

Vendor Names on Darknet Drug Markets

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Selling and buying illegal drugs is moving from streets to online. Trades are made not in the public Internet but in so called *darknet* (or *deep web* or *Tor network*). Several marketplaces, *cryptomarkets*, offer platforms where vendors and purchasers can find each other. Payments are made in cryptocurrencies (e.g. Bitcoin) and products are sent usually via postal services. The reason for online trade becoming more common is the anonymity darknet provides. It is very difficult and time-demanding for the law enforcement to find out the identities of the agents and to prevent their actions.

During the last few years, darknet cryptomarkets have been subject to many academic studies, especially in the field of social sciences. They can be, however, examined through the lens of onomastics, the study of proper names, as well. In cryptomarkets, drug vendors are known by their user names. These names make an interesting source of data, as they have a great economic significance for their bearers. The most industrious vendors sell products worth millions of euros annually. Creating a respected brand is a major part of successful business, just like in non-virtual world.

This poster presentation makes an overview to the general characteristics of drug vendor user names. Data for the study includes 762 vendor names, collected in April 2017 from AlphaBay, which was the largest cryptomarket at that time but was closed in an international police operation in July 2017. The analysis is mainly focused on names' meaning and principles of naming. What do user names tell about drug vendors? What kind of images they create? Vendor names are also compared to other user names and real-life commercial names.