

Tensions in Learning About Generative AI: Investigating How Artists Exploring Image Generation Tools

Imagine you are a talented artist..... (but you don't know ML)



You're working on a delightful story about a family of turtles having tea in a mossy forest.



But every time you run it... a turtle's eyes are on its back.



So you turn to tutorials. You want to understand what went wrong....



The Problem – Barriers to Access

How helpful are current tutorials for learning AI-image tools?

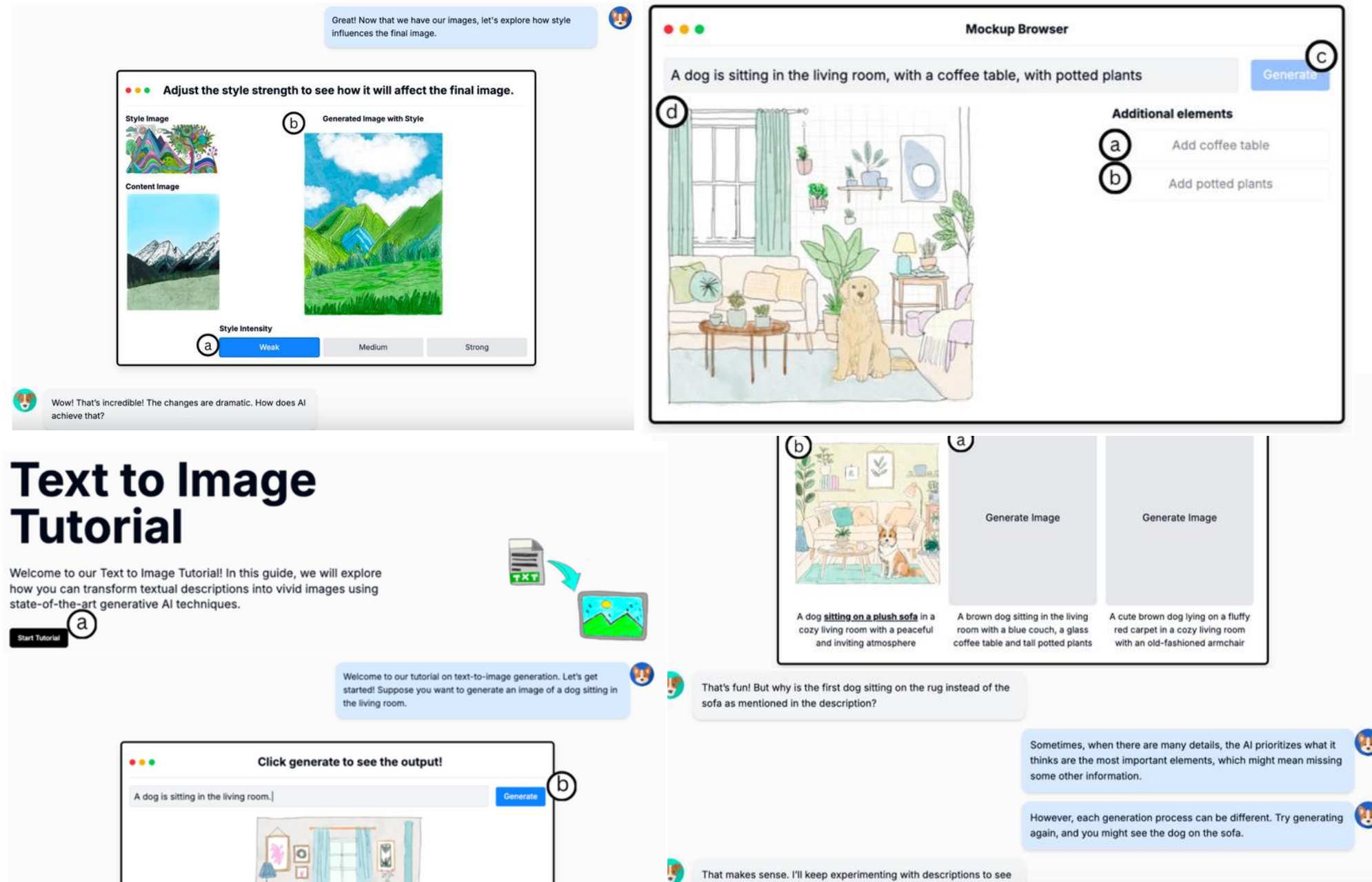


- 1 in 3 said tutorials were not helpful
- About 50% of non-technical users found the content overwhelming
- The biggest barrier? **Understanding the terminology**

“Copy and paste the settings, like all the settings in Latent Modifier Integrated. What does that even mean?!”



So we made Peek-Box - with the feedback from artists and experts







- Jargon-free, comic-style format
- Interactive design (flip cards, sliders)
- Covers text-to-image, style transfer and sketch-to-image

User Study to Evaluate Peek-Box

- With 17 artists and art hobbyists (6 F | 10 M | 1 GNC) from diverse professions
- Most participants (14 out of 17) had some experience using Gen AI image tools but none of them were ML experts

How Artists Perceived Peek-Box

	Text to Image Task A Participants were shown the image and asked to recreate it using text prompts within a specific time limit.
	Text to Image Task B Participants were shown the image and asked to recreate it using text prompts within a specific time limit.
	Style Transfer Task C – Style Image Participants were provided with the image as the style image.
	Style Transfer Task C – Content Image Participants were provided with the image as the content image. In this task, they were required to apply the style of the style image to the content image and refine the output within a time frame.
	Sketch to Image Task D Participants were provided with a sketch of a cat and asked to generate an image of the cat flying in space within a time limit.

Approaches:

- With tutorial
- Self-experimentation

Results:

- Task performance
- User satisfaction
- Tutorial helpfulness

But.... The Creative Autonomy Paradox

- Participants appreciated guidance—but still wanted creative freedom
- Structured tutorials were useful but sometimes limited creative freedom

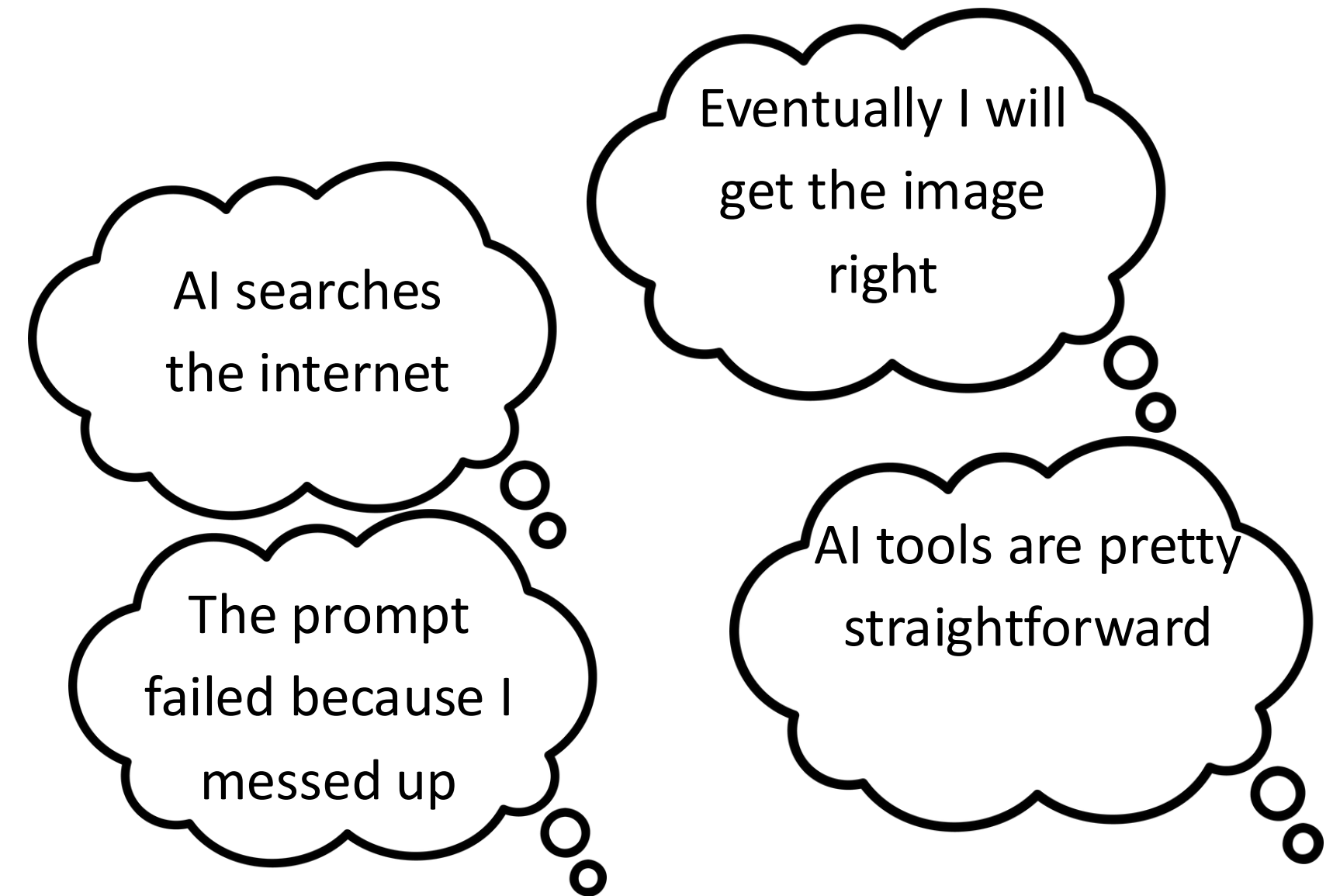


“Most of the time, I don’t really like to be guided when I’m doing things that are, like, more creative.”



“It’s just like Google, right?” - Misconceptions and Misunderstanding

- Some thought it retrieved images online
- The problem is me, not AI
- Reluctance to admit confusion



Why This Matters

- Many users (artists, hobbyists, curious first-timers) lack technical backgrounds
- Build tutorial systems invite everyone— not just tech experts



Thank you

