

# Becoming-Sound

Affect and Assemblage in  
Improvisational Digital Music Making

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THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

# Outline

- Affect and assemblage
- Jamming in *Viscotheque*: a case study







The *intensity* of  
*jamming*



complex socio-technical  
interactive systems

beyond usability...

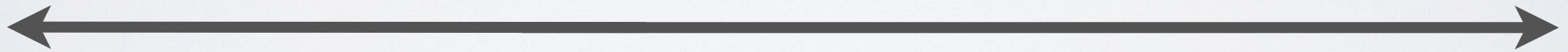


...towards *experience*

experience

beautiful  
snowflake

all the  
same





*affect*

*affect / intensity*

Spinoza

Deleuze

Massumi



*affect*

pre-personal

*feeling*

personal, biographical

*emotion*

performed, projected

affect is *unstructured potential*

**feelings** represent the  
*registration* of affect



affect *gives rise to* movement,  
transformation and difference

**what can a body do?**

*assemblage* is the network(ing) of  
affective/intensive forces

...which can open up new  
potentials for action



agency is complex

posture

toe-tappin'  
thigh-slappin'

music is *affective*

mood

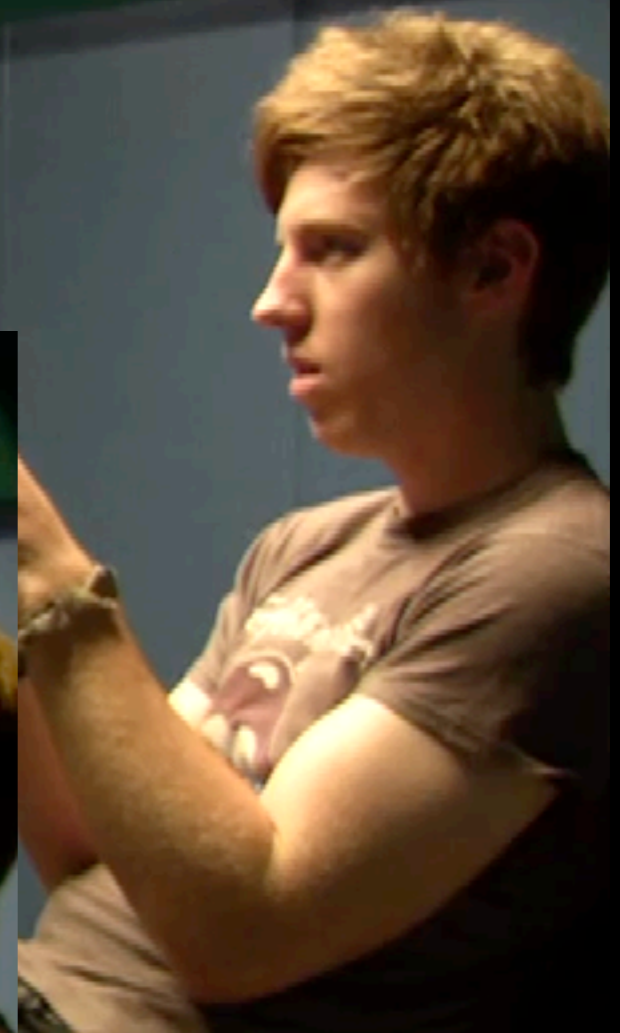
memory

manipulative

focus

concentration



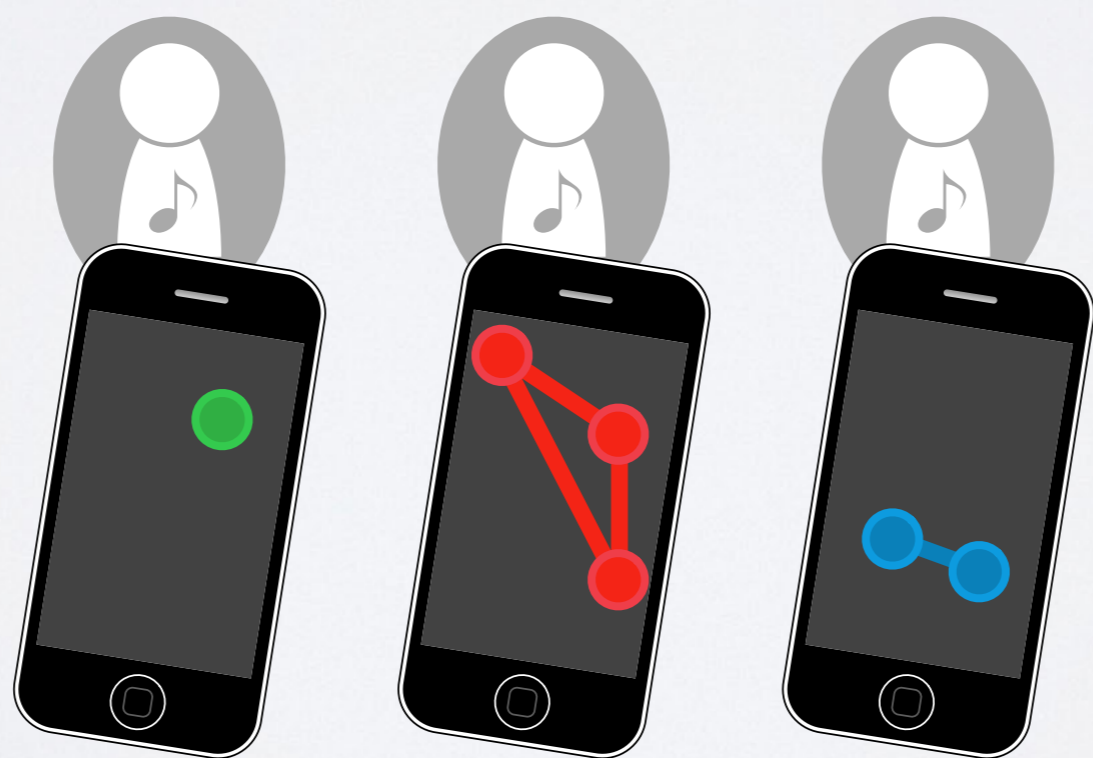
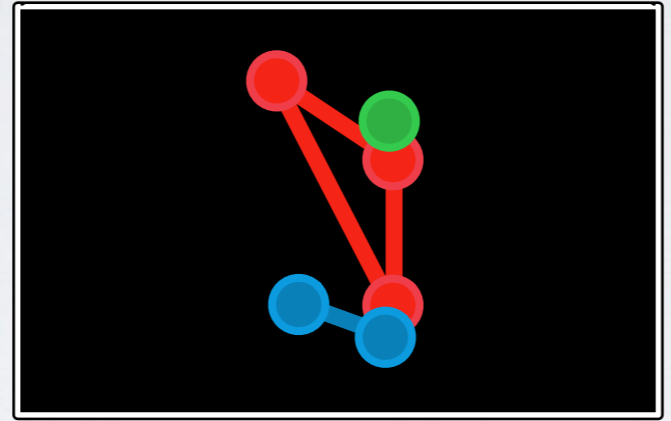
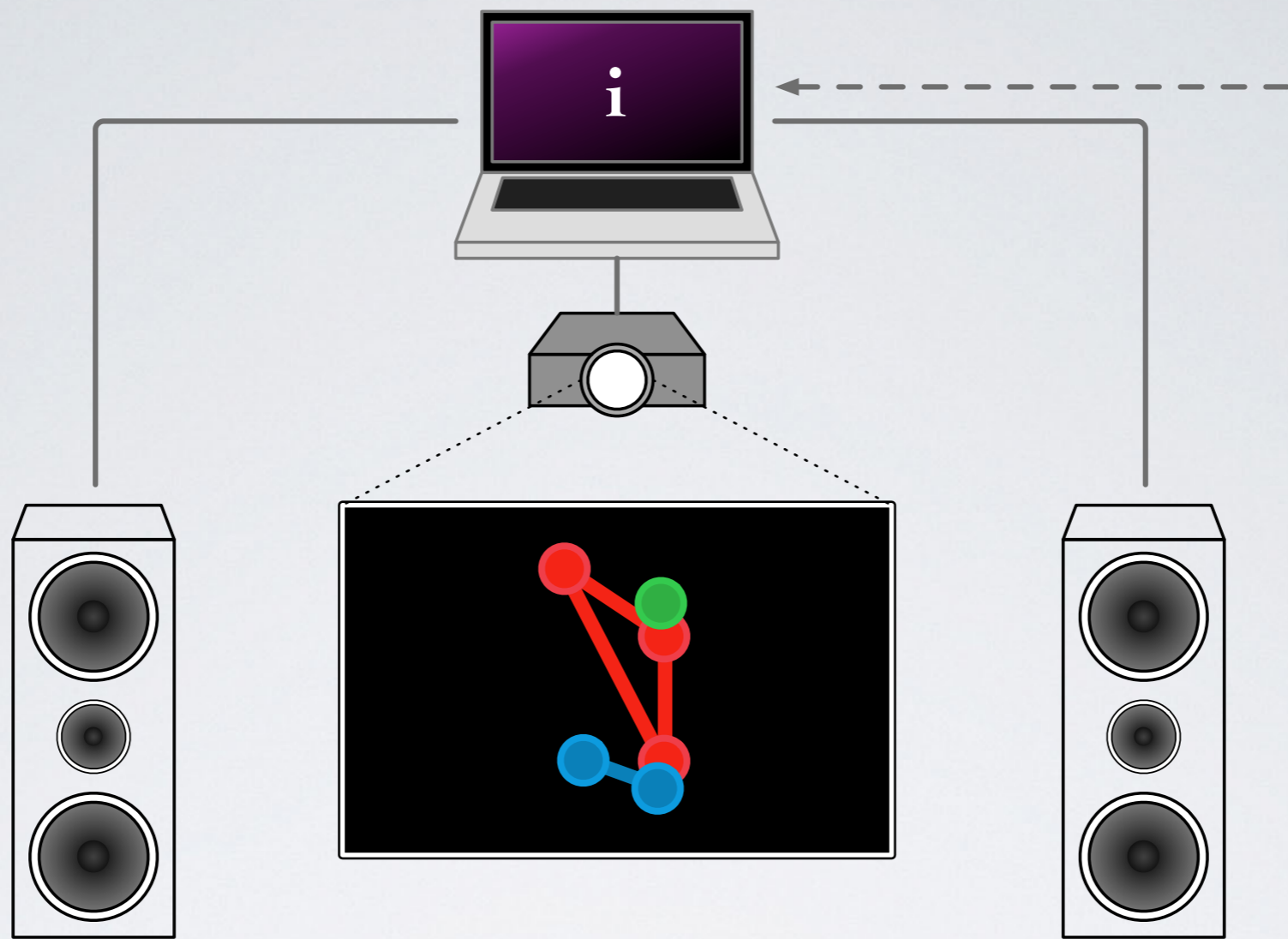




***Viscotheque***

iOS group  
music making  
environment





OSC over  
wi-fi

what are the affective  
atmospheres in Viscotheque?

P1

P2

P3

Participants



obs



# *Viscotheque*

P1

P2

P3

obs



Group  
Interview





system  
logs



video of  
session



interview  
transcripts



Week 1

Group 1



# Week 1

Group 1



Group 2



Group 3



Group 4



Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Group 1



Group 2



Group 3



Group 4







# Interview themes

- 50k words, grounded theory
- The affective power of the sound
- Ownership of/identification with the sound
- The need to differentiate, to *find* a sound



# Observations

- Moments of real intensity
- Earlier sessions—flighty, skittish
- Later sessions—sedate, subdued
- Punctuated equilibrium

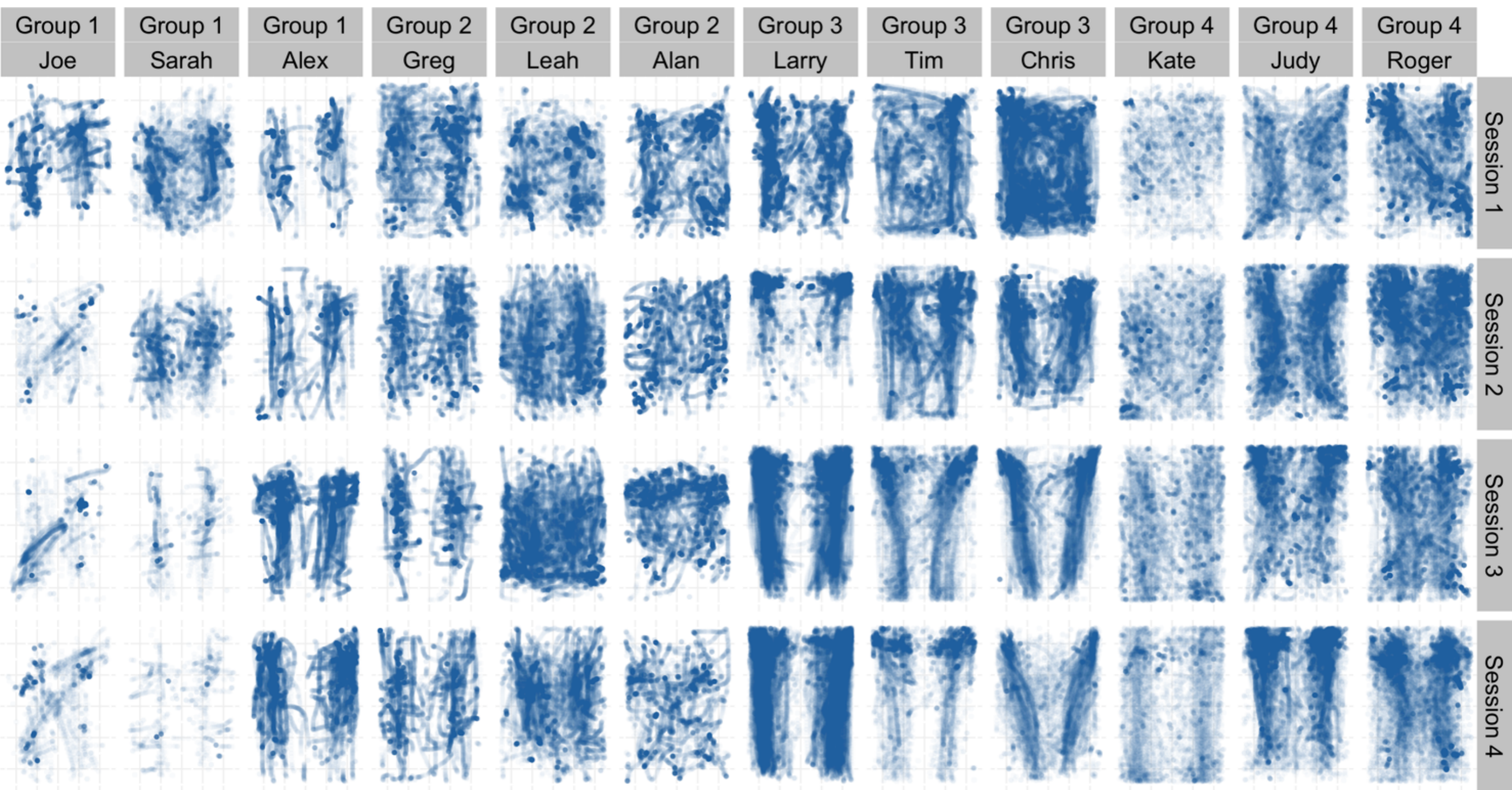


becoming-sound

but we have all this log data...

accelerometer signatures

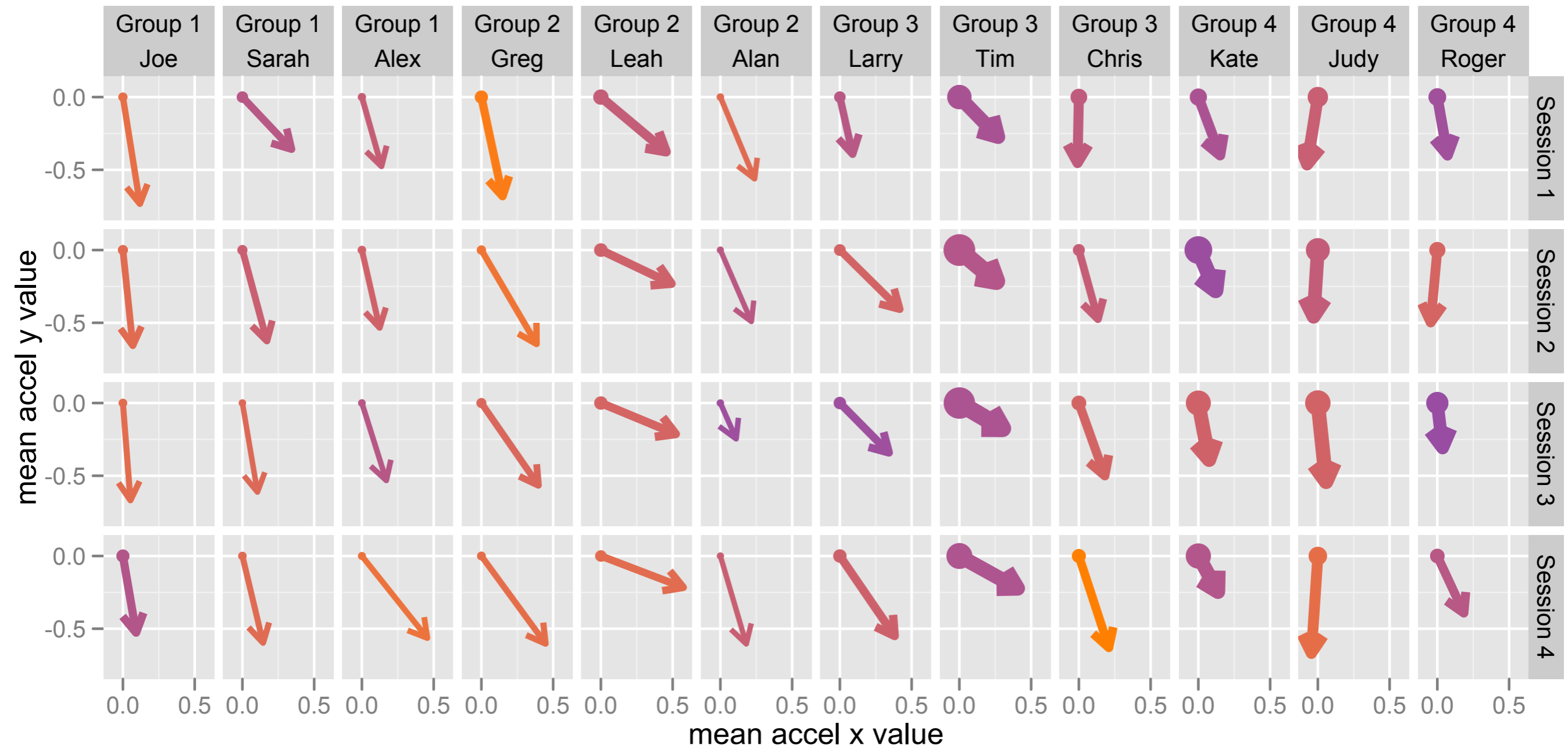






average RMS motion energy 0.25 0.50 0.75 1.00

mean accel z value -1.00 -0.95 -0.90 -0.85 -0.80 -0.75



# Implications

- Agency is complicated in affectively-charged environments

# Future work

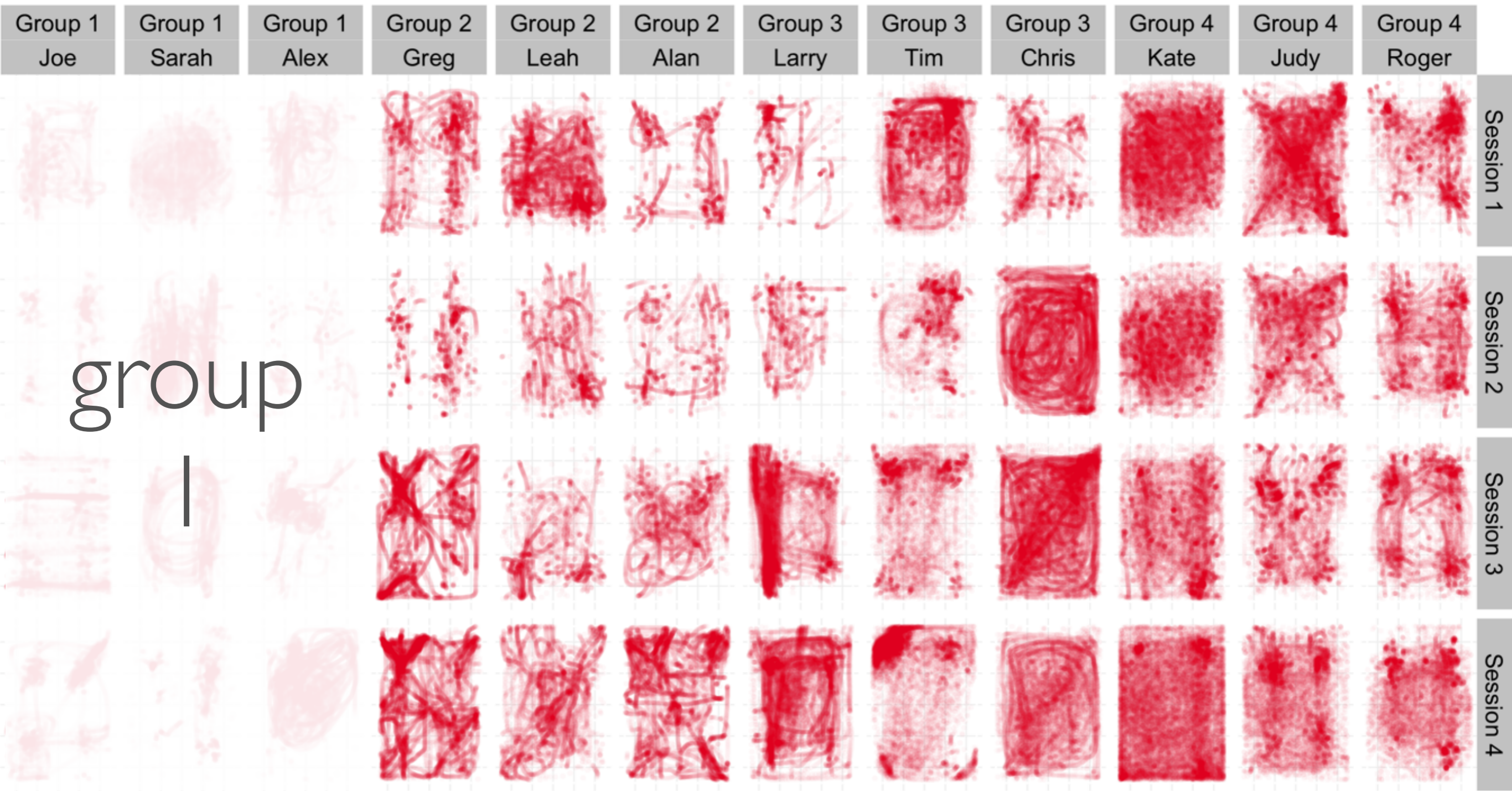
- Co-location vs remote interaction
- Instrumentation: GSR, motion analysis



# Cheers

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touch count ● 1 ● 2 ● 3



group

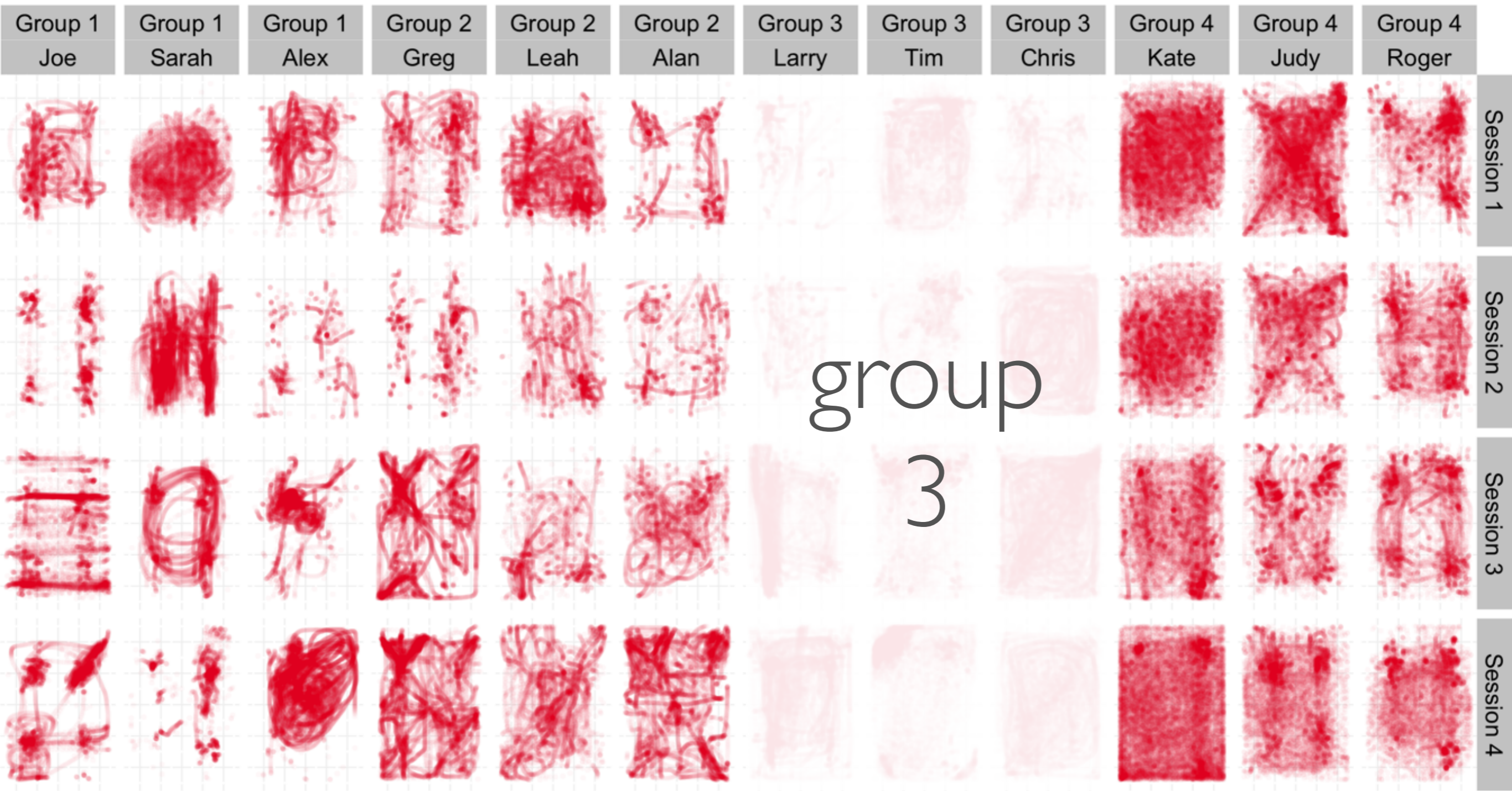
1







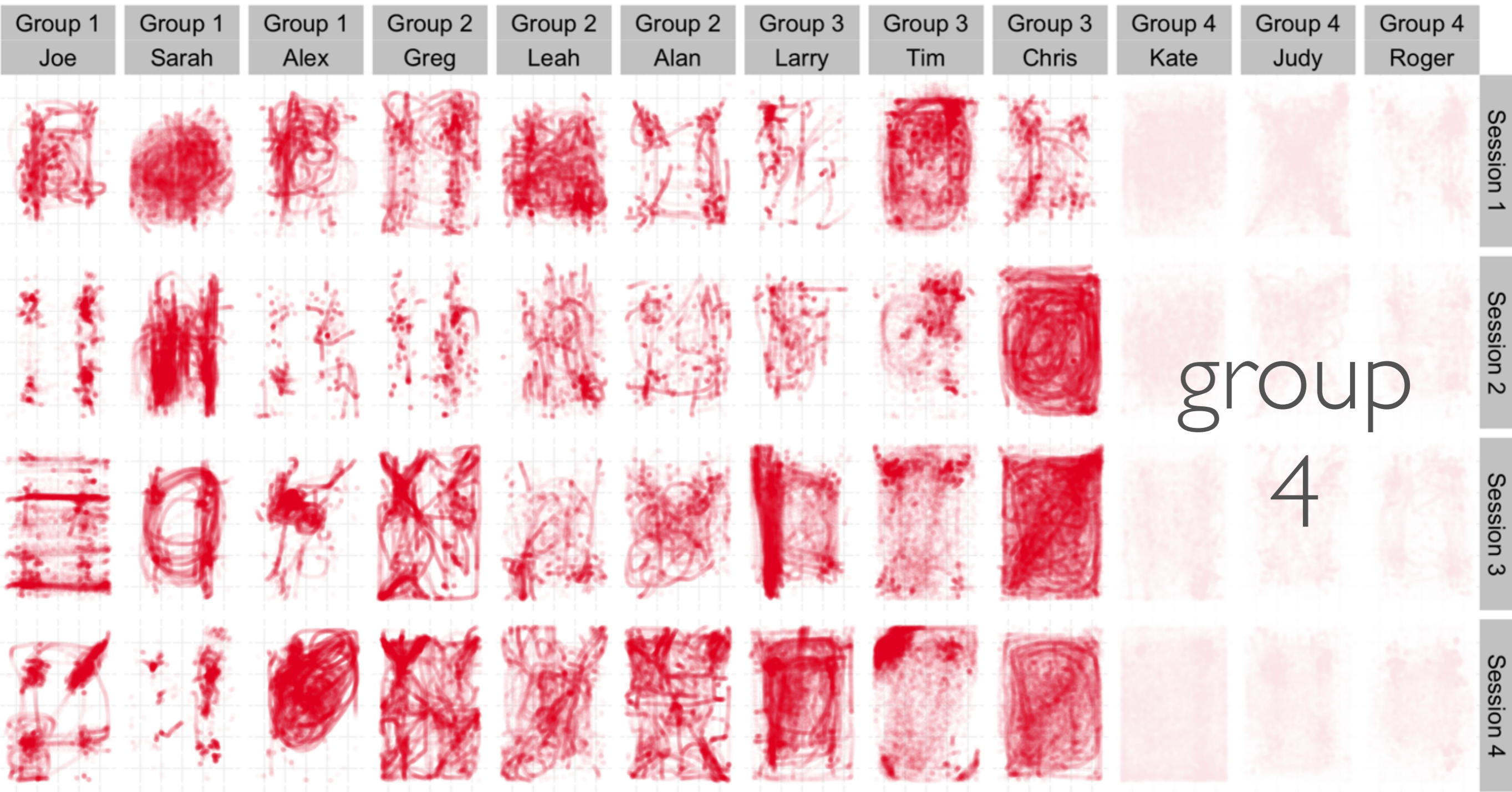
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group  
3



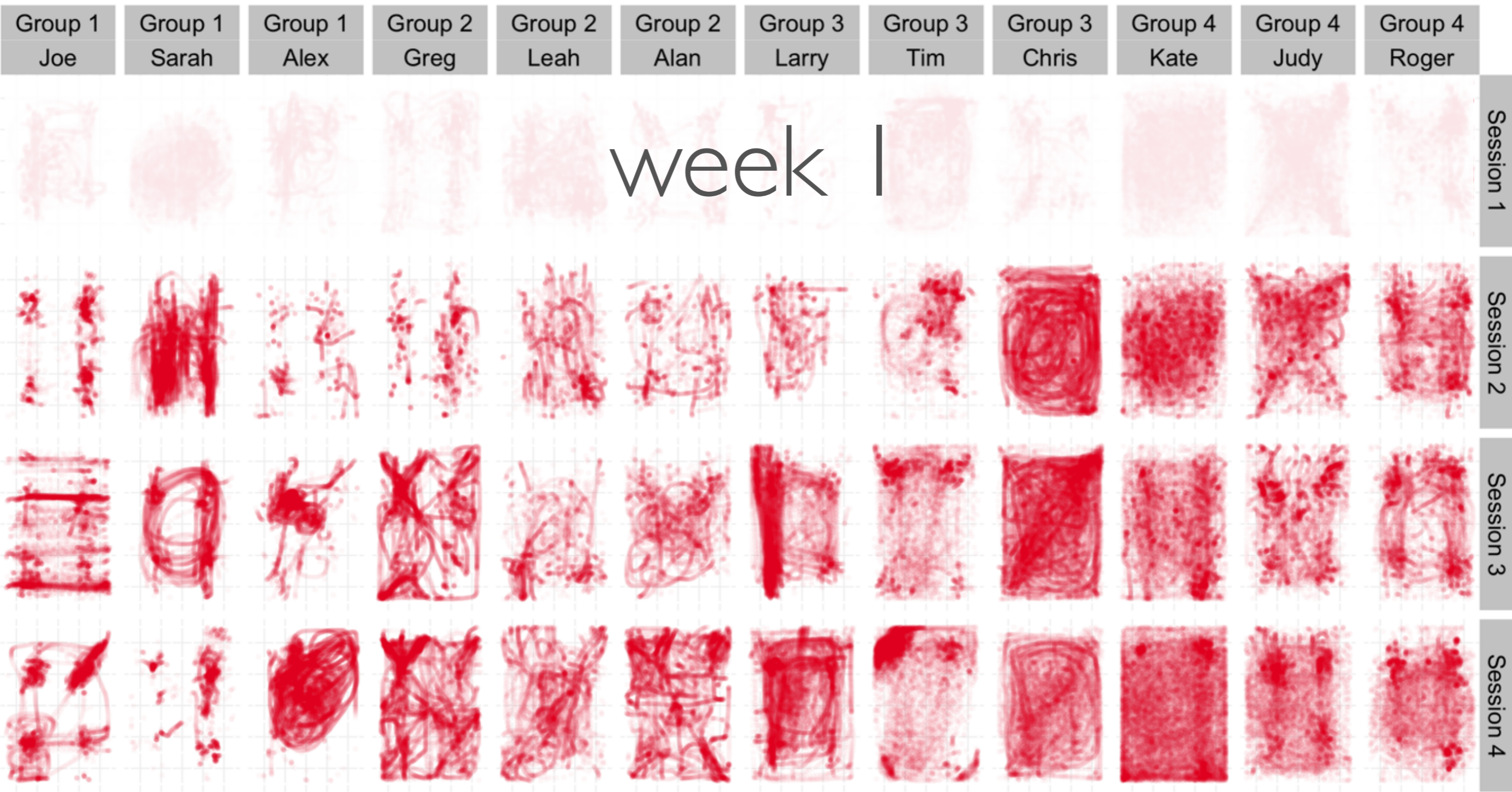
touch count ● 1 ● 2 ● 3



group  
4



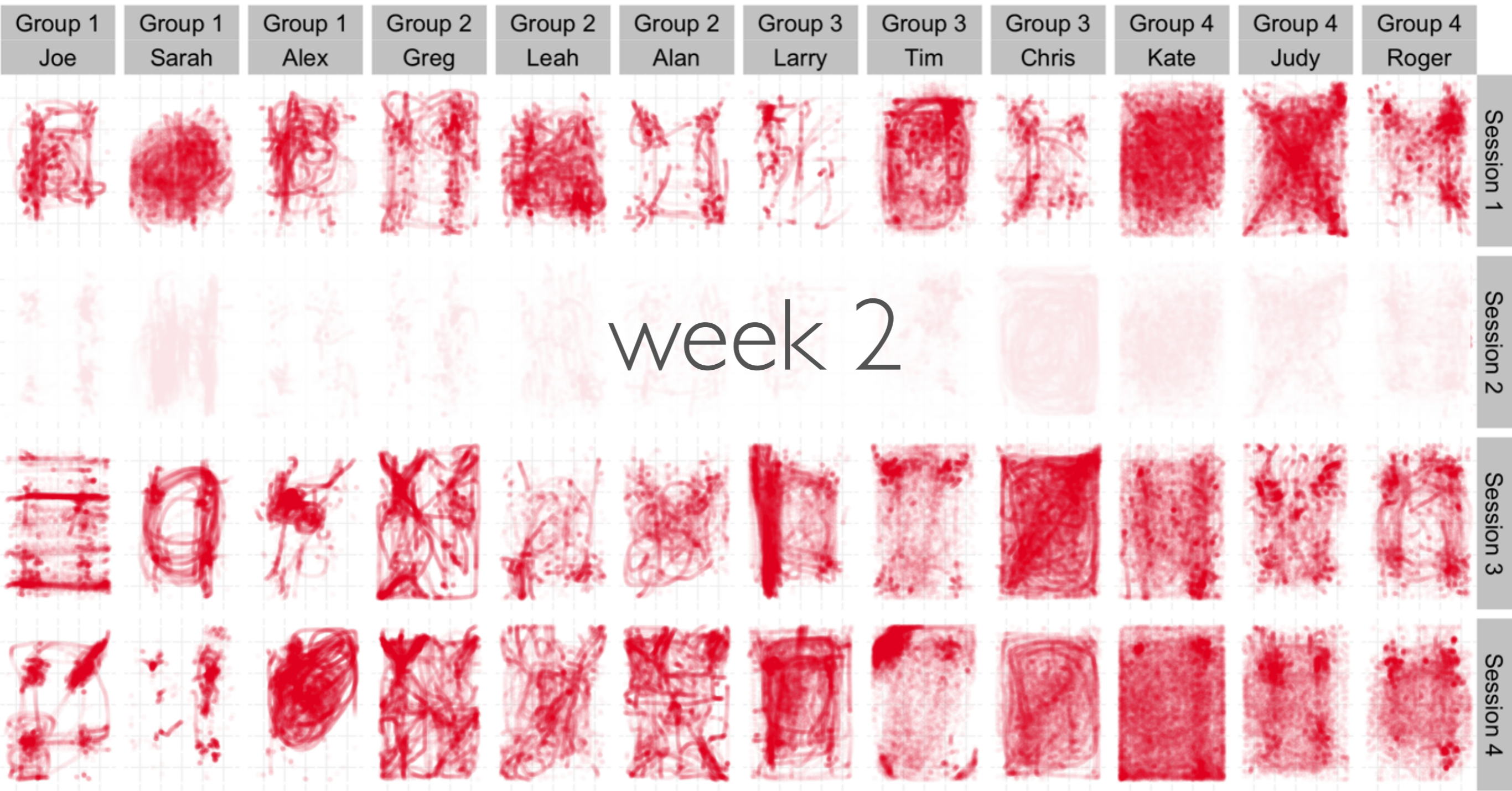
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week 1



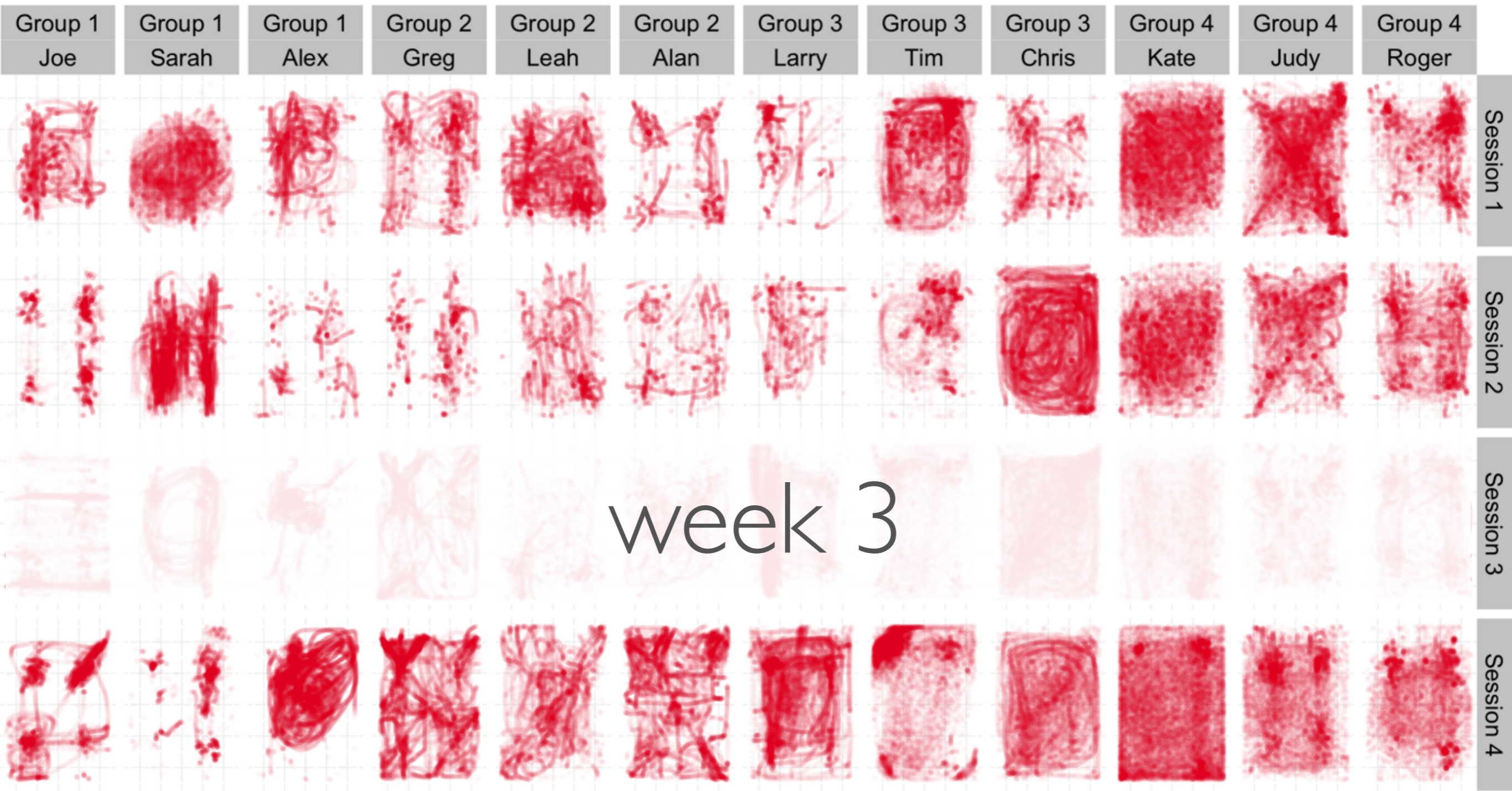
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week 2



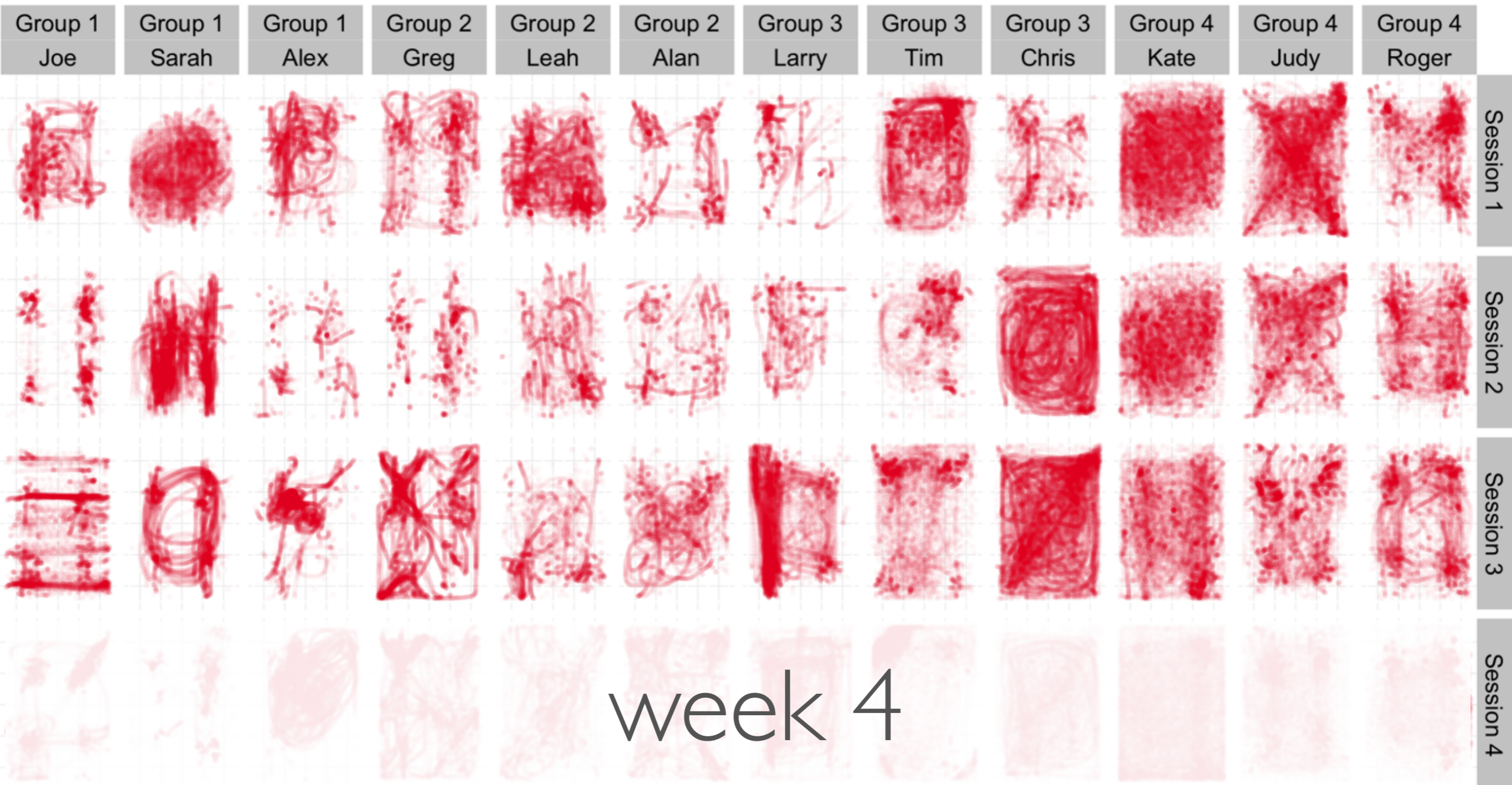
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week 3



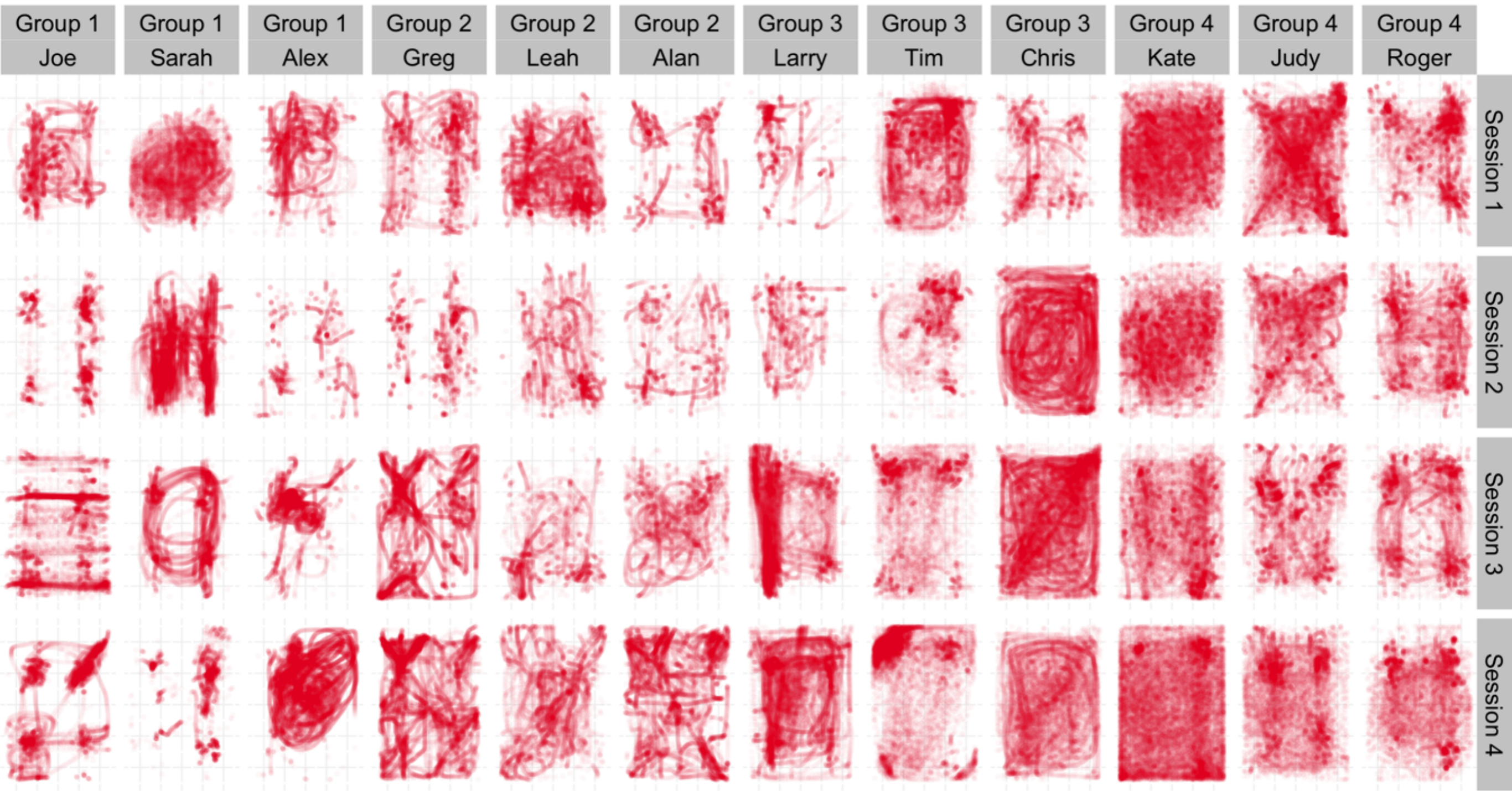
touch count ● 1 ● 2 ● 3



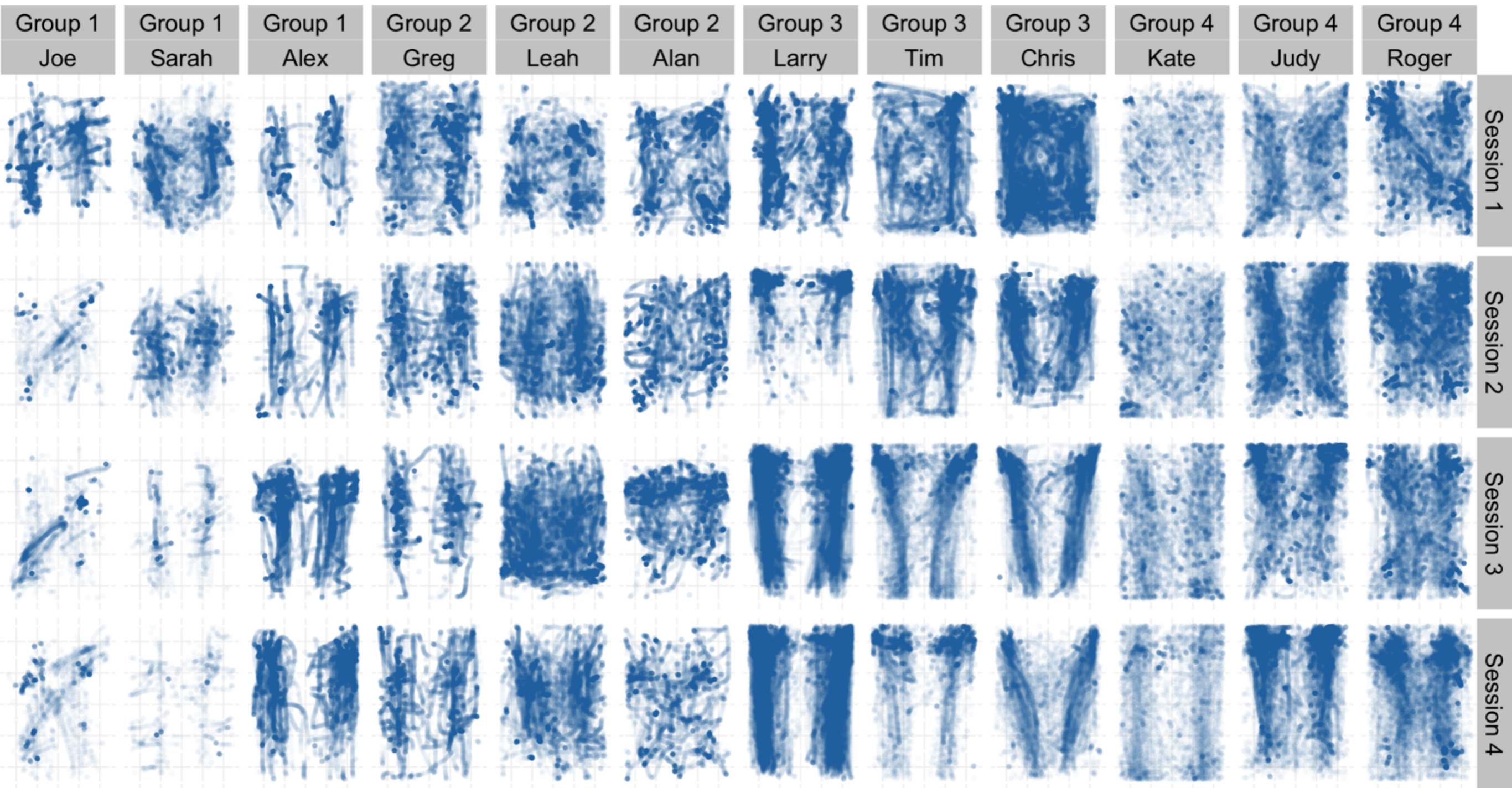
week 4



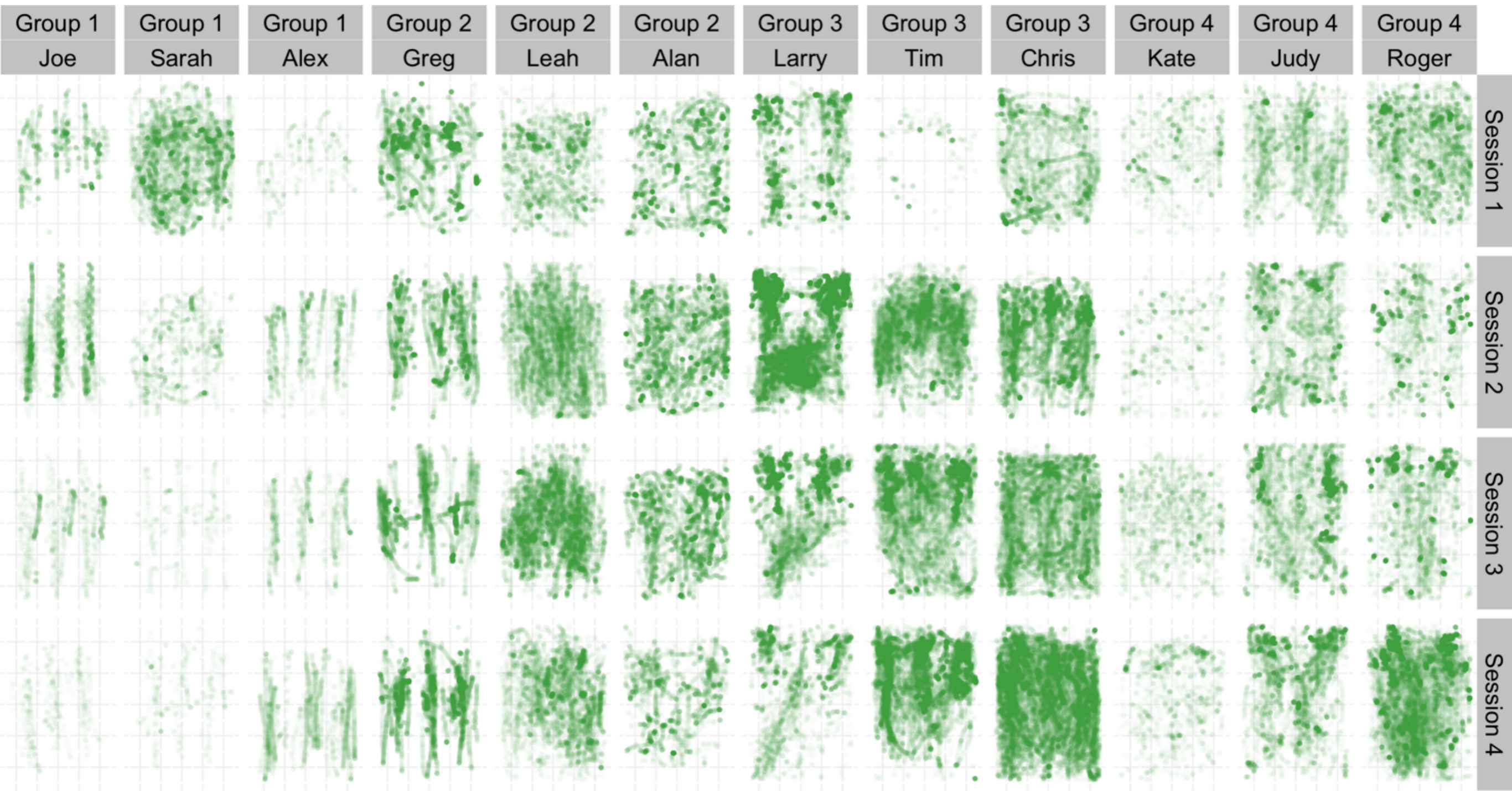
touch count ● 1 ● 2 ● 3





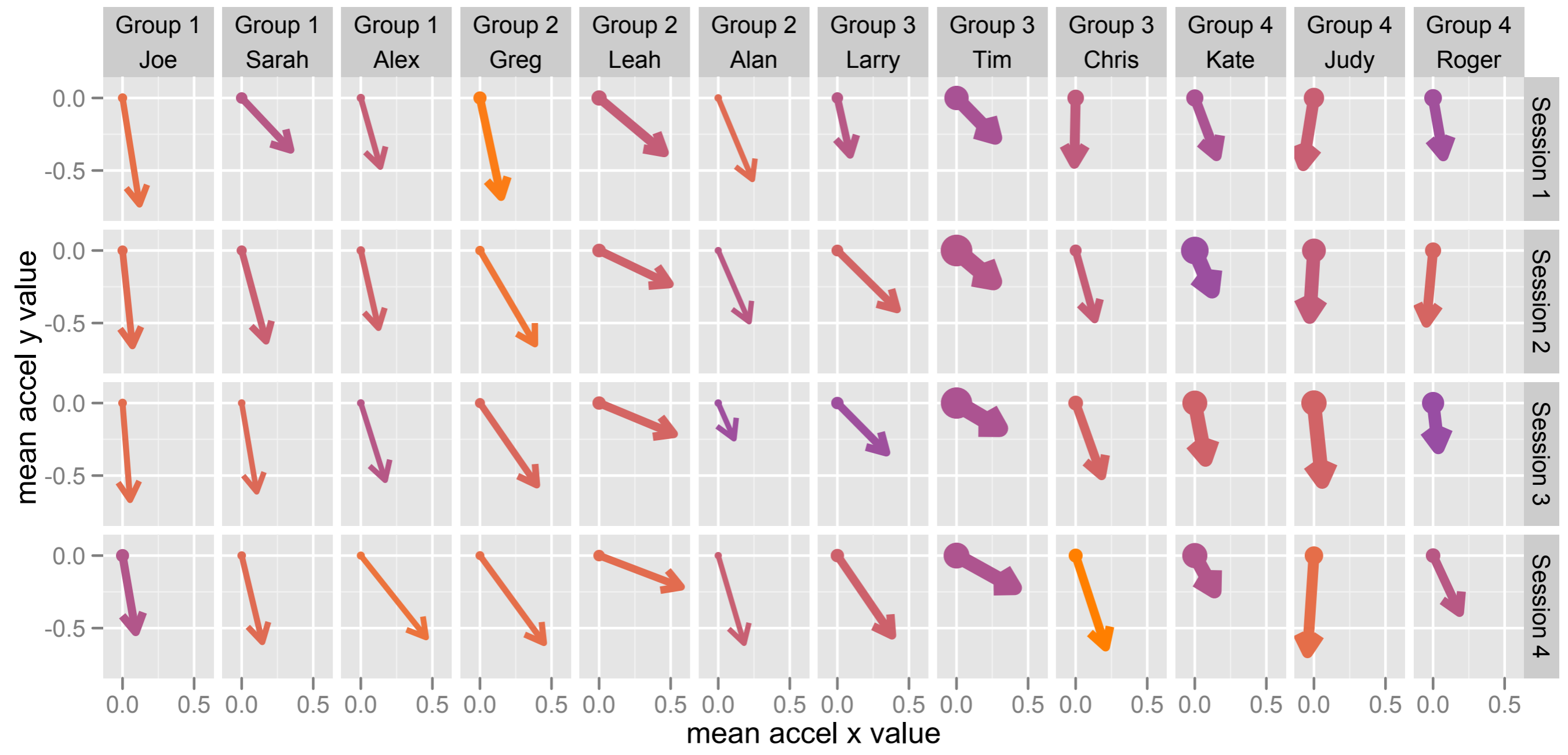






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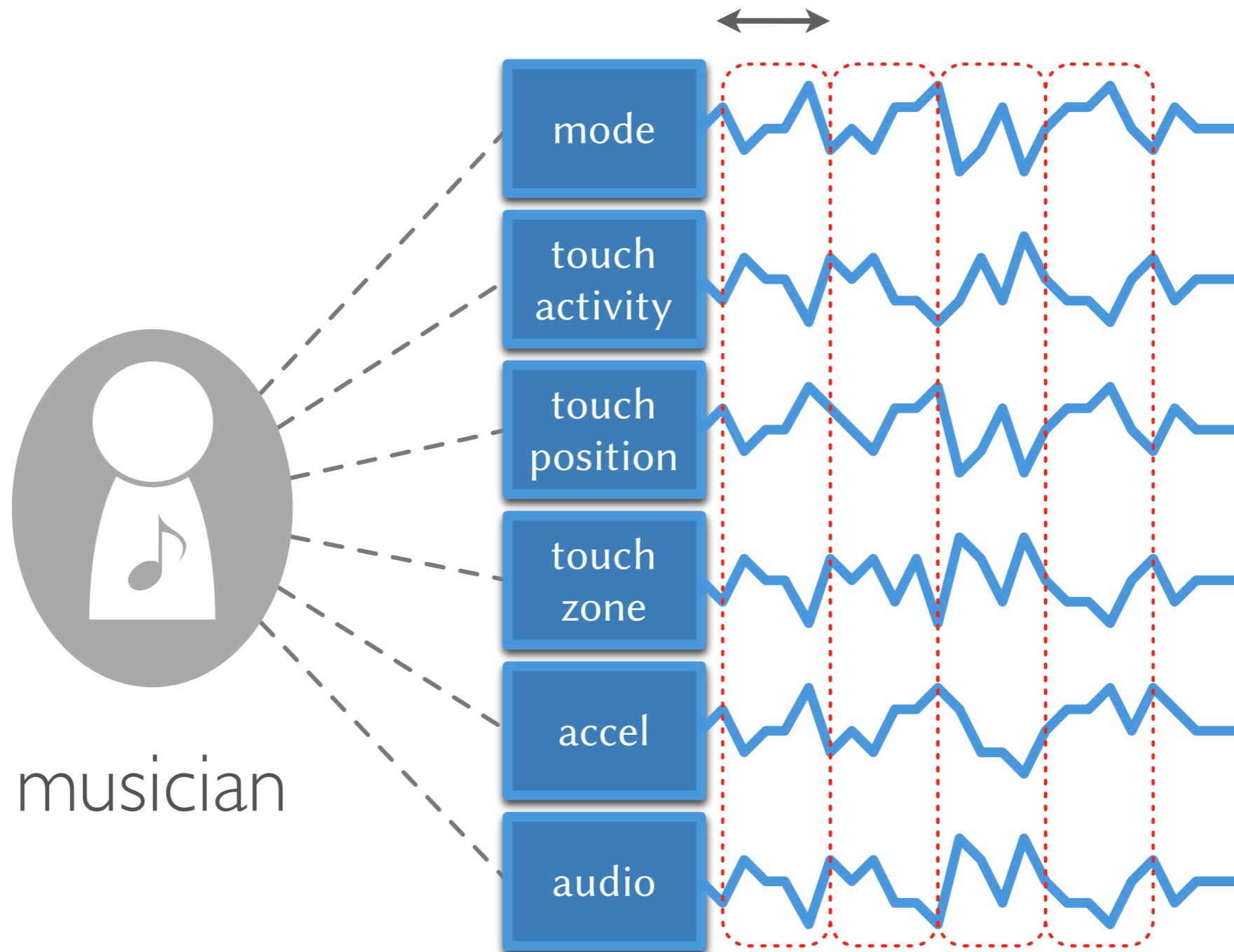




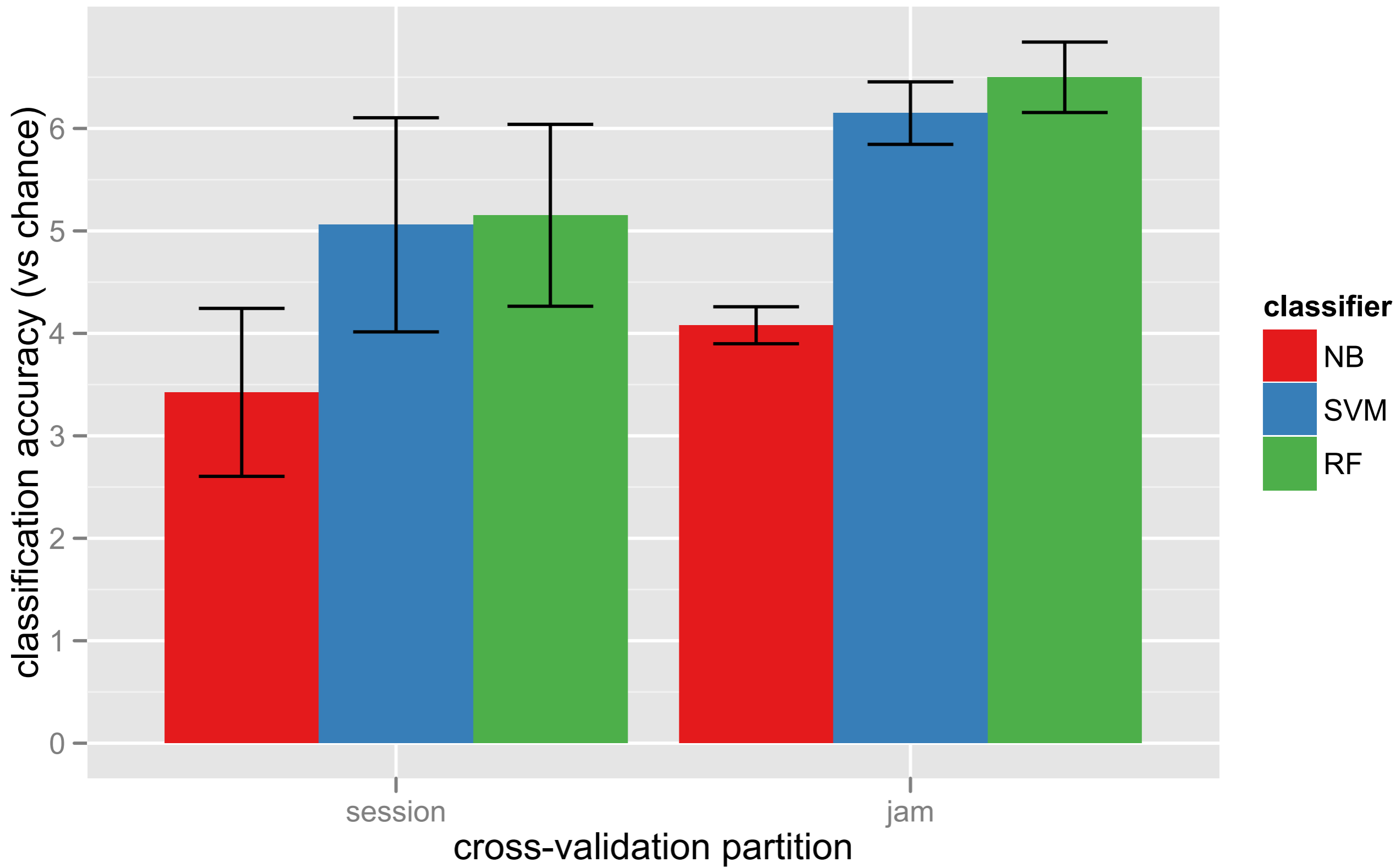
*A sensitive synthesis of machine learning and affect theory requires...*

- not attaching numbers to things that aren't
- looking for *differences* in the data
- examining the *nature* of those differences

feature window (5 sec)







session 1

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 2

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 3

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 4

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4



session 1

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 2

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 3

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 4

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 1

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 2

jam 1

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jam 4

session 3

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4

session 4

jam 1

jam 2

jam 3

jam 4



