The use of colour is an integral component in visual interface design for creating separation between objects and for conveying meaning. It has previously been established that colours can be separated in a hierarchy of primary colours and secondary colours, and that colours are consistently associated with specific mood tones. However, it has thus far not been investigated whether these two factors, which we refer to as the perception-primacy and emotion-conveyance, are associated with attentional capture in a congruent manner. To investigate this, we conducted a visual search task study in a controlled environment, in which 11 participants scanned a 20 item display for a coloured target amongst coloured distractors. We found evidence to support that primary colours capture attention significantly more than secondary colours, and inconclusive evidence that colours convey their meaning at a sufficiently early level of processing to influence attention. We end by discussing implications of our results for design practice and research in psychology.

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