The spikes in the graph above show the change in of the pick rate heroes compared to the average of the last two weeks. The first peak of our graph shows the introduction of four characters into the game as well as fine tuning on preexisting characters. As Dota 2 was in beta until July 2013, the graph looks quite turbulent up until then, this is caused by multiple characters a month being ported from Dota to Dota 2. These smaller peaks show users trying out the new heroes. The larger peaks indicating balance changes to these added characters.

Once Dota 2 was fully released the meta was relatively consistent up until November of that year. A special event featuring newly introduced heroes Earth Spirit and Ember Spirit as well as revamped Storm Spirit. Patch 6.79c released in December and removed the hero Skeleton King from the game, replacing him with Wraith King. Legion Commander was also ported from Dota. Earth Spirit played a big role in the November 2013 spike as he was nerfed this patch.

In early February 2014, the second largest spike occurs with the release of patch 6.80. This patch was focused around balancing as our good friend Earth Spirit was again nerfed along with a few other heroes. Many other heroes were buffed during this patch causing more diversity in picks during matches.

The International normally takes place in August with a few exceptions where it took place in July, it does not make a noticeable impact on our graph. This means that the heroes that the professional players pick during these tournament matches do not influence the broader player base to mimic their choices.

The event that caused the most deviation from previous choices was the release of a new hero. With a few exceptions like the major peak of patch 6.80 that was caused by large balance changes, most peaks come from the introduction of new characters. This shows that adding new characters to a game entices players to pick different heroes more than balancing existing heroes.

<https://liquipedia.net/dota2/The_International>

<https://dota2.gamepedia.com/Patches>

<https://dota2.gamepedia.com/Game_Versions>