

## **The spread of drug crime through information and telecommunications technologies**

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Abstract. The article examines the relationship arising from the sale of drugs using the Internet. The widespread use of computer technologies and telecommunication systems in modern life, the creation on their basis of global computer networks, which have become a familiar part of public relations in all spheres of life, has led to the fact that "cyberspace" has become actively used to commit crimes, in particular, for the spread of narcotic funds and their analogues. The scientific article analyzes the current state of the drug situation in Russia, as well as outlines the prospects for improving the mechanism of counteracting the spread of drugs through the information and telecommunications network Internet. The author analyzed the judicial and investigative practice on the issue under consideration, identified the members of an organized criminal group participating in the contactless method of selling narcotic drugs using the Internet, identified the features of each of them. The use of a contactless method of selling narcotic drugs influenced the widespread use of the "Bitcoin" cryptocurrency as the main means of payment for transactions with narcotic drugs.

Keywords: drug crime, narcotic drugs, Internet technologies, computer technologies, information system, cryptocurrency "Bitcoin", electronic payment systems, contactless sales.

Drug addiction and drug-related crime pose a threat not only to public and state security, but also lead to the degradation and destruction of all mankind. The forms and methods of drug-related crimes are constantly being improved and do not lag behind scientific and technological progress and the development of social relations.

The rapid development of information technologies, the spread of methods of making payments for goods and services through the use of electronic systems leads to a change in the methods of committing illegal acts, incl. related to illicit drug trafficking.

The statistics of drug addicts in Russia in 2019 shows that annually 90 thousand people begin to take narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. At the same time, 70 thousand people die every year from the effects of narcotic drugs.

The number of cases associated with the use of drugs by children aged 6-7 is increasing. Our country accounts for 20% of the world drug trafficking [7].

The most common cause of death from drugs is overdose, which disrupts internal organs and causes cardiac arrest. But it is not only the drugs themselves that "kill", but also the consequences of their use.

The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on December 31, 2015, enshrines the emergence of new forms of illegal activity, in particular, with the use of information, communication and high technologies<sup>1</sup>, which also applies to crimes in the sphere of illicit drug trafficking, when the commission of which the information and telecommunication network "Internet" can be used.

Internet technologies are increasingly being used in drug trafficking, as evidenced by the 2017 UN World Drug Report. Modern technologies and the use of social networks for communication create a new way of selling drugs - contactless marketing using the Internet.

Criminals use the Internet as an affordable and convenient means for free advertising of drugs, to communicate with potential buyers, to obtain information about payment, to inform about the location - "plantings". And consumers are actively using the Internet in order to obtain information about the channels for the distribution of narcotic drugs.

So, for example, in a criminal case on charges against Boldin A.V.<sup>2</sup> in the commission of crimes under par. "b" part 3 art. 228.1, par. "b" part 3 art.228.1, par. "g" part 4 art. 228.1, par. "b" part 3 art. 228.1, par. "g" part 4 art. 228.1, par. "g" part 4 art. 228.1, par. "g" part 4 art. 228.1, part 3 art. 30, par. "g" part 4 art. 228.1, part 1 art. 228 CC RF, it was found that in the period from December 2016 to March 2019 Boldin A.A. together with his wife Boldina O.O. earned money by distributing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, as well as their analogues, in the role of pawns on the "TOR" browser on the Internet. The TOR browser is a shadow browser, with the help of it you can find any site that would be blocked using a regular browser. On the website "HYDRA" in the browser "TOR", Boldin A.V. has been registered since mid-December 2016. His duties included, with the help of virtual money "Bitcoin", to acquire drugs in large quantities, and subsequently carry out "plantings" in various districts of Moscow. The scheme for acquiring narcotic drugs looked like this:

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<sup>1</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December 31, 2015 № 683 "On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation" (as amended on December 31, 2015) // Collected Legislation of the Russian Federation № 1 of January 4, 2016 (Part II) Art. 212.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the accused has been changed (author's note)

using a virtual wallet on the Internet Boldin A.V. transferred funds to a virtual exchange office, where rubles were exchanged for virtual money "Bitcoin". Then the virtual money "Bitcoin" was transferred to the virtual wallet of the "5th Element" store. Further to the personal account of A.V. Boldin on the site "HYDRA", came the coordinates with the address, with a photograph and a description of the place "plantings" with drugs, which he later took away and together with Boldina O.O. laid out in different districts of Moscow, making records of coordinates, addresses and photographs of the area, made by him "plantings" with drugs, after which he went to the site "HYDRA" and sent to the address of the store "5th Element" information about the "plantings". For the work performed, namely for one done "planting", the manager of the "5th Element" store transferred the salary in the form of virtual money in the currency "Bitcoin". The amount of "Bitcoin" changed every time and depended on its rate. Then the virtual funds were transferred to the virtual wallet in the personal account of A.V. Boldin on the HYDRA website, which was under his personal login and password. Further, the funds from the personal account were sent to virtual exchange offices, and after the transaction, the virtual money was processed within 24 hours and transferred to the bank card of A.V. Boldin from different personal accounts.

The legislation of the Russian Federation does not regulate public relations related to cryptocurrency in any way. Also, there is no prohibition on the use of this electronic payment system. In connection with this circumstance, there are problems arising in the prevention of crimes committed using electronic money - Bitcoin [1].

Thus, in general, the contactless method consists in the fact that drug criminals look for clients by placing advertisements on the Internet. Buyers pay for drugs through electronic payment systems, and receive them through caches - "plantings". As a result of this method of direct personal contact between the dealer and the purchaser of drugs does not occur, which is of great forensic value.

So, the contactless sales scheme may include:

- establishing contact between the consumer and the distributor by calls or correspondence via social networks or messengers (for example, Skype, Viber, WhatsApp, etc.) [8; 4]. Drug criminals create websites on the Internet or place advertisements on drugs on them, with the aim of their possible ordering by any person through a computer or mobile phone [5].
- having made an order, the buyer of narcotic drugs transfers the funds to the specified account of the electronic payment system, from which the money is received by criminals to the electronic numbers

- payment systems or to bank accounts of dummy individuals. In some cases, money is transferred from the accounts of dummy individuals to the accounts of legal entities, and after that it is subject to cash;
- the creation of the so-called "plantings" with the drug. Typically, the drug is placed in the plantings in a cigarette pack in the entrances of residential buildings, garage cooperatives, playgrounds, etc.;
- information about the planting place is sent to the buyer by SMS messages or calls via social networks and instant messengers. A detailed description of the place and item is sent next to which the planting is located or a photo is sent.

The members of the criminal group communicate with each other using various Internet applications (Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.) [6], through which they receive instructions with detailed descriptions of how to properly pack, store and transport drugs, make plantings, communicate with drug users, how to use electronic accounts and hidden means of information exchange via the Internet, etc.

Let's look at an example. So from the interrogation of a suspect in part 3 art. 30, par. "G" part 4 art. 228.1 of the CC RF Shaimkulova K.I.<sup>1</sup> it was established that the suspect, due to lack of funds for living, decided to deal with the distribution of drugs in the position of "planter" on the darknet portal "Hydra", in the store "madweekend". For one pledged planting with a narcotic drug, he was paid a monetary reward in the amount of five hundred and fifty rubles. The store operator transferred funds in the form of "Bitcoin" cryptocurrency to the individual account of K.I. Shaimkulov. on the darknet portal "Hydra", after which he transferred them to the "crypto-exchange", then cashed them by bank transfer to the card of the bank "Sberbank" of Russia. The narcotic drug packed in polymer bags was transferred to K.I. Shaimkulov by the administrator of the madweekend store through the darknet portal "Hydra". by means of "plantings" in the forest parks of the Moscow region for further marketing.

Currently, modern drug-related crime is characterized by the presence of modern digital technologies and is not limited to the territory of one region, but has an all-Russian and international character.

An analysis of investigative and judicial practice shows that the following are involved in the non-contact distribution of narcotic drugs:

*developers* of psychoactive substances who create new types of psychoactive substances or modify existing chemical formulas;

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<sup>1</sup> Suspect's last name has been changed (author's note)

*wholesale drug couriers* transporting large consignments of drugs across the territory of the recipient country (while the driver may not know about the real contents of the transported cargo);

"*marketers*" responsible for the development, administration and updating of online store sites or pages on social networks, advertising blogs [2];

"*skladmen*" who receive from drug dealers a wholesale consignment of drugs, pack drugs into small portions and periodically replenish their quantity from planters ("kladmen"). This stage in the criminal narco-hierarchy, as a rule, is occupied by persons who have previously justified their trust as planters;

*smugglers* who move bulk consignments of drugs from abroad to the territory of the recipient country;

"*dispatchers*" who receive orders from drug users and carry out their dispatch, control the receipt of payments from consumers and send "plantings" addresses to drug users;

"*curators*" directly work with couriers, "promoters", "dispatchers", transfer their salaries, create a report for each employee and ensure the safety of planters - "kladmen";

"*personnel officers*" are engaged in the selection of planters ("kladmen");

*planters* ("kladmen") at the direction of the "dispatcher" or independently plant a narcotic drug in a certain place, the address and photo of which are sent to the "dispatcher" or directly to the drug user;

"*cashiers*" withdraw funds received through payment terminals from bank accounts and distribute them among the members of the group or transfer them to the organizer of this group;

"*promoters*" ("*graffiti artists*", "*writers*", "*stencils*", "*spammers*"), who put on the walls the addresses of online stores and Internet bots selling drugs, as well as glueing and spreading leaflets, stickers, hanging stretch marks ( posters) on ropes tied around trees;

"*collectors*" - persons who use violence against couriers who stole drugs from a store or caused other damage (as an edification to the rest, videos of the massacre of "kladmen" are posted on the Internet);

*cashers* that facilitate the transfer of electronic money into cash;

"*drops*" - persons involved in cashing out funds or receiving parcels with narcotic drugs. In other words, a "drop" is a person whose passport data or other information about him is used to carry out illegal operations so that the persons committing crimes remain undetected. Sites that are dedicated to teaching the recruitment of "drops" for criminal purposes, it is recommended to attract drug users, students, unemployed by searching for them on social networks, on entertainment sites, dating sites and job search sites.

An important component of drug-related crime on the Internet is disguise, conspiracy, because using a contactless method of committing crimes, criminals try to hide contacts with each other and with buyers from law enforcement agencies.

Therefore, it is quite difficult to establish the facts of the illegal sale of narcotic drugs only by investigative means, and a complex of operational-search measures is required, which will be aimed at identifying and solving the crimes in question. In this regard, the role of operational-search information is increasing, the sources of which are persons who provide confidential assistance to the bodies carrying out operational-search activities. Also, the effectiveness of investigative work in identifying and solving drug-related crimes can be achieved by performing tactical combinations and operations with the use of a complex of operational-search measures of a technical nature [3].

The technical knowledge of drug criminals and new ways of committing drug crimes by them require law enforcement officers to have good knowledge in the field of electronic or information and telecommunication networks, to improve operational-search and forensic techniques and methods of detecting, disclosing and investigating crimes related to the contactless method of selling drugs.

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