



SOME ASPECTS OF COMBATING CRIMES RELATED TO ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE THROUGH THE INTERNET

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Abstract. This article examines some aspects of the non-contact distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances using a virtual environment. The author reveals the features and most important elements of the commission of this type of crime, striving to highlight particularly important aspects of their detection and investigation. At the same time, the factors that contributed to the growth of cybercrime in the illegal drug trade were discussed. In addition, future tasks facing law enforcement agencies in combating the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances using information technologies are also approached from the author's point of view.

Keywords: crime, illicit drug trafficking, information technology, internet, crime investigation, combating the virtual drug business.

Drug and drug trafficking is one of the most dangerous social problems of modern society. It has a serious impact not only on public health, but also on economic stability, the state of crime, and national security.

Drug-related crimes in Uzbekistan have shown a growing trend in recent years. The spread of synthetic drugs, drug trafficking via the Internet, and the increase in drug addiction among young people are causing serious concern.

Data on drug situations in the regions for 2025 showed that the problem in this area remains relevant in the country. Despite the large-scale preventive and operational measures taken by state bodies, the fight against illicit drug trafficking remains one of the urgent tasks.

Drug traffickers are actively using new technologies to stay ahead of law enforcement agencies in their criminal activities. The transformation of drug-related crimes through the internet, as well as through the active use of network technologies, is becoming especially relevant today. Drug traffickers use the global network not only as an integrated advertising and promotion platform crossing borders, but also as a cyber tool for communication, hiring sellers and couriers, as well as a method and location for drug distribution. In this regard, it is necessary to strengthen national security requirements in this area.

The fight against drug-related crimes committed in the field of information technology is directly related to the effectiveness of operational-search activities carried out using Internet resources.

In recent years, the overall share of drug-related crimes in the share of serious and especially serious crimes has increased. In particular, this type of crime has been steadily growing in our country:

- 2021 - 7,142
- 2023 - 10,011 units.
- 2024 - 12,278 units.
- 2025 - the growth trend persists again[1].

These figures reflect the results of targeted actions taken by law enforcement agencies to prevent drug-related crimes. However, the crime rate in this area still remains very high, and as the Russian scientist O. P. Gribunov noted: "The situation with illicit drug trafficking in the world has become very tense in recent years"[5].

Today, thanks to the revolution in cybertechnology and mobile communications, the distribution of drugs and psychotropic substances has gained new opportunities, mainly through contactless methods. The use of DarkNet by drug-related criminals significantly complicates the work of law enforcement agencies.

The "dark" (DarkNet) segment of the virtual space, which is hidden from unaware users and inaccessible through a simple browser. The "dark network" is characterized by a very high degree of anonymity. Therefore, this segment is used by communities engaged in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, paid through electronic means. And it is the anonymity of users inherent in this communication network that complicates the work of law enforcement agencies in the fight against the "virtual drug business."

The movement of criminals using the unique technical capabilities of the Internet and mobile cellular communication requires arduous and difficult technical processes in the detection of this type of crime. Modern social media systems allow drug dealers to significantly increase sales volumes, expand product range, and ensure a high level of confidentiality of their criminal activities. Drug traffickers actively use encryption programs that make it difficult to protect and identify messages on mobile devices. For this purpose, shaded parts of the internet, such as "Tor," "Browser," are used, which are closed to third-party users[3]. The essence of these browsers is that they allow citizens to access websites blocked in Uzbekistan by changing their IP address, while making it difficult or impossible to identify them. It is also alarming that the illegal trade of synthetic drugs is increasing in pharmacies, along with the Internet.

The dangers of synthetic drugs are:

- they are produced cheaply;
- spreads quickly;
- develops addiction very quickly.

According to experts, the spread of synthetic drugs poses a serious threat, especially among the age group of 14-25 years[4].

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Anonymous electronic wallets are used to transfer funds to the bank card account they have, which can also be registered in the name of another person. You can use your bank card to withdraw funds for cash or purchase property. Organized groups and criminal organizations usually acquire and create companies, which can later be used to support and conceal criminal activity, as well as in subsequent money laundering schemes.

Electronic traces are increasingly used as evidence in criminal cases related to various types of crimes. From this it follows that the use of virtual traces is a prerequisite for solving operational and investigative tasks in the investigation of drug-related crimes using information technologies.

It should be noted that the method of committing crimes is closely related to its context. Contactless drug trafficking transactions create a unique environment for maintaining confidentiality. For example, to facilitate their identification, a well-established system of "carriage" points is installed in isolated areas with simple routes. These routes inform buyers.

The most common places for "dropping" drugs are public transport stops, retail kiosks and pavilions, and building entrances. Time must also be taken into account, since sellers take advantage of blindness and darkness, as well as the absence of people in these places at this time. In summer, when daylight hours are longer, most drug-related crimes occur between 8:00 PM and 12:00 PM, and in winter between 6:00 PM and 11:00 PM[8].



When considering drug-related crimes committed using computer technology, it is important to assess the personality of the perpetrator. Many researchers in this field point to the following features when creating a typical profile of a drug-related criminal. In terms of age, individuals aged 18 to 30 are listed as having average intellectual development, possessing computer skills at the level of a reliable user (in particular, the ability to work in various Internet mail systems); understanding the electronic payment system, including the use of the Internet; having a certain level of understanding or awareness of the methods and means of operational-search activity[9].

Our analysis showed that the following objective factors influence the situation with drugs in our country, namely: the constant development of methods of drug distribution; insufficient interaction between law enforcement agencies; the difficulty of identifying, registering, and documenting the illegal distribution of drugs by contactless means; vulnerability at the border; we can see that the level of preventive work, primarily social prevention, is low.

In general, the current situation in our country is characterized by the persistence of negative trends in the sphere of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Psychotropic substances, which pose a serious threat to the health of the nation, remain one of the main threats to the security of the country, socio-political and economic stability, and state security.

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