

**Speaker:** Ákos Szigeti (University of Public Service, Hungary)

**Presentation title:** Factors affecting online drug trafficking: A qualitative content analysis on a darknet market

The increase in the volume of illicit drug trafficking on darknet markets (DNMs) is boosted by the restrictions due to the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. This study aimed to put this trend into context by obtaining in-depth knowledge of vendors services and reputation, and thus to build a foundation for implementing text analytics in the next research phase. In the current phase, I conducted qualitative content analysis on a sample (n=100) randomly selected from 6,357 product descriptions, and a sample (n=500) randomly selected from 34,619 reviews, both in the drug category of products, scraped from darknet market Dark0de from April to July 2021. According to my results, on supply-side, vendors tended to provide basic information on the drug, its high quality, the speed and stealth of delivery, the (often 24 hour) availability for responding messages, the effects of the drug, and sometimes even instructions for use. Regarding the demand-side, customers usually praised the quality of the product, mentioned the speed and stealth-secure packaging of delivery as essentials, and communicated only a small number of issues. The research results support the applicability of the theory of social figuration to illicit drug trafficking on DNMs and highlight that the interdependencies in this social figuration are fuelled by trust. Furthermore, my results formulate a robust hypothesis about the previously undervalued role of deliverers to test by future research.