

Bright Colours in UI Design: Benefits and Drawbacks

UX Planet



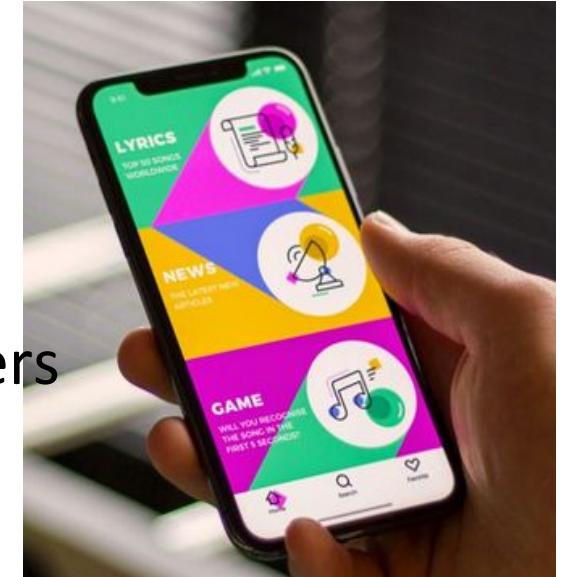
Tubik Studio: A digital agency specializing in UI/UX design and development of websites and mobile applications, animation, graphic design and branding.

Colour in new digital devices

- Applying colours effectively is an essential skill for anyone working in visual composition eg. illustrators and UI designers
- Colour theory knowledge is more important with growing popularity of flat designs for devices such as smartphones

Vibrant colours and gradients are now seen in user interfaces of different digital products from playful entertaining ones to business apps and websites.

However, there is much discussion about the **Impact bright colours have on user experience**



Benefits of bright colours in UI

1. Increased readability and legibility

- **Readability** relates to how easily people read copy content
- **Legibility** defines how quickly users distinguish the letters in a particular typeface.
- **Vibrant colours** enable enough contrast helping to increase readability and legibility
- High **contrast** layout elements become distinguishable and noticeable
- This may not always work well. If copy content and the background colours **contrast too much**, it may be difficult to read or scan the text.
- Designers are recommended to create a **mild level of contrast** and apply high contrasting colours only for **highlighting** elements.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

2. Sharpening navigation & enhancing intuitive interaction

- Visual hierarchy is a core element for clear navigation and intuitive interaction system of any digital product.
- UI components are organized that way so the brain can distinguish the objects by their physical differences including colour.
- Ref:
<https://tubikstudio.com/visual-hierarchy-effective-ui-content-organization/>

Benefits of bright colours in UI

Visual hierarchy:

Henry Adams once said: “*Chaos was the law of nature and order was the dream of man*”. People always favour the order because it makes things more comprehensible.

The same works with user interfaces of digital products. When UI elements are organized and structured, people can easily use an app or a website and feel satisfied with a product.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

Visual hierarchy is one of the core techniques which are applied to the design process. It is initially based on **Gestalt psychological theory** which examines users' **visual perception** of elements in relation to each other and shows how people tend to unify the visual elements into groups.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

Visual hierarchy aims to present content of a product so that users can comprehend the level of importance for each element.

It organizes UI components so that the brain can distinguish the objects on the basis of their physical differences, such as size, colour, contrast, style etc.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

- colour has a great impact on the users' perception so serves as an effective tool for **visual hierarchy creation**.
- Colours have their own hierarchy which is defined by the power of influence on users' mind. There are **bold colours** such as **red, orange, and black** which can easily draw attention. On the other hand, there are weak, or soft, colours **like white and cream** which work better as a background.
- Using the different colours designers can support a slight hierarchy of the UI elements. For example, **Call to Action CTA buttons** in bold colours will definitely be the first thing that users see if the other UI elements are created in a softer palette.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

2. Sharpening navigation & enhancing intuitive interaction

- Colours have their own hierarchy which is defined by the power of impact on users' mind.
- Bright colours are easy to notice so designers often use them as the means of highlighting or setting contrast.
- Applying one colour to several elements you can show that they are somehow **connected**. For example, you can choose a red colour for purchase buttons so that people could intuitively find them when they need.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

•3. Recognizability

- The human brain reacts intensively to bold colours so bright colour combinations can be easily noticed and memorized.
- Colorful UI design has great chances to stand out of the crowd among many products with weak colours.
- The choice needs to be based both on the preferences of the target audience and market research.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

•3. Recognizability

- If a company has bright corporate colours applied to the logo and branded items, it can be a good idea to use the colours on its website or mobile app.
- This creates consistency of visual solutions connecting all the company's communication channels as well as increases brand awareness.

Benefits of bright colours in UI

• 4. Setting mood and atmosphere

- To convey the right tone, message and get users to make the **expected action**, designers need to know that colours can influence our **mood and behaviour**
- Our mind reacts to colours while we usually do not notice it. The study called **colour psychology** states that the moment our eyes perceive a colour, the brain gives signals to the endocrine system releasing hormones responsible for the shifts of emotions.
- **Colour Psychology:**
<https://tubikstudio.com/color-in-design-influence-on-users-actions/>

Benefits of bright colours in UI

- **5. Trendy look and style**
- Bright colours and gradients are included in [top trends in UI design](#).
- <https://tubikstudio.com/review-of-popular-interface-design-trends-in-2017/>
- Now they can be found in different types of digital products and the limitations of strict business style seem to step aside.
- Bright gradient colours in user interfaces can bring the feeling of a modernized technology and fresh ideas.
- A mobile app or website designed according to the latest trends often looks catchy and can draw users' attention despite high competition.

Pitfalls of using bright colours in UI

- 1. Bright colours can be tough to match
- The more vibrant colours you apply in UI, the more difficult it becomes to match them. To make users feel pleased and comfortable, designers try to bring the balance and harmony into user interface design. The colour harmony is about the arrangement of the colours in design most attractively and **effectively for users' perception.**
- **Harmonic colour** combinations contribute to a nice first impression from the website or application.
- Colour theory defines several basic colour schemes which were proven to work efficiently.
- **Colour Theory:**
<https://uxplanet.org/color-theory-brief-guide-for-designers-76e11c57ea>

Pitfalls of using bright colours in UI

- **2. Losing accents**
- Many vibrant colours in a single visual composition bring a risk of losing highlighted elements because they become a part of a colourful mess (overload!)
- That's why designers are recommended to apply the proportion of **60%–30%–10%**. The biggest part should go to the dominant **hue (colour)**, the third of the composition takes secondary colour and 10% percent goes to the colour which helps to make the accents. Such a proportion is thought to be pleasant for human eyes since it allows for perceiving all the visual elements gradually.

Pitfalls of using bright colours in UI

- **3. Bright colours don't suit all users' groups**
- **Age, gender, and culture** can influence the preferences of a potential user. For example, children like yellow colour pretty much, but as we become adults it usually seems less attractive. Men and women generally prefer cool colours such as blue, green and their tints. Unlike women, men usually prefer achromatic (**Achromatic colours** (white, grey and black) ie.lightness but no **hue** (colour) or **saturation** (intensity of colour)).

Pitfalls of using bright colours in UI

- **3. Bright colours don't suit all users' groups**
- Even if you create a design for an entertaining app, you need to consider the specifics of the target audience. Middle-aged people usually prefer light UI and they may not like bold colours across the screen finding them a distraction.

Pitfalls of using bright colours in UI

- **4. Vibrant colours may look too contrasting on mobile screens**
- Too much contrast may not be good, especially with mobile interfaces because they are limited of space and can be used under diverse circumstances.
- Small screens, ambient light, and bright fonts make a contrast image look **unpleasant for users' eyes**. That's why applying bright colours in mobile UI designers need to pay attention to the level of contrast between colours so that people would feel comfortable while reading text on a mobile screen.

