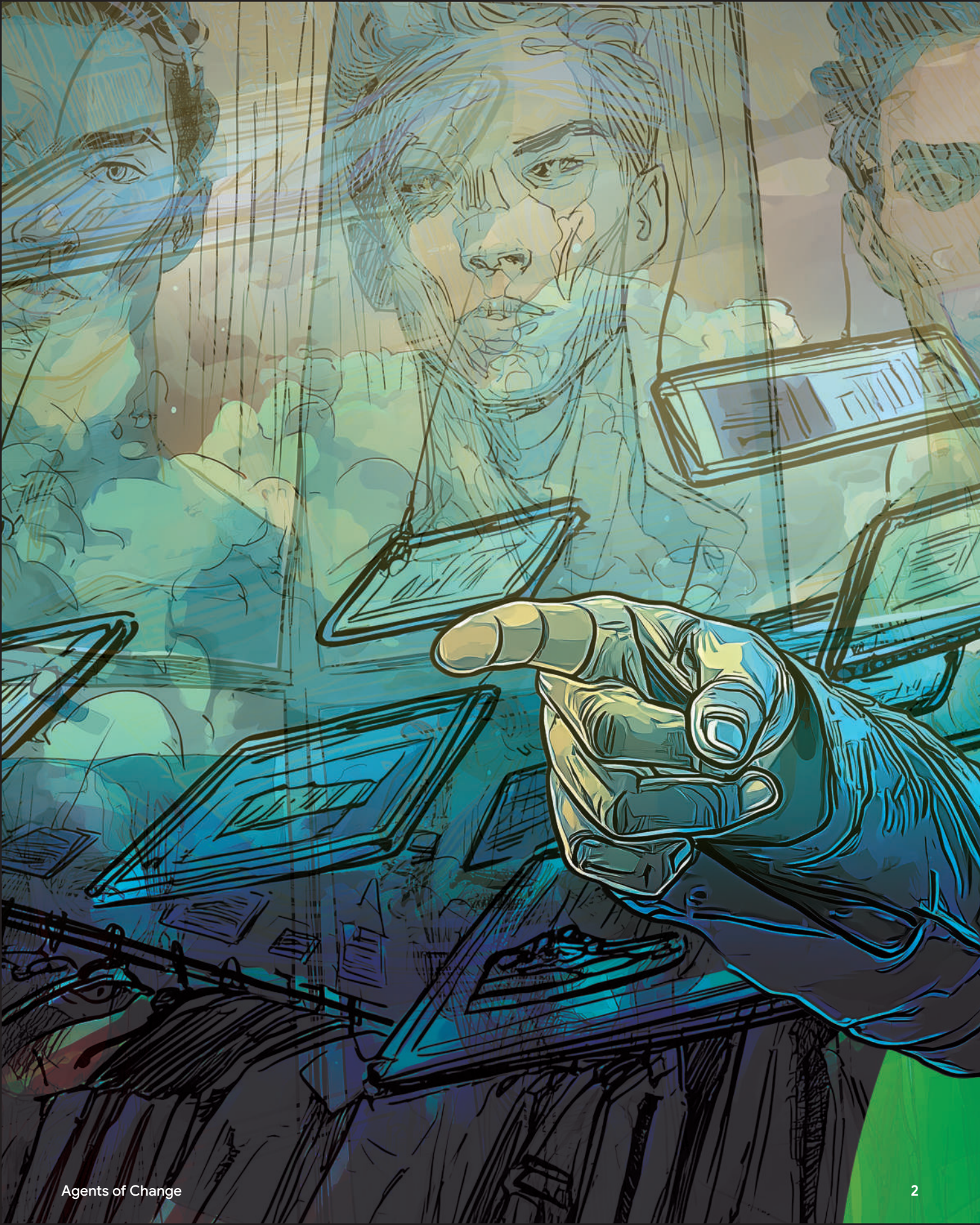




Agents of Change





See it for yourself: How AI turned shopping into self-expression

How Glance worked with AI from Google Cloud AI to transform the lock screen on millions of mobile phones into a personal styling surface.

Chapter 5 | Agents of Change by Google Cloud



About this series

Agents of Change is a human-crafted narrative series about how people inside organisations use technology to change the systems around them. These stories are deeply reported, researched and produced through the combined force of human intelligence and machine capability, not as replacements for one another, but as collaborators. In each story, the customer team is the agent of change; Google Cloud is the enabling technology partner.

The Breakthrough

G

lance became an agent of change by tackling a stubborn friction in online shopping: people could scroll endlessly through clothes on other bodies and still not know what they would look like on their own.

The challenge was to make a generated version of the user feel believable, fast enough for a lock screen, and precise enough to connect to a real product. All while maintaining strict privacy.

Working with Google Cloud, Glance moved from experimental wait times to a “one selfie, three minutes” flow, generating personalized visual experiences that users actually wanted.

The result changed the lock screen from a curated feed into a personal styling surface.

How it started



IT BEGAN WITH A JOKE. IAN ANDERSON TOOK A PHOTOGRAPH OF NAVEEN TEWARI AND DROPPED IT INTO A RUN OF GENERATED CARICATURES.



THEN THE ROOM WENT QUIET. THE PICTURES WERE GOOD ENOUGH TO TRIGGER RECOGNITION. THE TECHNOLOGY HAD ARRIVED.

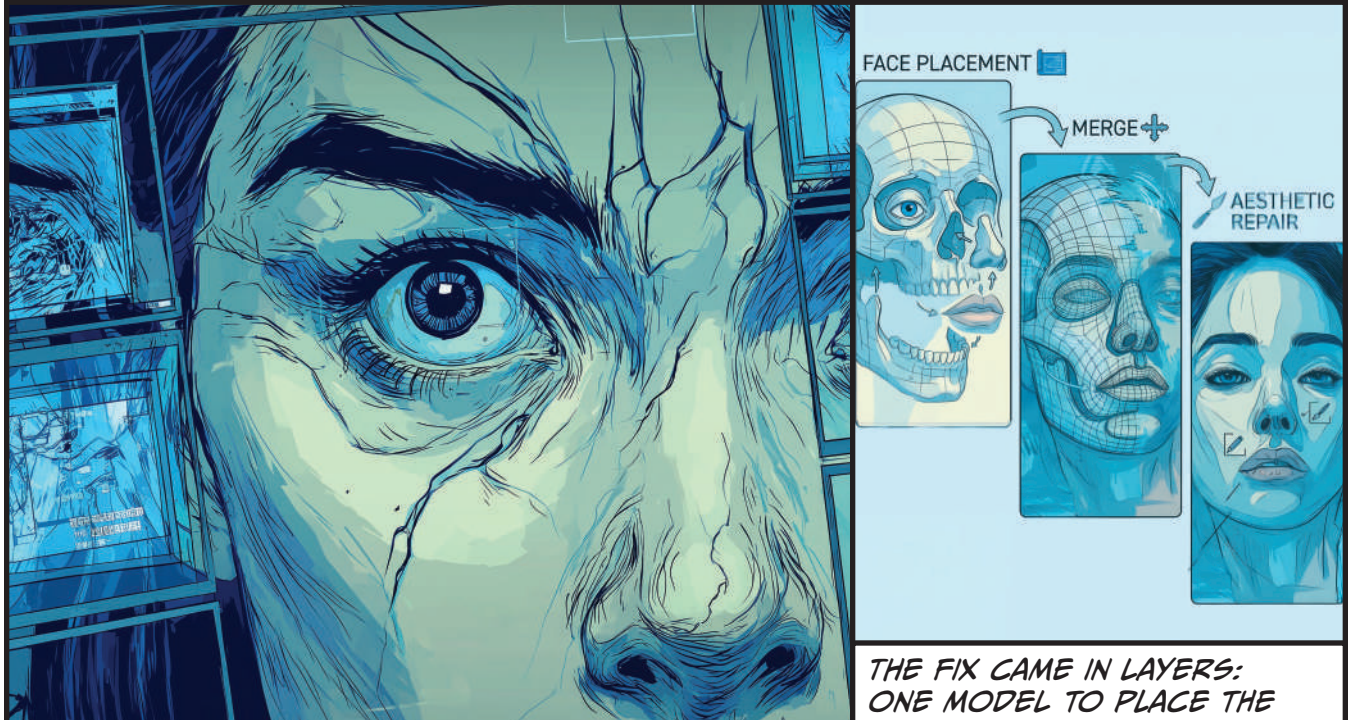


IT WAS NOT EVERYONE'S FAVORITE. IT WAS SIMPLY THE LOWEST-RISK ADVICE. A NEAR-WHITE. A HARMLESS ANSWER. A WAY TO AVOID BEING WRONG IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME.

The uncanny valley and identity



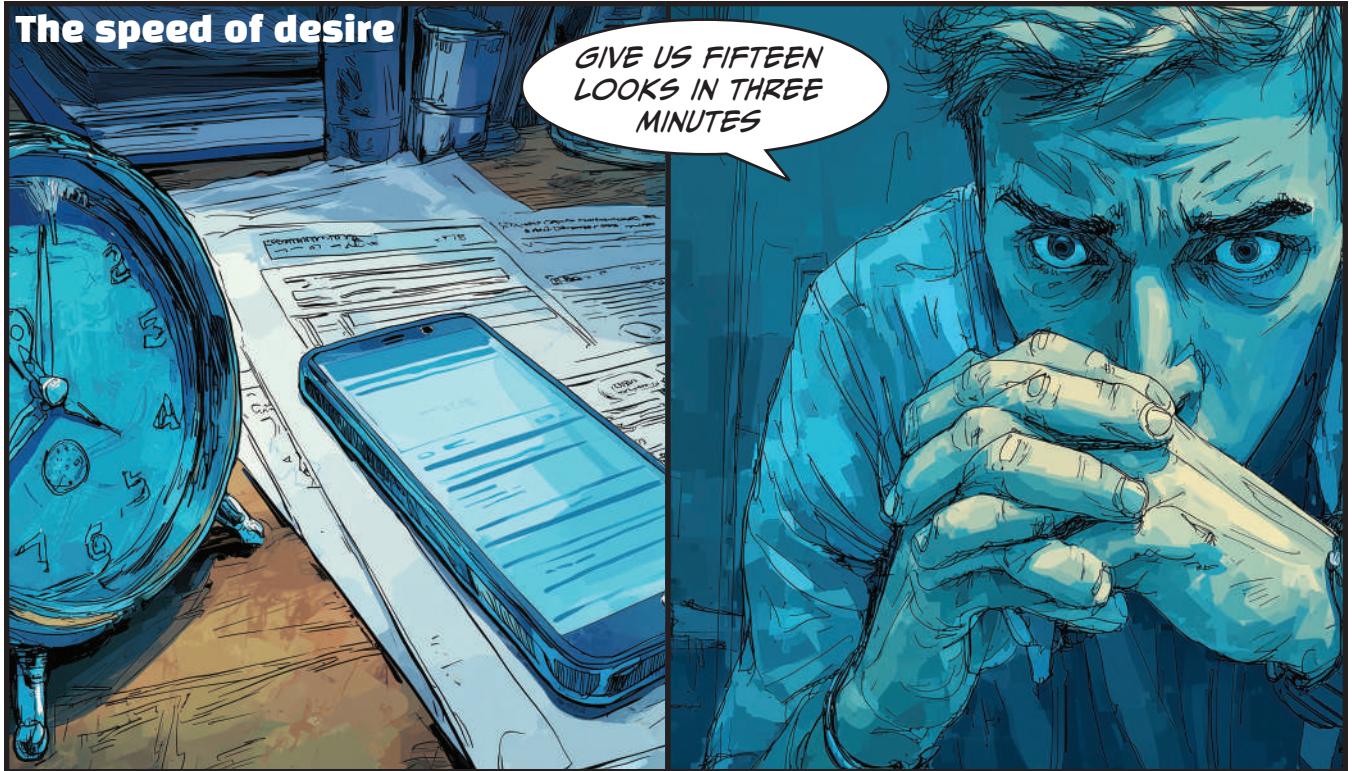
THE FIRST OBSTACLE WAS BRUTAL. THE IMAGES LOOKED FAKE. FACES LANDED AWKWARDLY. THE USER WASN'T LOOKING AT A MODEL; THEY WERE LOOKING AT THEMSELVES.



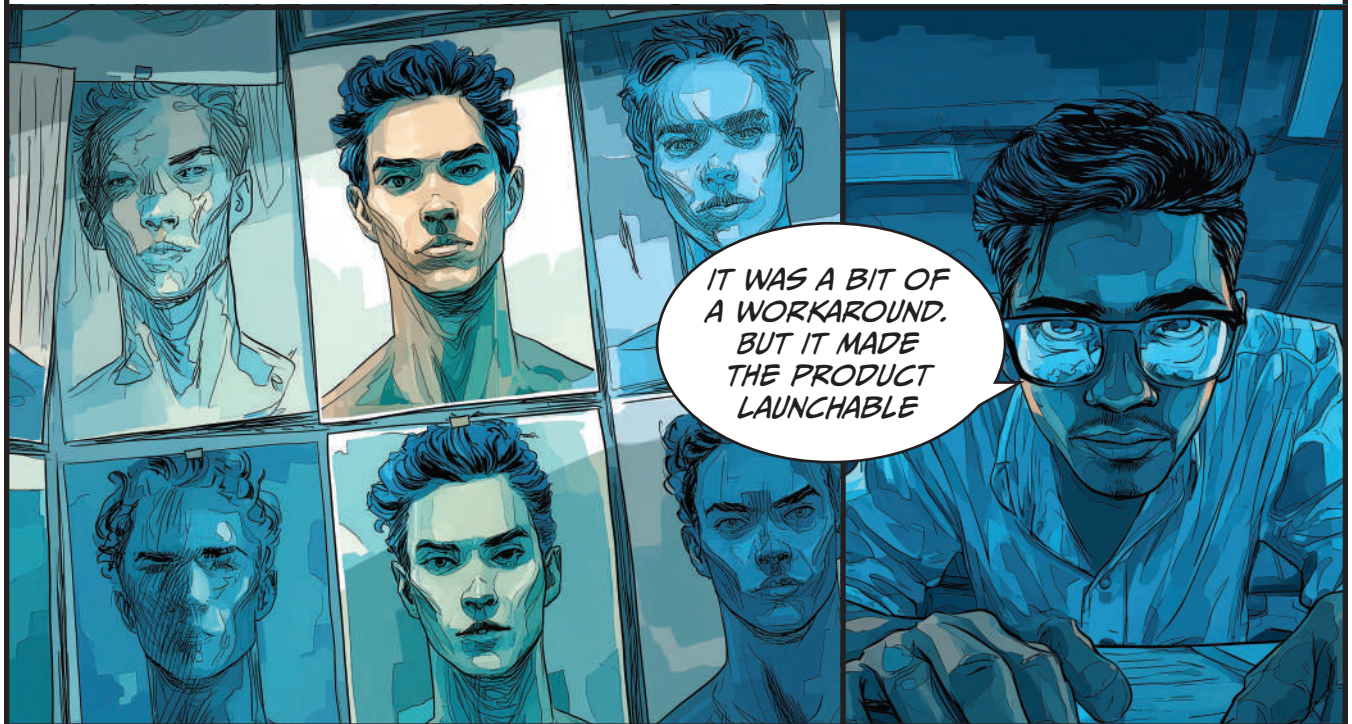
EVERY PERSON CARRIES A PRIVATE IDEA OF HOW THEY LOOK. GLANCE HAD TO GET CLOSE TO THAT INTERNAL SELF-IMAGE TO BE BELIEVABLE.

THE FIX CAME IN LAYERS: ONE MODEL TO PLACE THE FACE, ANOTHER TO MERGE IT NATURALLY, AND ANOTHER TO MAKE IT AESTHETICALLY WHOLE.

The speed of desire

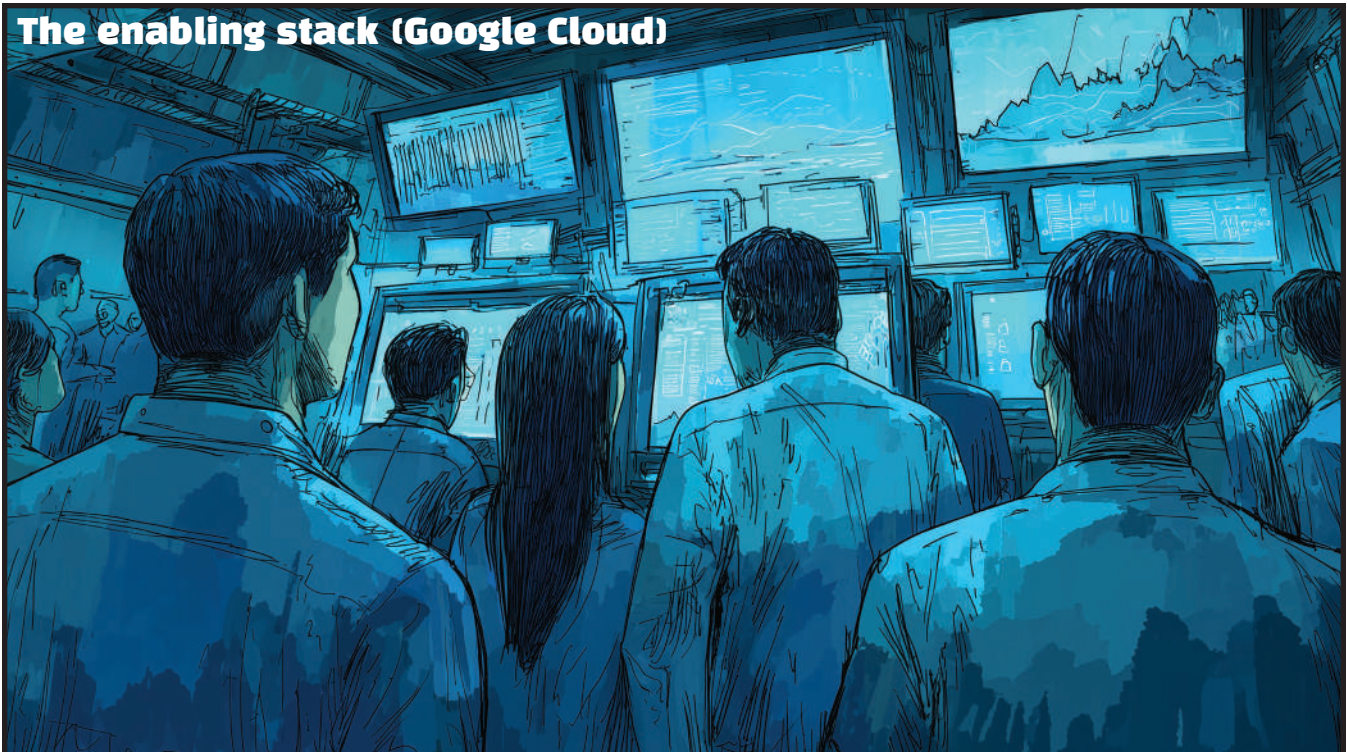


HIGH-FIDELITY LOOKS INITIALLY TOOK 15 PHOTOS AND 40 MINUTES TO PROCESS. LEADERSHIP SAW THE MAGIC, BUT KNEW THAT USERS WOULD NOT WAIT THAT LONG.

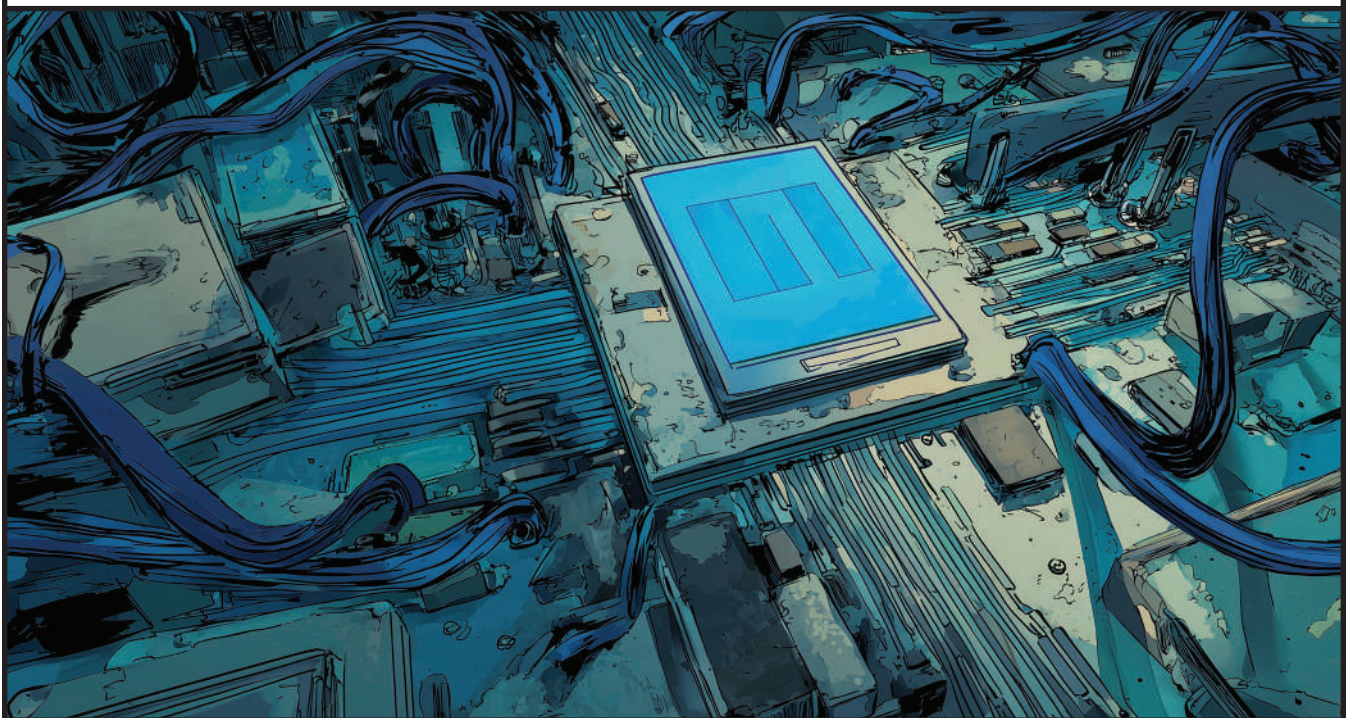


TO GAIN SPEED, THE TEAM REDUCED BODIES INTO REFERENCE ARCHETYPES. WHEN A USER UPLOADED A SELFIE, THE SYSTEM MERGED THEIR FACE INTO THE NEAREST PRE-GENERATED VARIATION.

The enabling stack (Google Cloud)



GOOGLE CLOUD HELPED CHANGE THE PACE AND ECONOMICS OF THE BUILD. IMAGE-GENERATION TOOLS IMPROVED REALISM, WHILE VERTEX AI MANAGED THE GPU-HEAVY WORKLOADS.



GEMINI BECAME THE REASONING LAYER, HELPING THE EXPERIENCE FEEL PERSONALIZED RATHER THAN GENERIC. SPEED INCREASED. WAIT TIMES DROPPED. COST CONTROL BECAME A DESIGN PRINCIPLE.

The human correction



GLANCE ASSUMED AI COULD ABOLISH THE "DOOMSCROLL." INSTEAD, USERS PUSHED BACK. THEY STILL WANTED TO BROWSE AND COMPARE.



EARLY VERSIONS ASKED USERS TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY FOR MORE LOOKS. THE TEAM REALIZED THAT WHEN USERS LIKED A LOOK, THEY WANTED MORE IMMEDIATELY. THEY WERE REBUILT FOR LIVE, ON-DEMAND TRY-ONS.

Success and scale



THE LOCK SCREEN WAS NO LONGER JUST CONTENT; IT WAS A PERSONAL STYLING LAYER. IT HAD BECOME A SURFACE WORTH SELLING.



A SELFIE WAS LINKED. THE SCREEN FILLED WITH LOOKS. A SKEPTICAL PROSPECT TURNED TO THE ROOM: "GUYS, COME HERE".

The unexpected core



A WOMAN UPLOADED A PHOTO OF A YOUNG MAN SHE HAD MISSED. SEEING HIM IN NEW, SHARP CLOTHES THROUGH THE AI FELT LIKE A WAY TO KEEP HIM PRESENT. A SHOPPING TOOL HAD BECOME SOMETHING MORE HUMAN.

The future of consumer AI may not belong to systems that make choices for people. It may belong to those that arrive just before choice, widening taste without confiscating it.

Glance's wager is that the most valuable surface in the day is not the one where people search, but the one where they recognize themselves.