Learning SketchUp

or: Tooltips are King
What we thought:

• When people have a problem, they will consult the documentation, spend some time learning, and get their problem solved.

• We know the language people use to describe their problems, so we can make a simple search system that works.

• We can impose an order of importance for the tools that people should be using, and thereby set up a procedural path through basic training materials.
What we built:

- Learning Center
- Help Center
- SketchUp Help
- Status Prompts
- Tooltips
- Instructor
- Quick Reference Card
- SketchUp Community (Pro Forums, Google Groups)
- Video Tutorials
- Self-Paced Tutorials
- Live Training
- Tech Support
- Error messages
- Menu System
- Toolbars
- ...
Learning Center

You can learn SketchUp

Anyone can learn the basics of SketchUp by taking a few minutes to work through the tips in this learning center. We hope this video will help you get a sense of working in SketchUp.

After you've watched this video try working through some basic concepts on your own using this SketchUp model.
Self-Paced Tutorials

See these numbered tabs across the screen? Just click on a tab to move to that part of the tutorial.

We'll tell you here which tab is next throughout the tutorial. Click on tab 2 to continue this lesson.

Click on Tab 2 to continue.

Select objects. Shift to extend select. Drag mouse to select multiple.
Video Tutorials
Help Center
Welcome to SketchUp (Mac OS X)

Developed for the conceptual stages of design, SketchUp is powerful yet easy-to-learn 3D software. We think of it as the pencil of digital design. This award-winning software combines a simple, yet robust tool-set that streamlines and simplifies 3D design inside your computer. SketchUp is being used by anyone with the desire to Dream, Design and Communicate in 3D!

From the entire SketchUp team, thank you for trying SketchUp, and welcome to the SketchUp user community.

SketchUp Versions

SketchUp is available in personal and professional versions. Google SketchUp (free) is available for free on sketchup.google.com.

Google SketchUp Pro is available to purchase at http://sketchup.google.com/gsu6/buy.html. You need Google SketchUp Pro if you want to:

- Export models in 3DS, DWG, DXF, OBJ, XSI, VRML, and FBX file formats
- Use the LayOut tools to create page and screen-based presentations of your models.
- Receive free email technical support for two years after purchase

Google SketchUp (free) and Google SketchUp Pro 6 Documentation

This documentation represents all of the functionality in both Google SketchUp (free) and Google SketchUp Pro 6. Functionality that is specific to Google SketchUp Pro 6 is identified with the pro icon (pro) in this documentation.

Using this Guide
Quick Reference Card
Status Prompt
Status Prompt
What we found:

We performed a series of usability tests to look in detail at the “first 15 minutes” of a new SketchUp user’s experience. In the test, we recruited construction-minded people from the parking lot of a hardware store. We put them in front of SketchUp with no instruction, and watched what they did.

- about half the users dismissed the Learning Center right away.
- only one user (out of 7 total) consulted the documentation
- only one user (out of 7 total) consulted the Help Center
- all users missed the Status Prompt
- all users scanned the menu system
- all users scanned the toolbars, pausing to watch for tooltips
Tooltips
Menus
Instructor

Select Tool
Select entities to modify when using other tools or commands.
next steps:

- Understand “Help & Learning” as a continuum of resources, from Tooltip to support call.

- Develop a richer, dynamic tooltip that grows to provide additional learning resources as a function of time, or clicks.

- Research more adjacent applications to look for what works there. Maybe consider other applications as important precedents.

- Understand what kinds of help & learning are appropriate for each kind of question (“Something is broken...”, “How do I...?” and “How does this work?”)