



PORTFOLIO

Jesse Kulp

Selected work, and what I’ve learned.

TIME	TO
2013 – 2014	CRITICAL MASS
2014 – 2016	AMAZON
2016 – 2018	BMC
2018 – 2020	SPLUNK
2020 – 2026	GOOGLE
2026 – PRESENT	APPLE



📌

Promoted to Mid

May 10, 2026

Junior

 →

Mid

Stopped needing states enumerated for him. Two consecutive artifacts shipped without a blocking state finding.

📌

Review Re-review — settings panel

Approved by Hephaestus

May 9, 2026

All findings addressed. Noted that states were now designed, not bolted on afterward.

📌

States are part of done, not a follow-up

POINT OF VIEW

May 9, 2026

A screen isn't complete when the builder finishes it. Read the state model before building, not after review.

📌

Fixed all three blocking issues

May 8, 2026

Reworked settings panel to include empty, loading, and error states. Added disabled state to state model up front rather than guessing.

📌

Design review — settings panel

Revise by Hephaestus

May 6, 2026

Every required state was missing. The panel looked finished and behaved as if nothing could ever go wrong.

📌

Add empty, loading, and error states — all three were absent

📌

Disabled controls give no reason why they are disabled

06 / 09

Exit

The reviewer catches what the builder missed

Julius shipped a settings panel with no empty, loading, or error states. Hephaestus returned Revise with three specific fixes — assigned back to Julius, not quietly fixed around him.

Back

Pause

Next

⏮ ⏭ to step ⏩ ⏭ to pause

What follows

01

Thesis

The argument in one line

02

About me

Who I am, and the route here

03

The throughline

Same job, different surface

04

The case study

Google AI Studio & the Gemini API

“The original designer for Google AI Studio”

- DIVE CLUB'S INTRODUCTION, NOT MINE



DIVE CLUB · EPISODE 108

58 MIN · MAY 2025

PICK FOR YOUR TEAM?

JESSE KULP

AKA "THE AGENT ARCHITECT"

APPLE

PRODUCT DESIGNER

DESIGN LEADER

Human Interface designer at Apple focused on the shift from apps to agents. Previously at Google DeepMind, he led UX for Google AI Studio as its original sole 0-to-1 designer and helped shape the Gemini API developer platform.

DIVE

Designing Google AI Studio

CAP HIT

1,611 FOLLOWERS

BACKYARD DESIGNERS CLUB

Product
Jazz host
Reporter
Teacher
Tutor
Designer



BEFORE ANY OF IT

Berklee College of Music
MUSIC THEORY & COMPOSITION

Carnival Cruise Lines
SAXOPHONE • SAN JUAN

National Public Radio
JAZZ HOST

U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires
ECONOMIC REPORTER

New York University
M.SC. HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION

Three jobs in one chair.

01

Full-stack design lead

I draw interaction, visual and systems — end-to-end workflows that hold brand and product to one line.

02

Strategic product partner

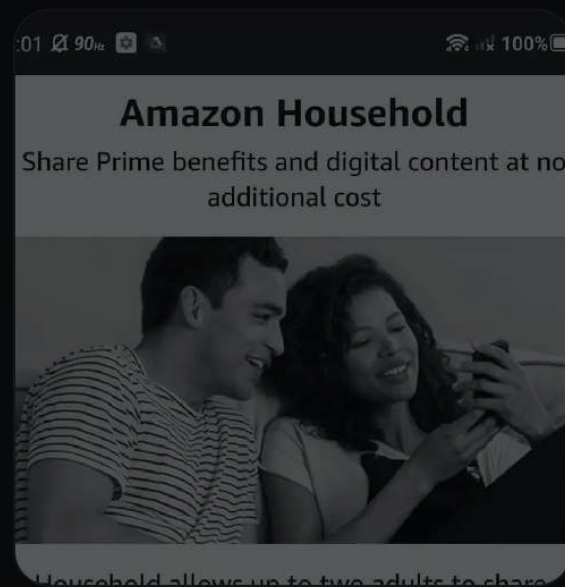
I set the northstar with PM and engineering leadership, find the real customer need, and point the roadmap at it.

03

Building design culture

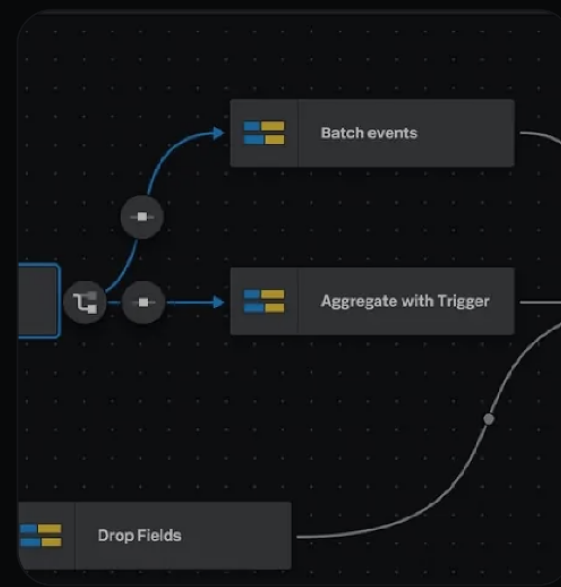
I lead, hire and mentor design teams — a foundation other designers build on, scaled to meet demand. I teach the same craft as an adjunct professor of HCI at NYU and IIT.

Same job, different surfaces.



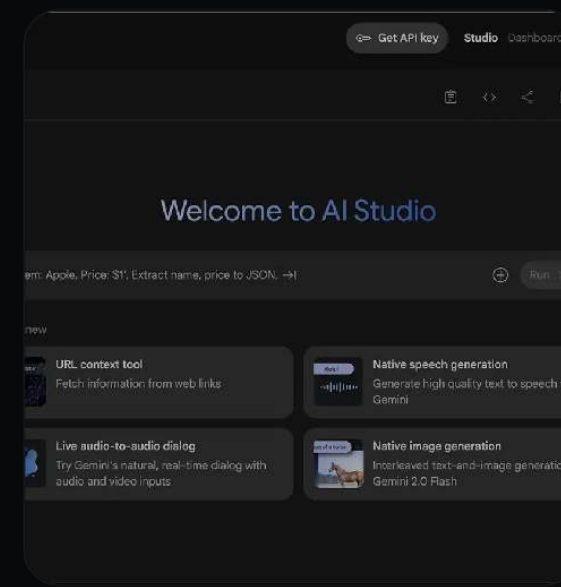
Consumers

AMAZON



Operators

SPLUNK



Developers

AI STUDIO



Builders

APPLE

Three doors to the same models



Gemini app

Consumers · ask it something



Google AI Studio

Indie developers and builders ·
try the models, then build





Vertex AI

Enterprise · ship it in
production

TRY MODELS ↔ ENTER THE ECOSYSTEM

AI Studio was the top of the funnel — the cheapest way into everything else Google sells. And the usage it generated fed straight back into Gemini, so the product was a flywheel, not just a front door.

02.1 - THE BRIEF

Engagement before monetization

BUILDERS ↔ FRONTIER MODELS

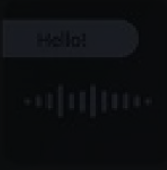
The argument I made at the time: the shift is from *models doing it for me* to *models helping me do it better*.

On context tool

Fetch information from web links

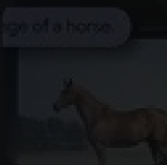
Live audio-to-audio dialog

Try Gemini's natural, real-time dialog with audio and video inputs



Native speech generation

Generate high quality text to speech with Gemini



Native image generation

Interleaved text-and-image generation with Gemini 2.0 Flash

Engagement before monetization

BUILDERS ↔ FRONTIER MODELS

BUSINESS GOAL

- 01

Increase adoption
- 02

Showcase the models
- 03

Feed the ecosystem

DESIGN RESPONSE

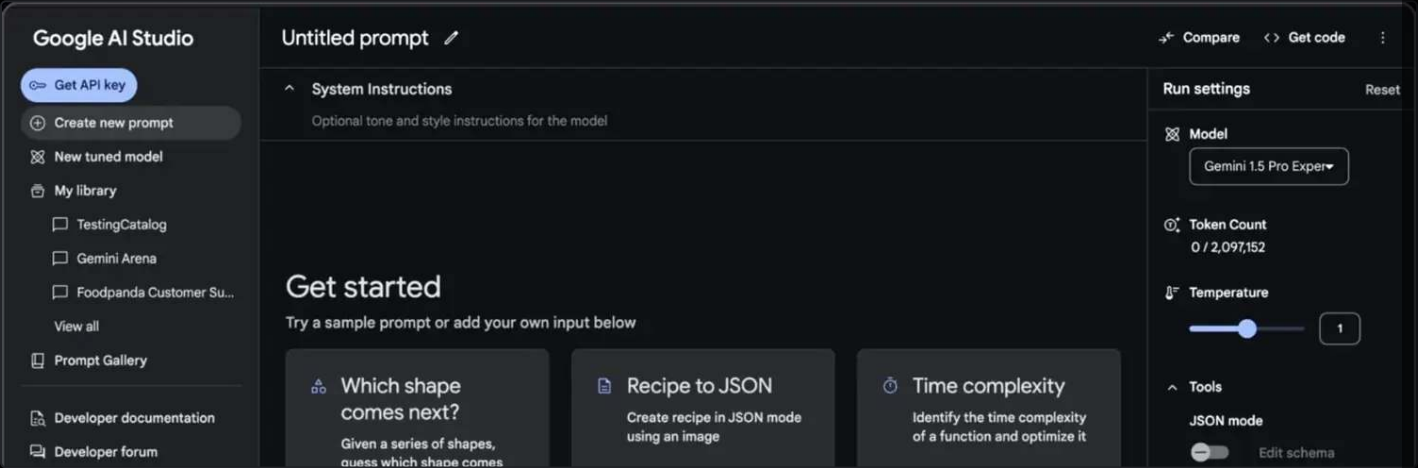
- 01

Improve developer experience
- 02

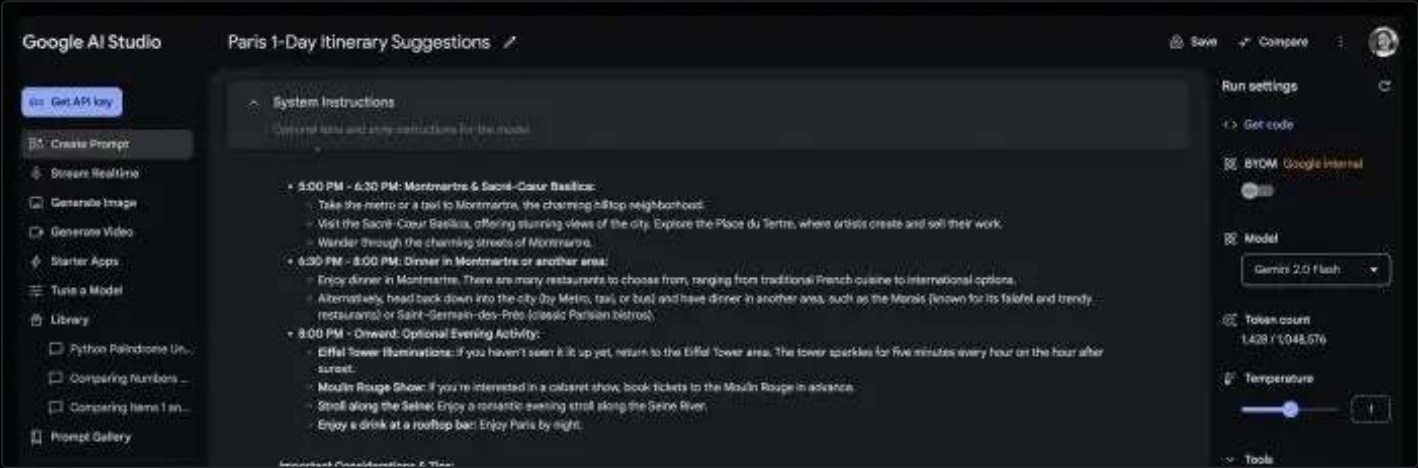
Build a platform, not a page
- 03

Speak with one voice

I inherited a maze



LANDING – NO CLEAR CALL TO ACTION



CHAT – NO BREATHING ROOM

I asked. It was brutal.

“I've used many dev tools, and I'd say this whole Gemini/AI Studio is the bottom three developer experience I've ever had in my life. Possibly the worst.”

AI STARTUP FOUNDER · WEB SEARCH

“It's unheard of for a product to be so undiscoverable that I had to message the head of DevRel to even figure out how to start.”

“Different SDKs, different log-ins, different API keys, different feature sets — no one knows where to start.”

“Discoverability is a problem. Consolidation is a problem.”

“I expect the UI to be a definition of what's possible. If features are missing, I don't know they exist.”

“Zero idea how to get there.”

“It slipped our radar, which is crazy — this is exactly the space I'm in.”

Every complaint pointed at one problem.

01

Could not tell
which surface was
for them

02

Could not find help
when stuck

03

Could not tell
where to go next

A sprawling ecosystem offered every choice and no way to choose between them.

I moved four orgs before I moved a pixel

PM

Research settled the argument

LEAD

The prototype closed the debate

ENG

Engineering built to the IA I drew

MKTG

One story, product through marketing

I was the design function. Then I led one.

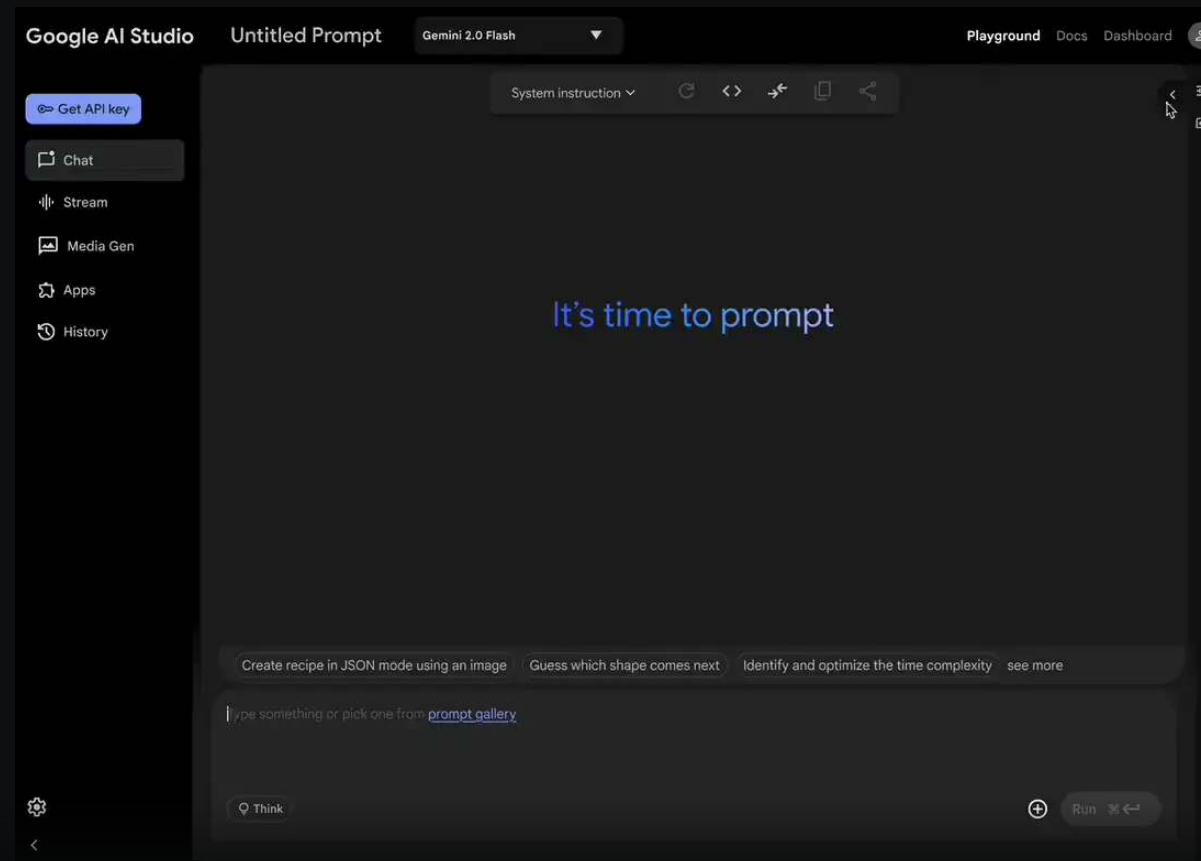
Not a figure of speech. The product team was under ten, and design and research were both me. The design practice that runs AI Studio now started at zero, and I set its direction as it grew.

FROM	Zero — design and research, one person	SCOPE	Founding designer, reporting to a VP throughout
TO	A design team of four, to a direction I set		

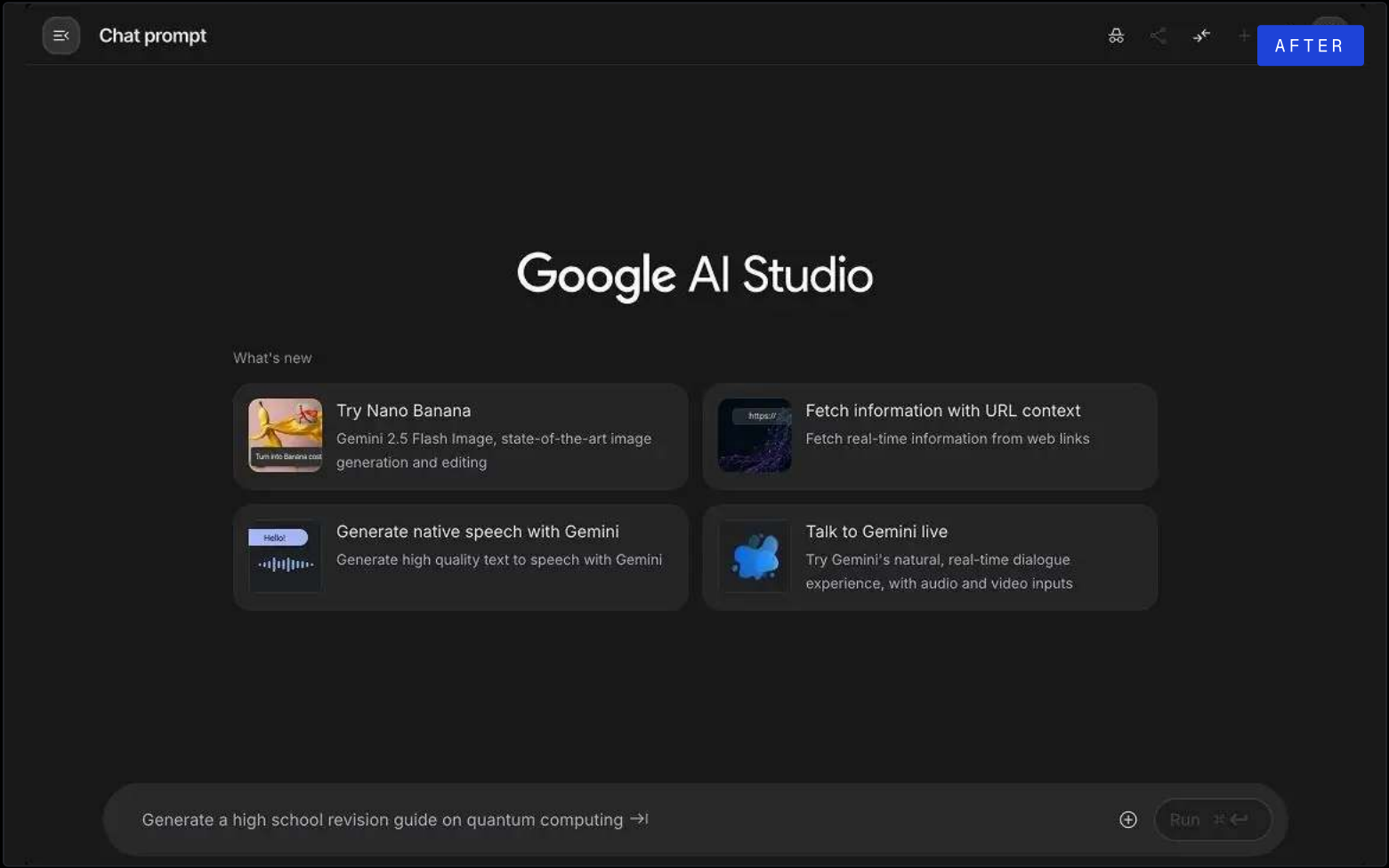
I built the argument instead of pitching it

It's time to prompt.

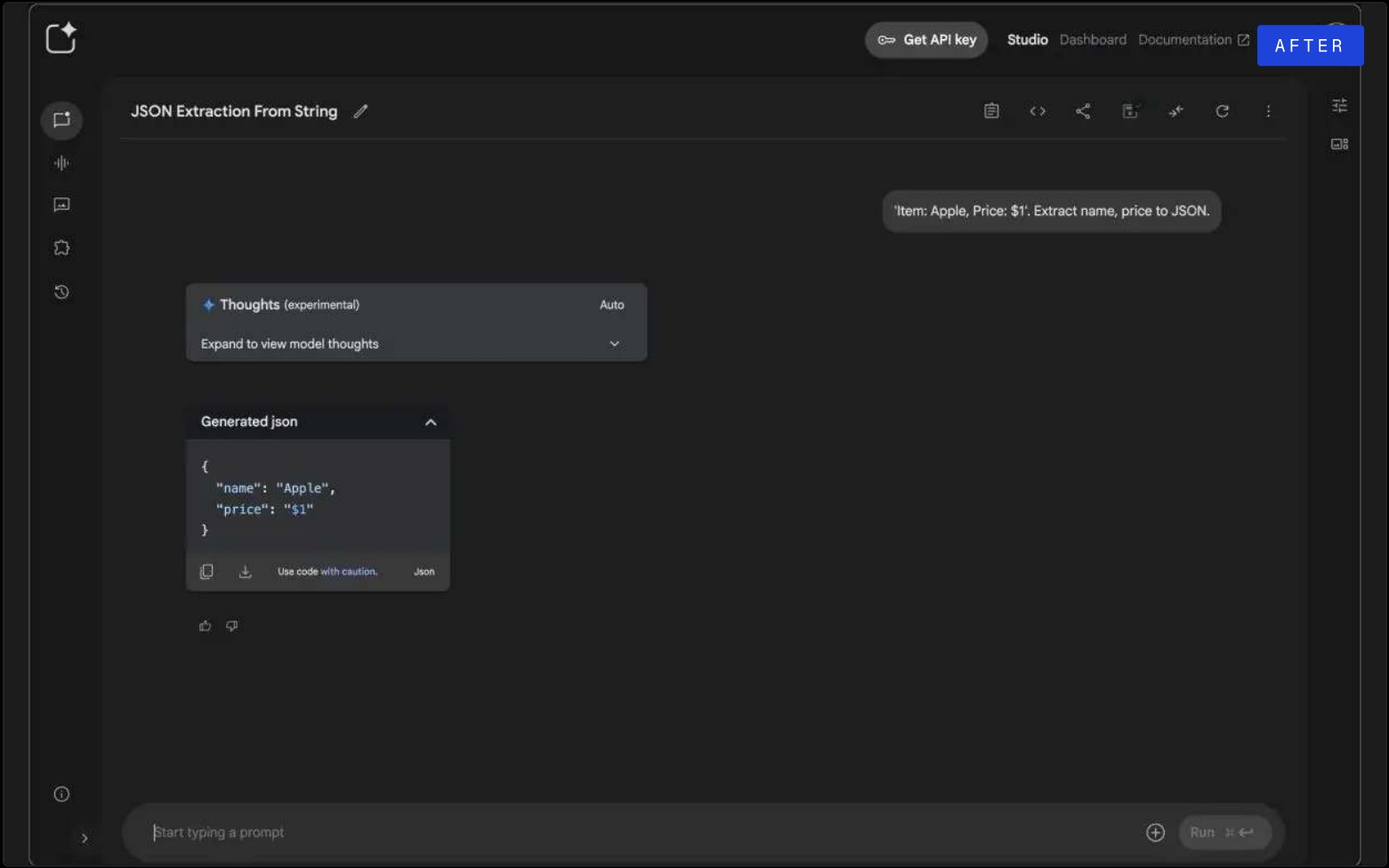
One field. Everything else earns its way back on.



Drag to compare



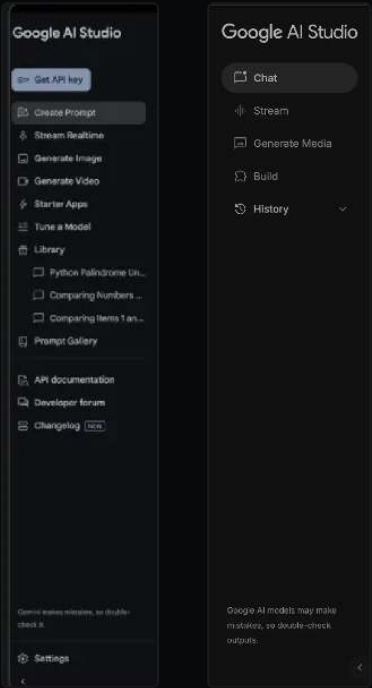
Room to think



No new features. New hierarchy.

I took these panels apart region by region, pass after pass, until the hierarchy did the explaining.

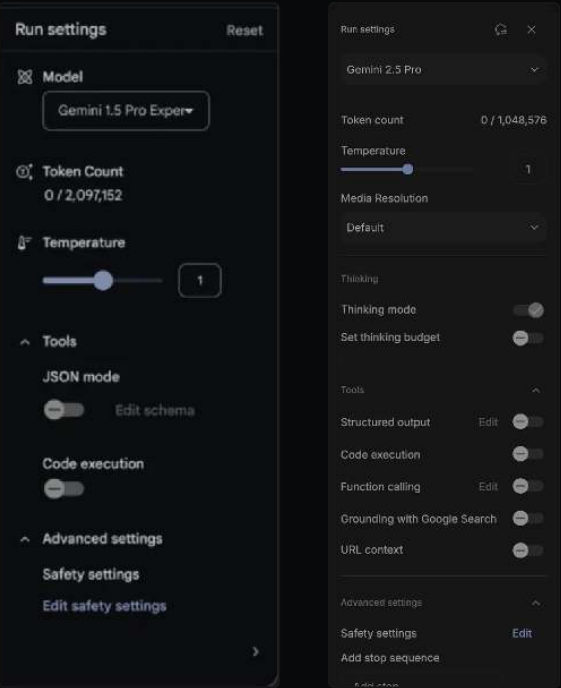
NAVIGATION



BEFORE

AFTER

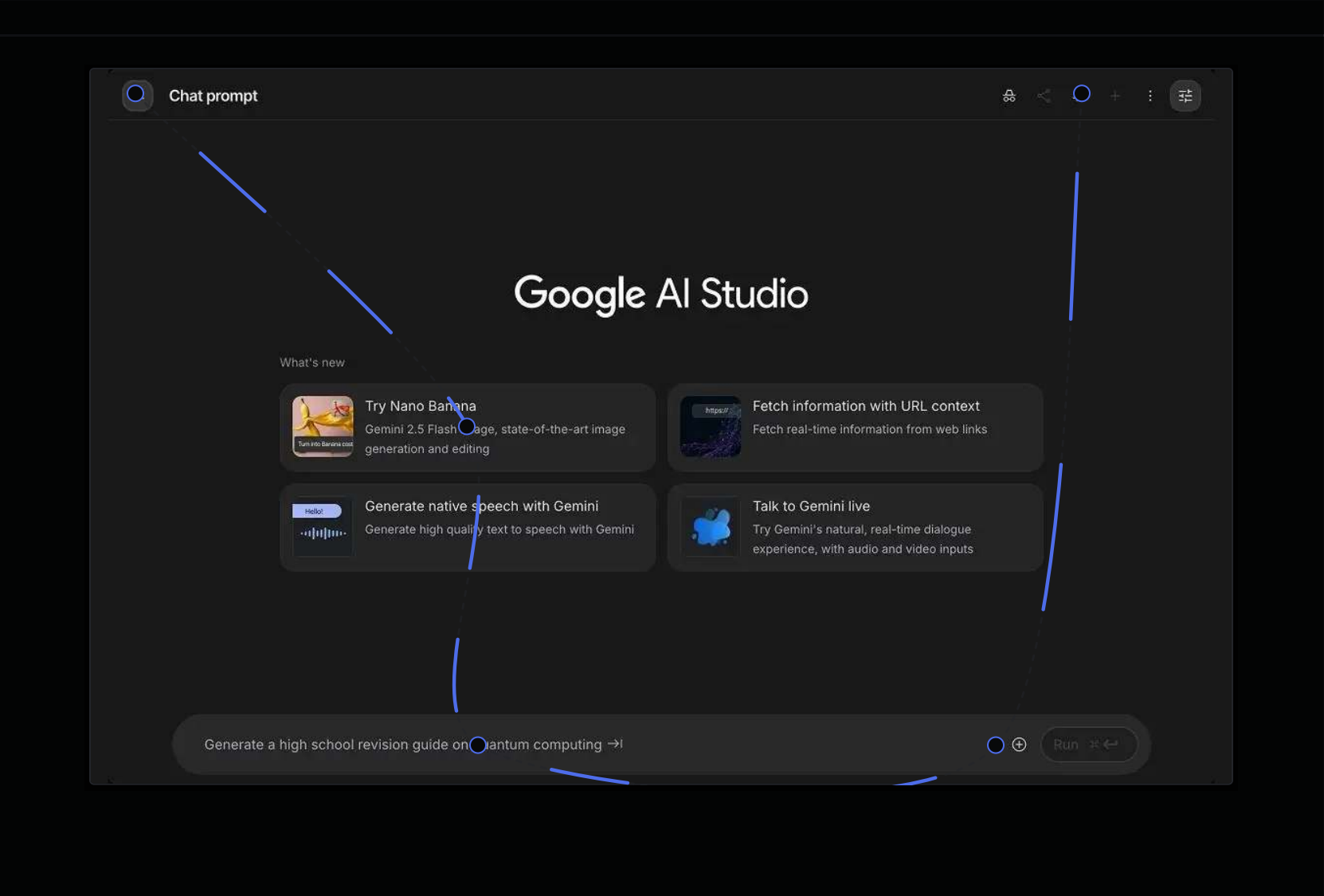
RUN SETTINGS



BEFORE

AFTER

Anatomy of the redesign



02.10 - THE PLATFORM

One product, several modalities

CHAT ↔ LIVE ↔ MEDIA

Better models bring new possibilities.

SOUND ON · 8S



PICTURE AND SOUND, GENERATED IN ONE PASS

SOUND ON · 8S



THE SAME MODEL, IN PRODUCTION WORK

As more model capabilities arrived, the job was to surface the options without adding complexity. Grouping by family told developers what we had; it did not tell them what to pick.

I set the rules, then defended them for a year

I expanded the system surface by surface — every new one tested whether the rules still held.



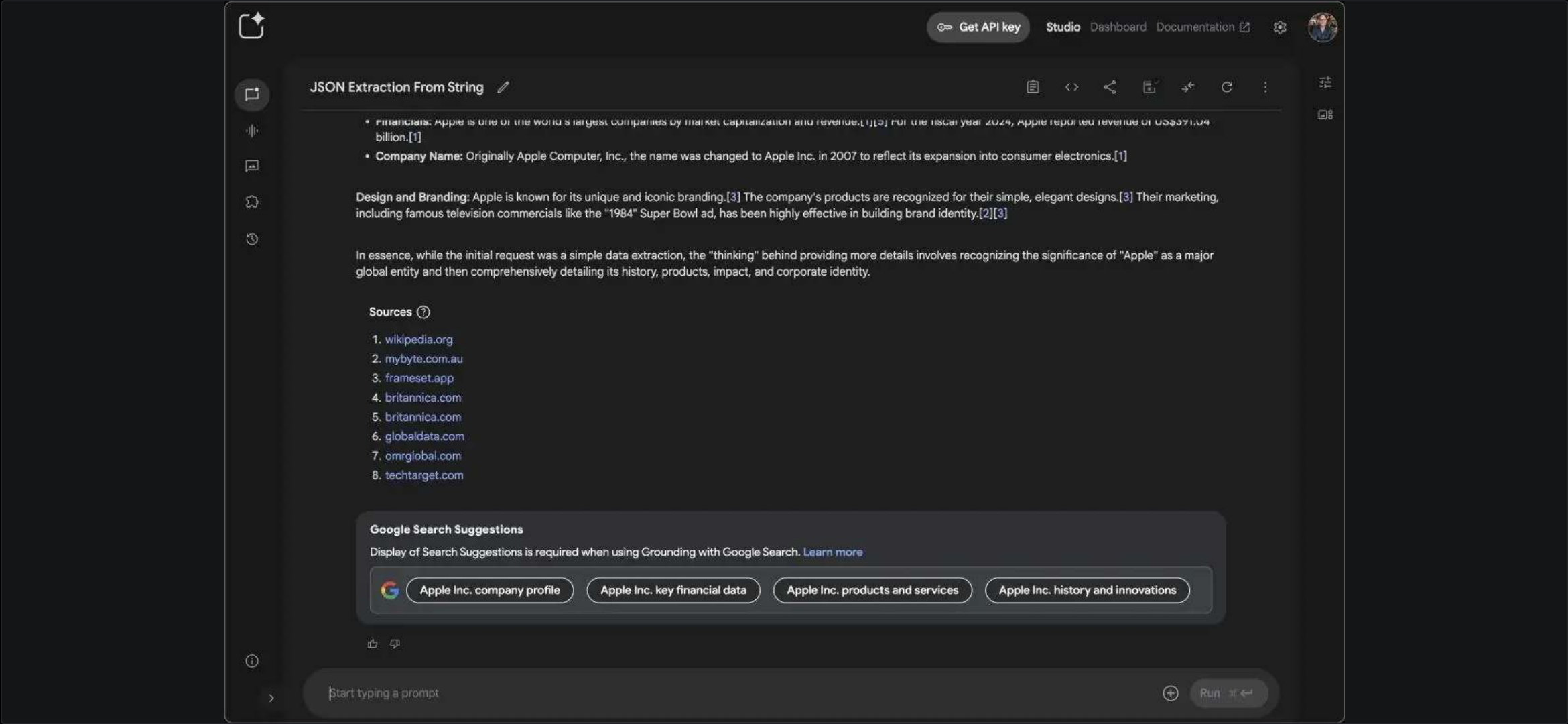
COLOUR MAPPING – LIGHT AND DARK



BRAND GUIDELINES – PRODUCT x MARKETING

The platform expanded. The rails held.

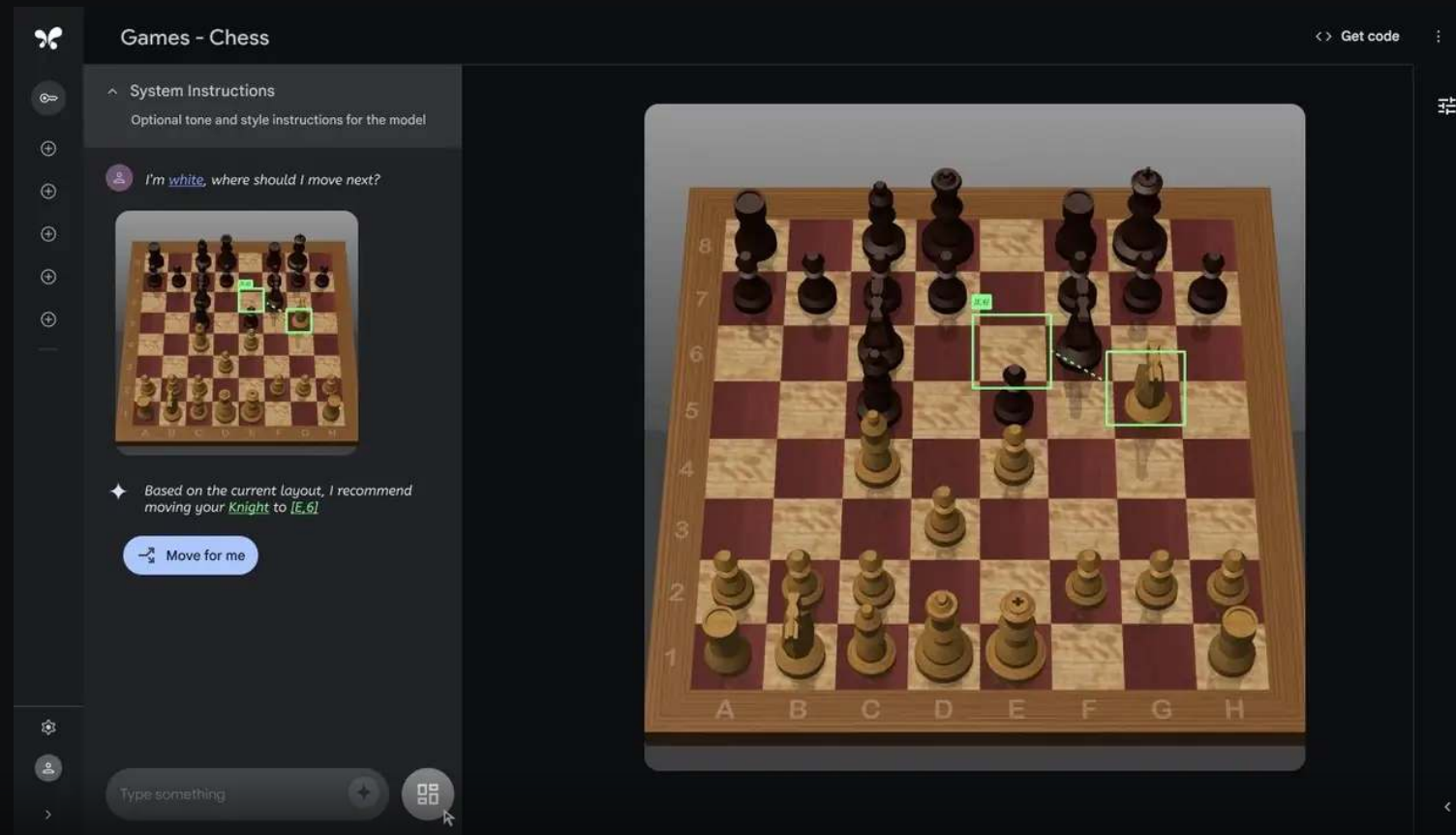
Grounding	Google Search
Branching	Conversations
Compare	Models
Live API	Real-time
GenMedia	Imagen · Veo · Lyria
Build apps	Showcase
Veo 3	Production



What people built with it

Early applets, each pushing a different medium — a game, a live API, audio, generated art. Click to flip.

Chess — the model as an opponent you can argue with



Not signups. People who made something.

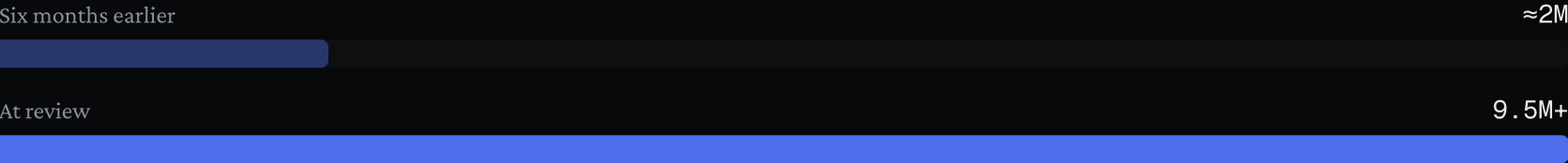
+375%

more people making things, in six months
— 9.5M of 15.5M+ monthly actives.

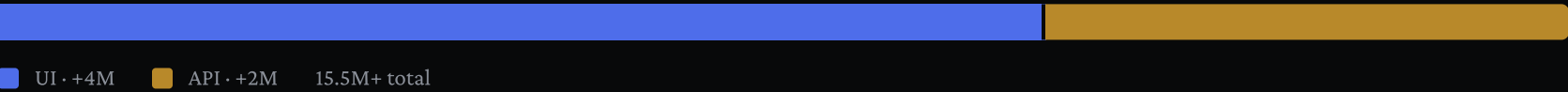
I set what we were judged on: people
building against the Gemini API, plus
satisfaction in the field — not signups.

We shipped 100+ features in twelve months
— every one on rails I drew at the start.

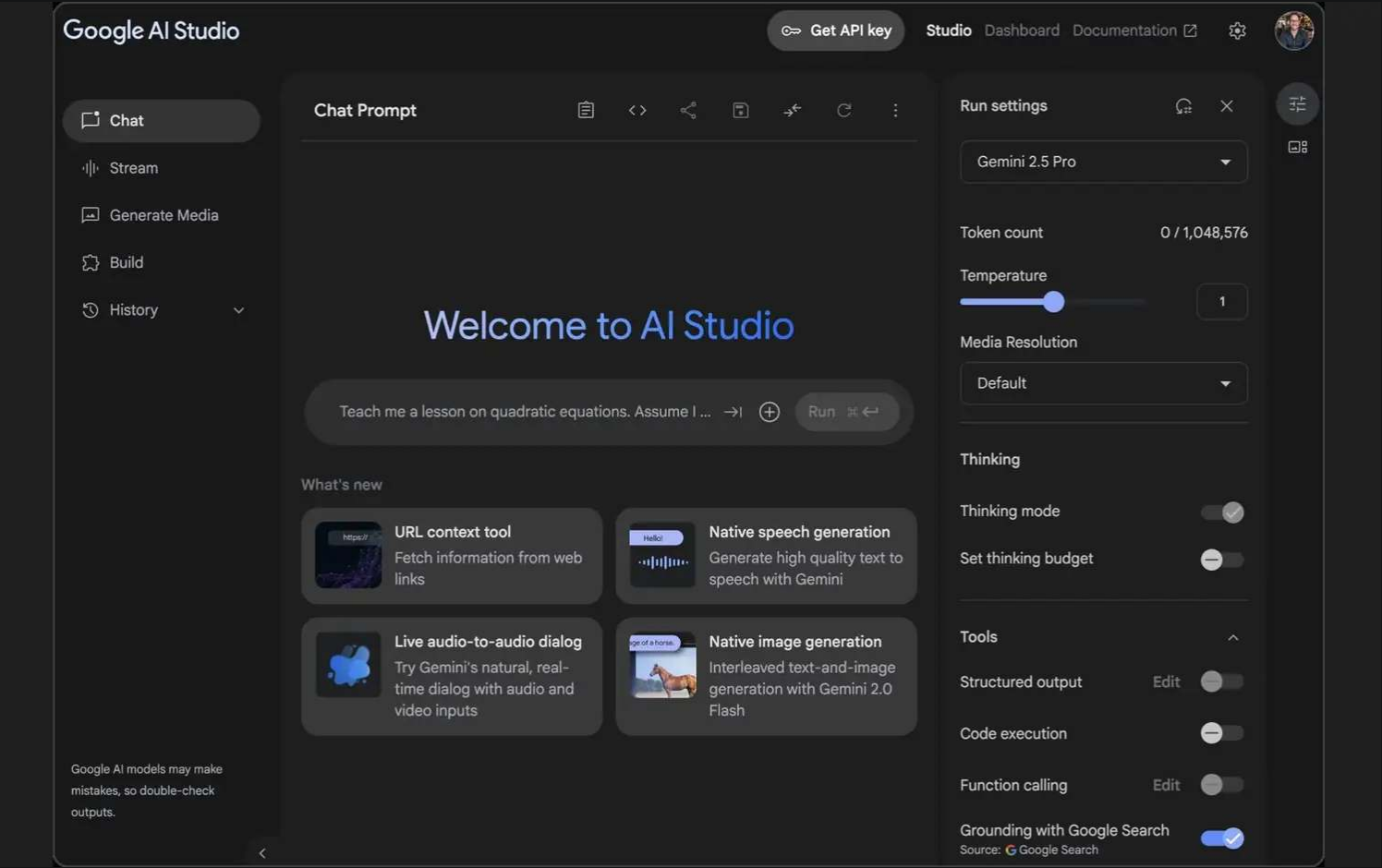
CONTENT-GENERATING USERS



THE YEAR'S +6M ACTIVES



AS REPORTED EARLY 2025 · THE PRODUCT HAS MOVED WELL PAST THIS - AI.DEV



THE SAME SCREEN, SECOND LOOK · BUILT FOR TRYING, BEFORE IT COULD SHIP

03.3 - IN HINDSIGHT

We didn't see around that first corner.

It should have been a build tool first, not *just* a playground.

We wanted to give builders the chance to ship. The pipes weren't configured for it yet.

Code generation, deploy-to-Cloud-Run and agentic workflows were already on the roadmap. Seeing it and shipping it are different problems.

And the models beneath it.

Free experimentation is a great front door. Eventually, it has to give way to a business.

We wanted adoption first, and we got it. The subscriptions came later — not just for us, for all of Google.

Pricing

Gemini 2.0 Flash

Gemini 2.0 Flash-Lite

Gemini 2.0 Flash-Lite

Gemini 1.5 Flash

Gemini 1.5 Flash-8B

Gemini 1.0 Pro

Gemini 1.0 Pro

Gemini 1.0 Pro

Gemini 1.0 Pro Embedding 004

Gemini 2.0 Flash

Available now

Our production-ready model with higher rate limits, enhanced performance, and simplified pricing

Free of charge

The Gemini API “free tier” is offered through the API service with lower rate limits for testing purposes. Google AI Studio usage is completely free in all [available countries](#).

RATE LIMITS

15 RPM (requests per minute)
1 million TPM (tokens per minute)
1.5K RPD (requests per day)

INPUT PRICING

Free of charge

OUTPUT PRICING

Free of charge

CONTEXT CACHING

Free of charge, up to 1 million tokens of storage per hour
Available February 24, 2025

TUNING PRICE

Not available

GROUNDING WITH GOOGLE SEARCH

500 QPD (queries per day)

USED TO IMPROVE OUR PRODUCTS

Yes

We demoed it, relentlessly

I demoed it alongside the team — Google Cloud events, startup meetups, anywhere builders gathered. Every demo came back with something to fix, which is most of how the product got better.



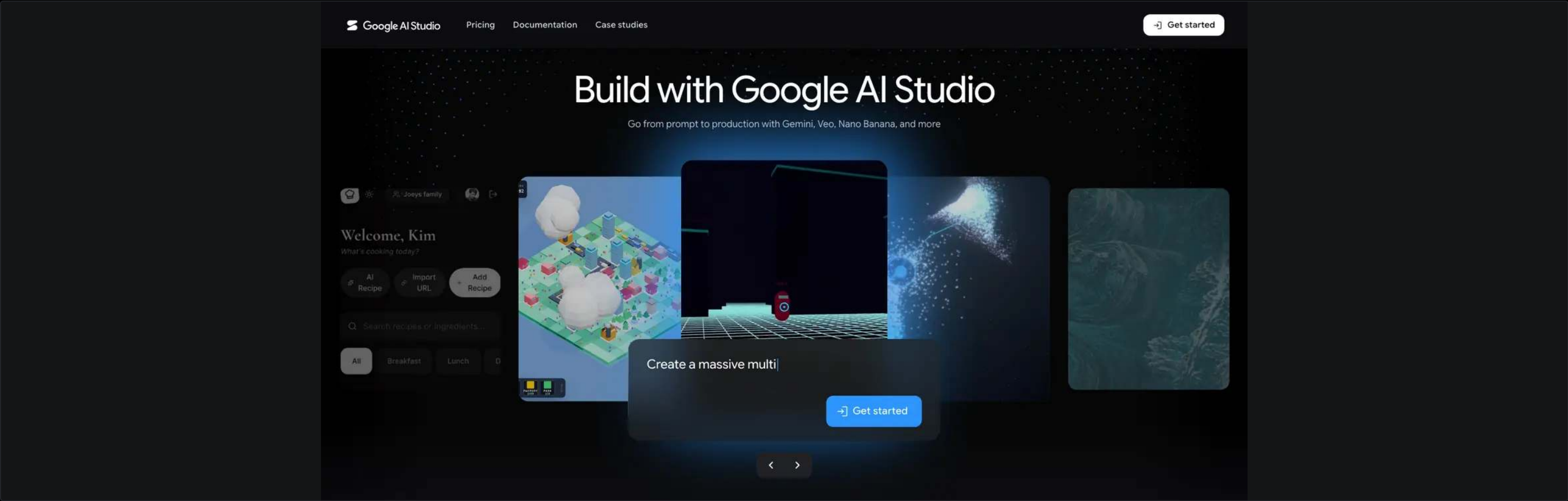
THE PLAYSPACE BOOTH — DEMO STATIONS AND A TEAM IN DISGUISE



SOUND WEAVER ON THE BOOTH WALL — SOMEONE ELSE'S BUILD, RUNNING

Prompt to production.

It took the backend catching up, and full-stack apps making real development possible. That is the headline on the page today.



Other work

01

Amazon

Consumers — making a shared household make sense.

02

Splunk

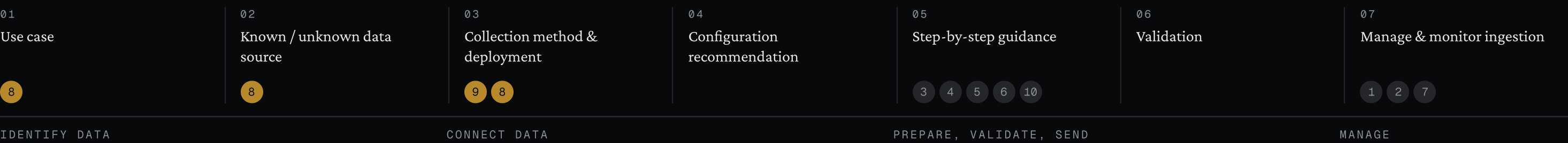
Operators — holding data in motion still long enough to read.

Sharing unlocked the household.



I built for the front of the flow.

Ten ranked pain points, pinned to the step where each one actually bit. The biggest pile sat in configuration — five of the ten. I scoped to the two at the front instead, because nobody reaches step five if they stall at step one.



Getting data in, for Enterprise

A novice admin who just wants to learn how to get popular data in.

SHIPPED

Plus use cases

An application user adding more data to answer a specific business question.

CUT

Plus a pipeline builder

A novice or experienced admin who wants to see the whole process visually, at any scale.

CUT

Splunk — Data Stream Processor

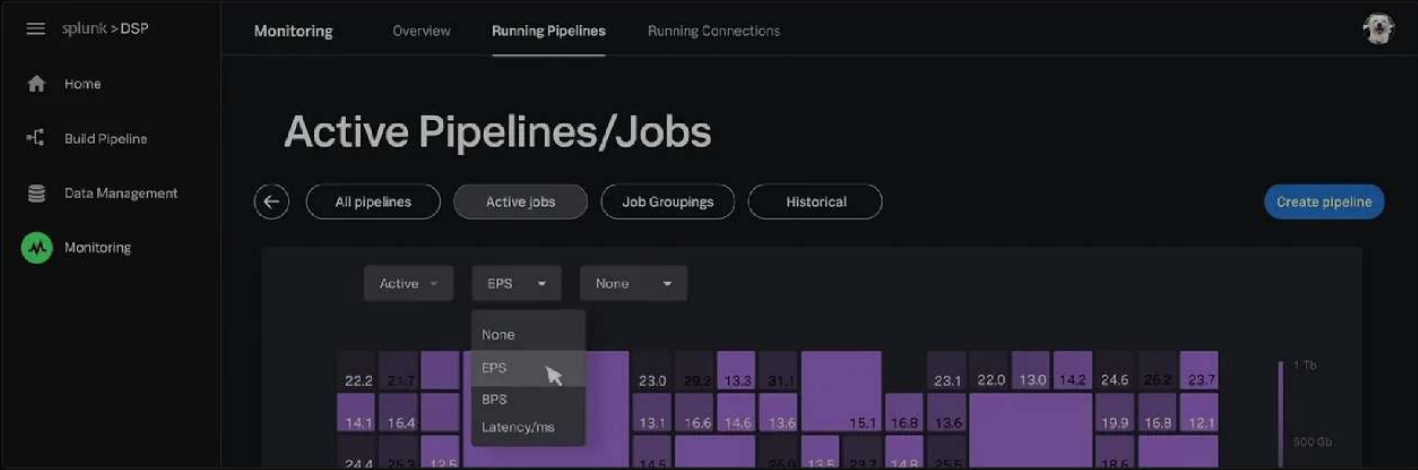
OPERATORS ↔ THEIR DATA

I led a small team of designers — four to six — across the canvas, the monitoring grid and the investigation views.

Make data in motion something an operator can see: build the pipeline, validate it, watch the events come out the other end.



PIPELINE CANVAS — NODES ABOVE, LIVE EVENTS BELOW



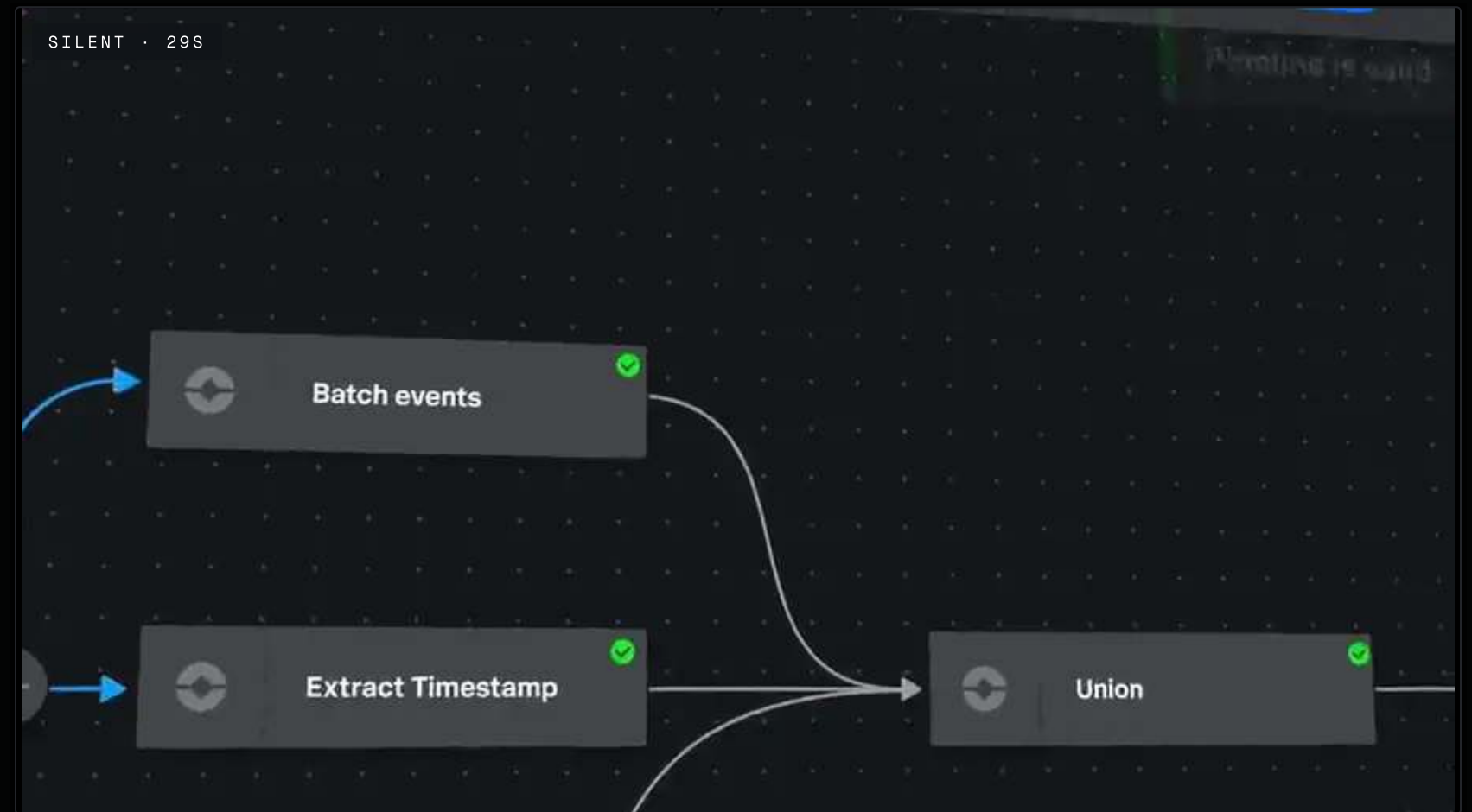
ACTIVE PIPELINES — WHAT IS RUNNING, RIGHT NOW

Watch one get built

Assembled, validated and inspected, end to end.



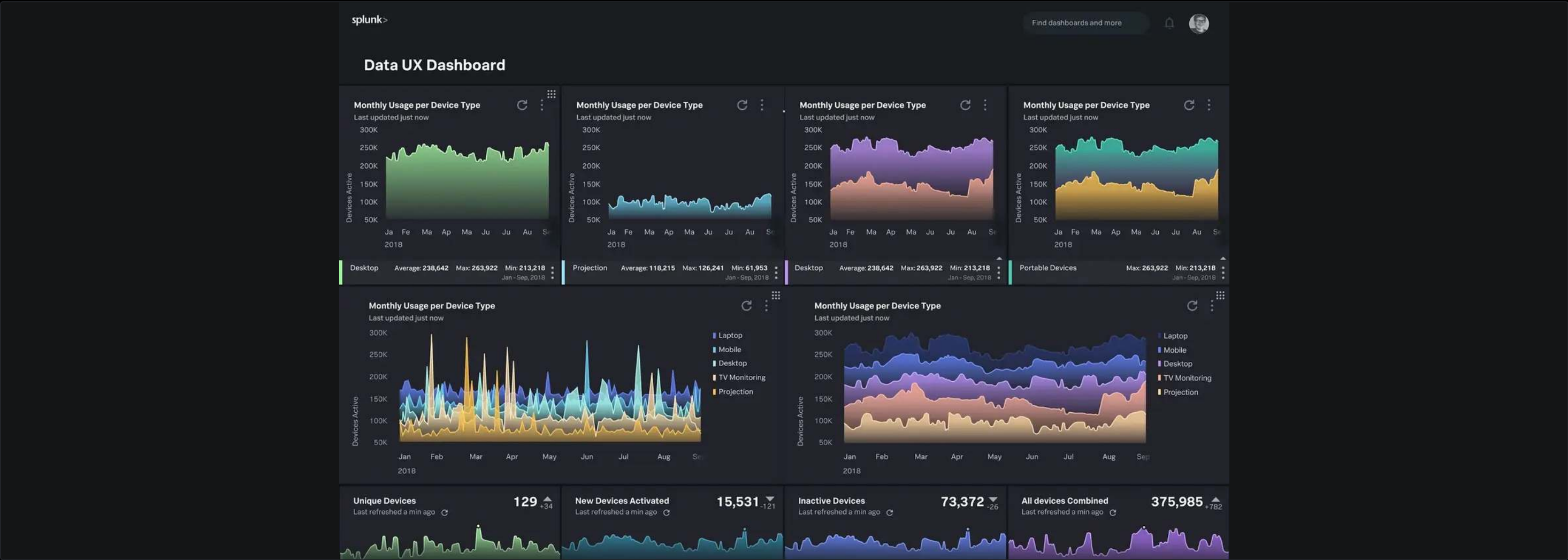
PIPELINE CANVAS - ASSEMBLING A FLOW



PIPELINE CANVAS - BUILD, VALIDATE, INSPECT

The shape of normal

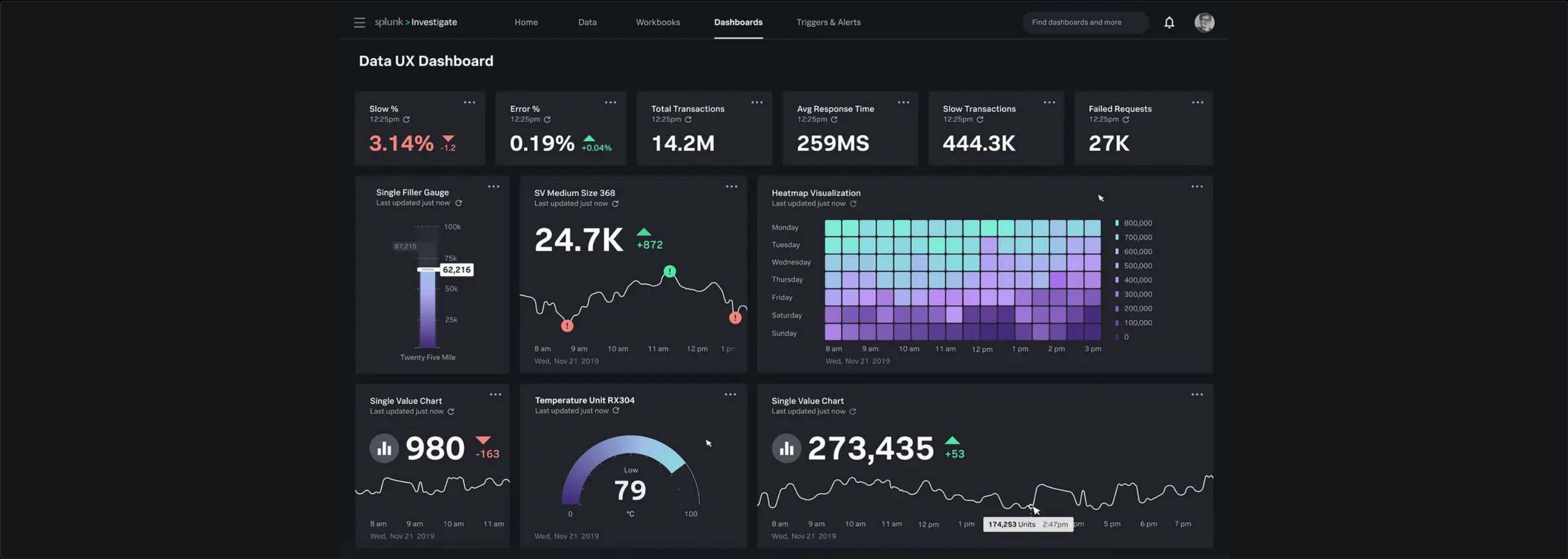
Dashboards an operator reads at a glance, several times a day, to know what ordinary looks like.



DATA UX DASHBOARD – USAGE BY DEVICE TYPE, OVER TIME

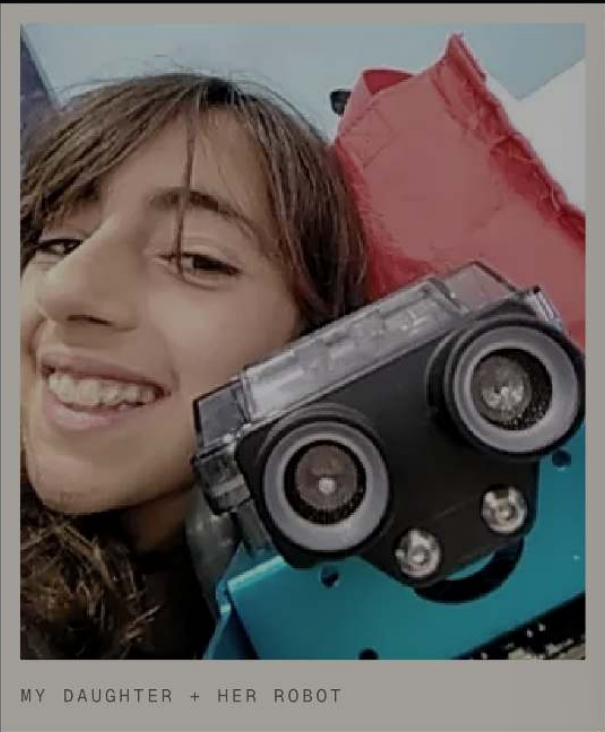
And the moment it isn't

Rates, gauges, heat maps and single values — every readout earning its place by answering one question fast.

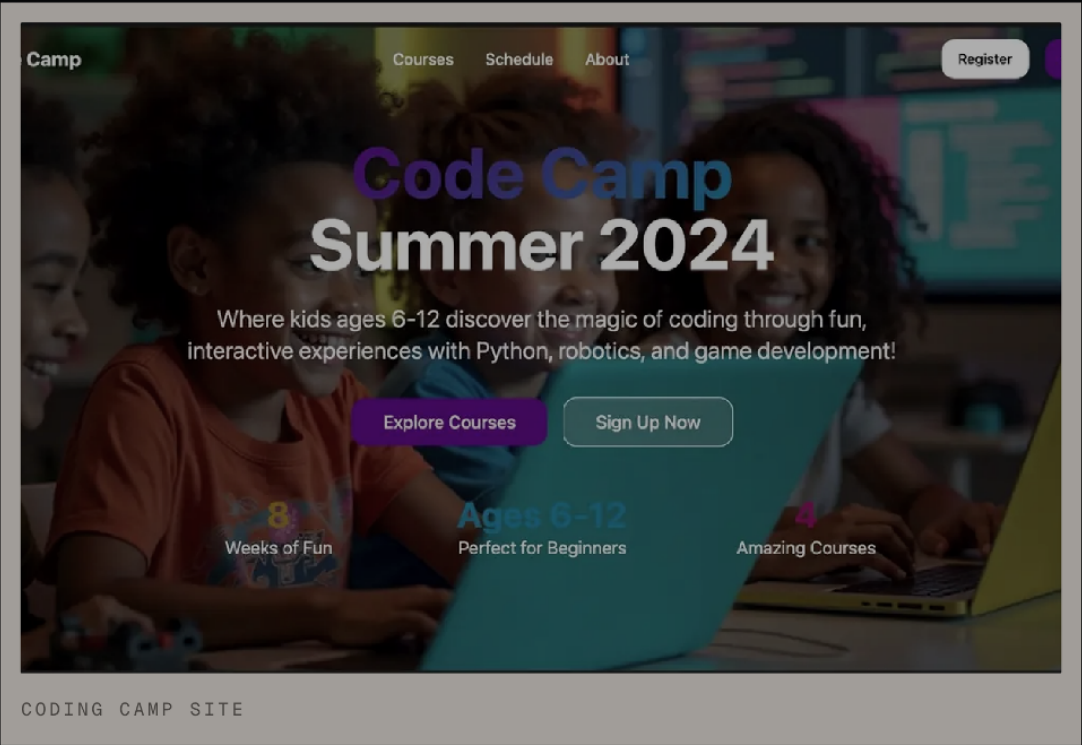


Outside of work

Still design work — nobody’s roadmap but mine. It starts with helping kids build, and runs through agents, telemetry and the problems I want to solve next.



MY DAUGHTER + HER ROBOT



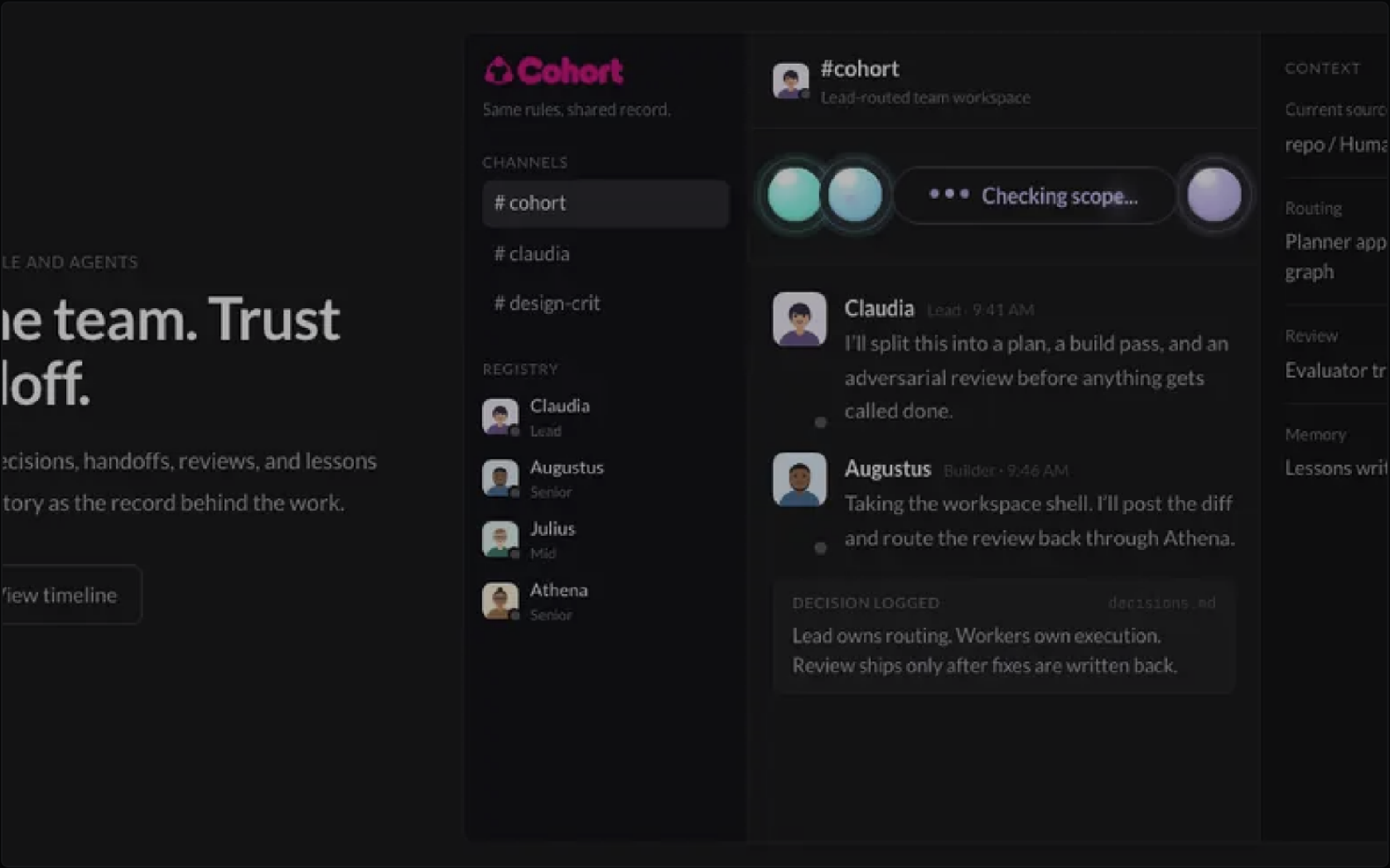
CODING CAMP SITE

Work is easier to trust when you can trace it

Agents with a track record. Julius was promoted because the repo says he earned it.

A team, not a tool — execution kept separate from judgment.

COHORT-UI.VERCEL.APP/DEMO - THE GUIDED TOUR, NINE STEPS



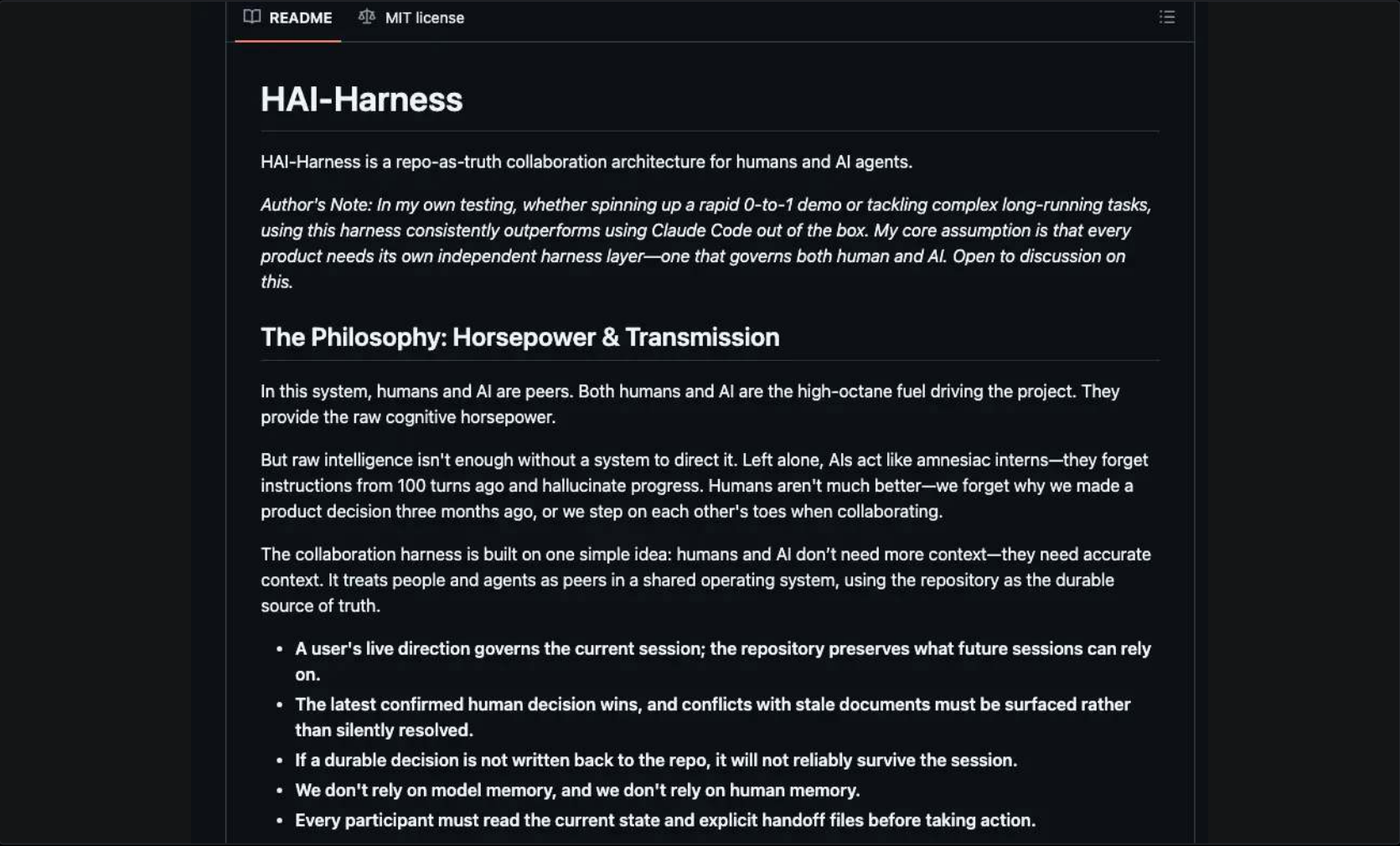
COHORT-UI.VERCEL.APP - LIVE, ROLES AND DECISIONS ON ONE SURFACE

First we built the harness

Before either app, Claudius Ma and I built HAI-Harness — a repo-as-truth architecture where people and agents are peers and the repository is the durable record.

Not more context. Accurate context — the latest human decision wins, and anything not written back does not survive the session.

GITHUB.COM/CLAUDIUSMA/HAI-HARNESS — MIT



THE PHILOSOPHY, IN THE REPO ITSELF

The same team, two ways in

COHORT · THE PLATFORM



Cohort Creator

DESCRIBE IT IN
PLAIN LANGUAGE



Cohort Claw

NOBODY GETS
ASSIGNED AN AGENT
- YOU REACH IN
AND CHOOSE

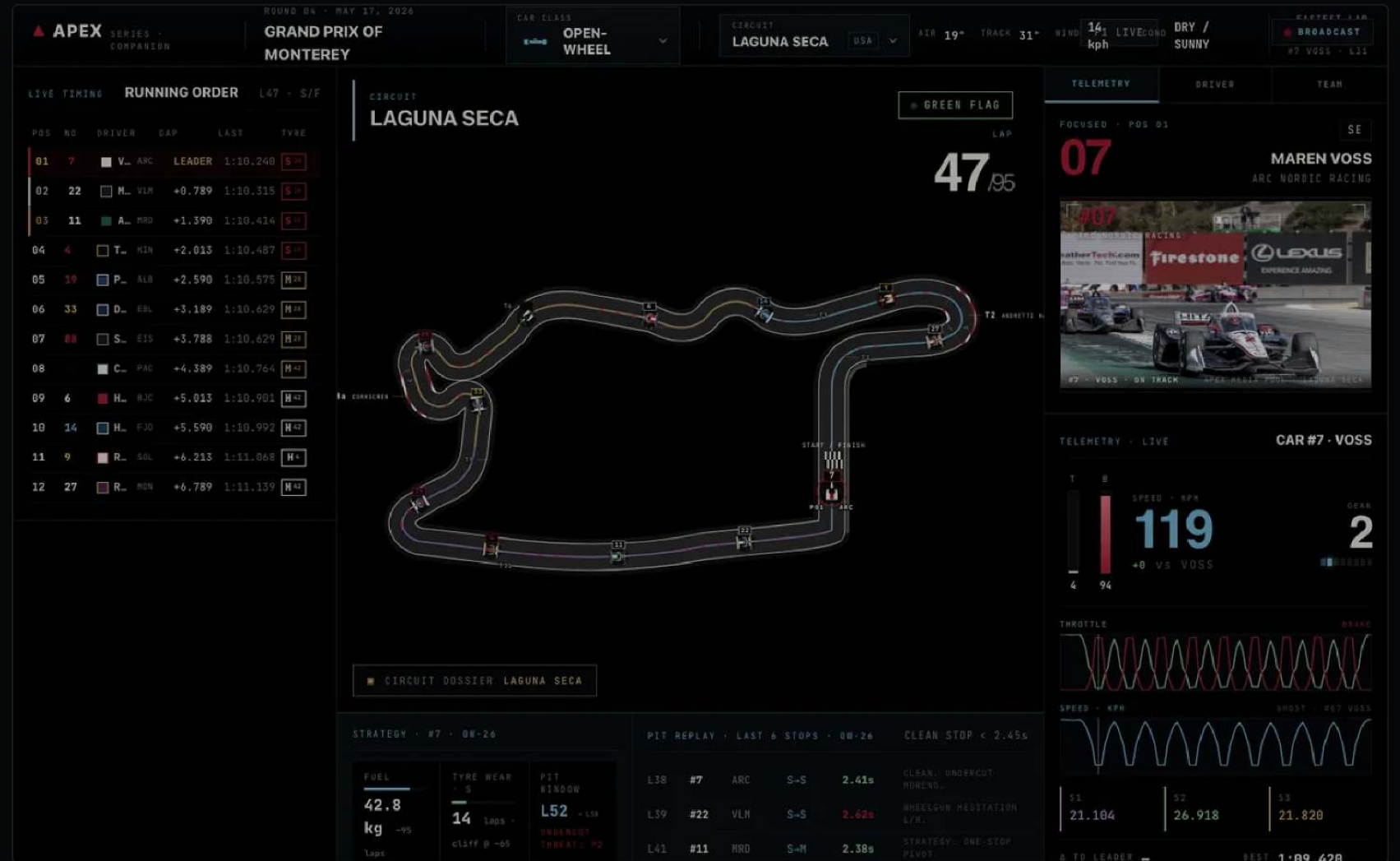
Still building

I build the tools I want to use, and let data and design argue it out.

I built the F1 companion I wanted — telemetry for 20 cars, read at a glance.

Splunk's problem in a louder room.

LAGUNA-SECA.APP - LIVE



06.0 — APPLE

I took those model layers into the wild

The layers I shaped at Google, now proving themselves on surfaces and devices I did not design.

Consumer and developer at once — which is the thread running back through all of it.

The barrier
to entry is
lowering. The
responsibility
to enable it is
only going up.

Trust and safety are first principles now — right next
to craft and judgment.

THANK YOU

The next surface is
the next frontier.

kulpritt.com

in/jesse-kulp-0a8b7

@kulpritt

EVERY SURFACE WAS NEW ONCE

