

Tutorial Activity Levels: Exploring Representations and Impacts on the Tutorial Experience

Motivation

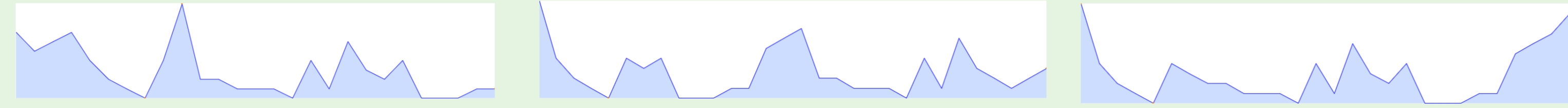
The community of users reading and writing online tutorials is expanding. Users can ask questions, add suggestions, or share their results via commenting.

Many comments are posted with the hope that there will be a response from the community. Without any indicators, it is difficult to determine if other users are accessing the content.

Users may benefit or be influenced by having access to trends in activity level.

Pilot Study #1 – Exploring Representations

Graph (Sparkline):



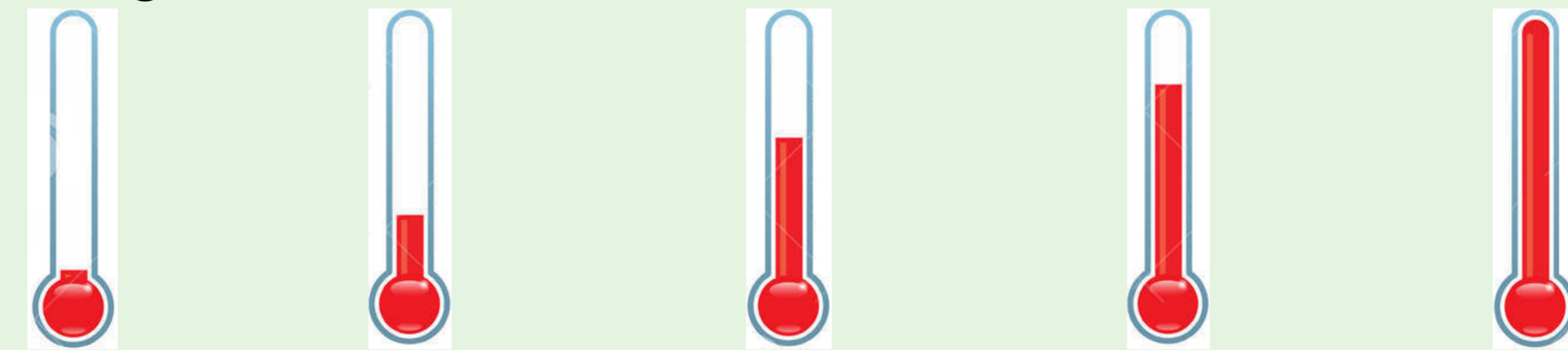
Text:

INACTIVE

ACTIVE

TRENDING

Image:



Method

- Given a list of tutorials with one of the representations, participants explained their interpretation of the activity level metric
- Participants picked their favourite representation

Findings

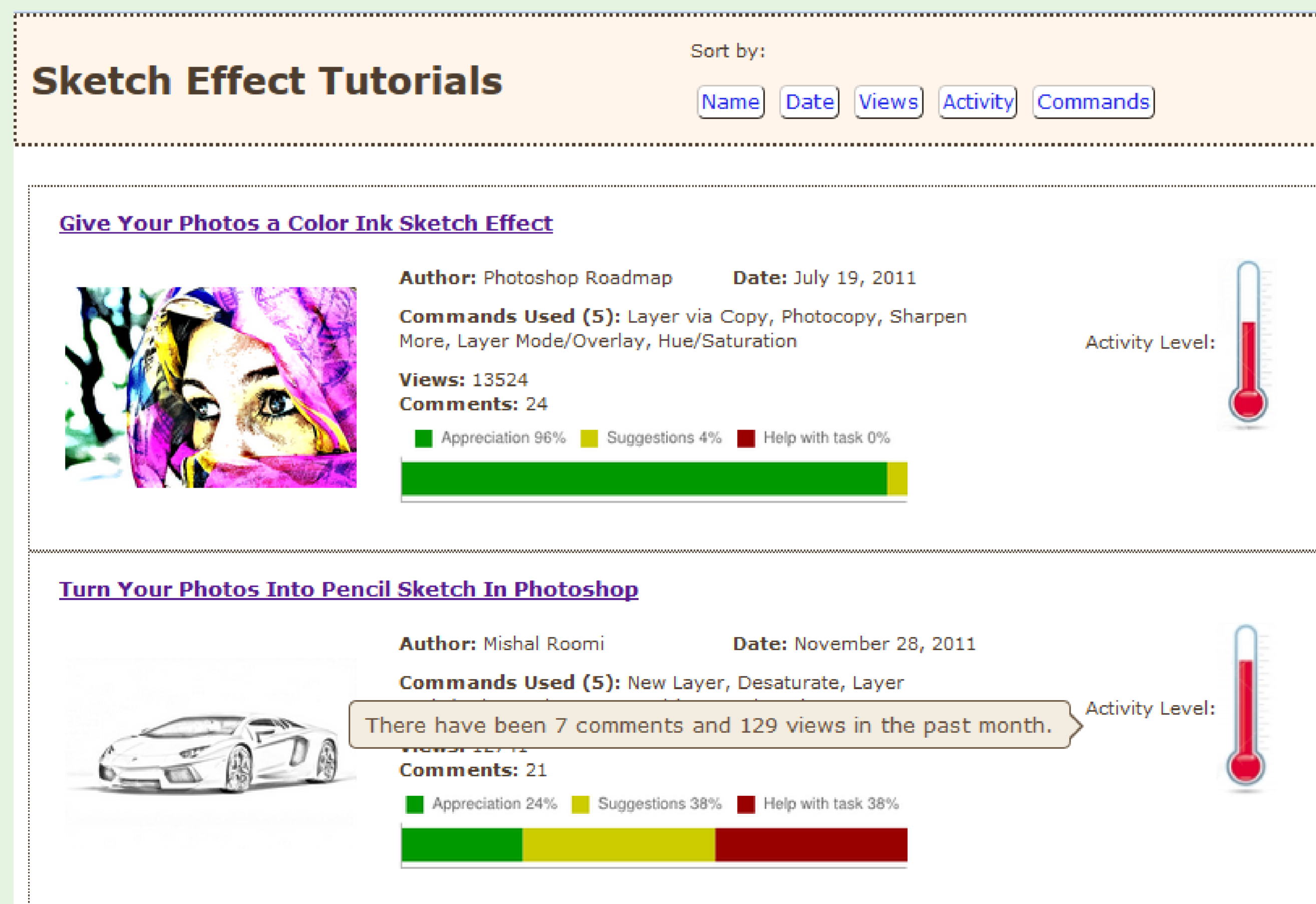
- Most participants liked the thermometer image because it was universal and easy to understand
- Many commented that they would like to know more details about how the level is calculated

Pilot Study #2 – Impact on Tutorial Selection

Thirty-two sketch effect tutorials are listed for the selection tasks

The command list shows the number of different commands in the tutorial and lists them

The comment graph gives a breakdown of the types of comments in the tutorial



Sort by: [Name](#) [Date](#) [Views](#) [Activity](#) [Commands](#)

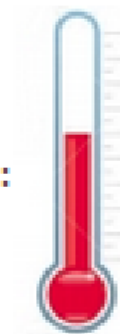
Give Your Photos a Color Ink Sketch Effect

Author: Photoshop Roadmap Date: July 19, 2011

Commands Used (5): Layer via Copy, Photocopy, Sharpen More, Layer Mode/Overlay, Hue/Saturation

Views: 13524
Comments: 24

Appreciation 96% Suggestions 4% Help with task 0%

Activity Level: 

Turn Your Photos Into Pencil Sketch In Photoshop

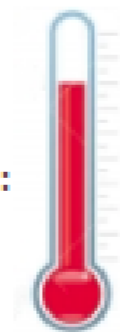
Author: Mishal Roomi Date: November 28, 2011

Commands Used (5): New Layer, Desaturate, Layer

There have been 7 comments and 129 views in the past month.

Comments: 21

Appreciation 24% Suggestions 38% Help with task 38%

Activity Level: 

Buttons allow for sorting

Activity level is calculated by comments and views in the past month

Hovering over activity level causes a detailed tooltip to appear

Method

- Twelve participants
- Completed five selection tasks based on situational personas
- Each task involves selecting from a corpus of 32 tutorials
- Compared use of activity level to use of command list and comment graph

Preliminary Findings

- Used activity level as deciding factor for variety of tasks
- Most used activity level for tasks involving trendiness
- Most liked having activity level and command list available
- Most users were able to gain additional knowledge about the tutorial from the comment graph

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