

Silk road and drugs issues connected with it

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Marie Claire Van Hout and Tim Bingham combined to write an intriguing case study titled "Responsible vendors, intelligent consumers: Silk Road, the online revolution in drug trading". This study brought to light the inner workings of a brand new and revolutionary method of drug distribution. The study included testimony from ten drug distributors on the silk road who volunteered to discuss their experiences. While the experiences of only ten members of a community of thousands of online hustlers, may or may not be generalizable, their statements do provide an understanding of the social interactions between the buyer and the seller, and the seller's relationship with the website. This memo will address the distinct differences in the social dynamic of a drug on the Silk Road compared to a typical face to face interaction between drug dealer and consumer.

The sales of most merchandise have become more and more dominated by large-scale online distributors. Sites such as Amazon and eBay showcase a massive variety of goods and commodities. Customers can view and compare product ratings, quality, and prices against competitors products easily and immediately. Warehouses across the country allow for these online enterprises to distribute their goods quickly and efficiently. With this method of product distribution being widely popular, it would stand to reason that other enterprises would aim to distribute their goods in this way.

Hustles such as drug sales, sex work, organ trafficking would all undoubtedly benefit from an online platform in which they could instantly reach consumers across the world and distribute their product. However, the nature of their enterprise obviously makes this inherently difficult. These hustles are highly illegal, and offering illegal goods and services on the <https://assignbuster.com/silk-road-and-drugs-issues-connected-with-it/>

internet is inherently compromising. Putting the sale of an illegal product in writing and offering it on a public forum is difficult and perhaps not feasible in all cases. However, the founder of the deep web website Silk Road, Ross Ulbricht, found a way to circumvent the risks that one would expect with online illicit drug distribution. Ulbricht established a website to sell merchandise that was accessible, but users were not traceable. He was able to ensure anonymity to all the the distributors on the website.

This was revolutionary to drug sale and distribution. With the advent of the silk road website, drug dealing was now a viable option for an entirely new type of people. Some people who never would have had access to the large quantities of drugs were now able to become drug dealers via this website. For drug dealers, there is typically a high risk, high reward association. The website cut some of the risk and maximized the reward. Drug dealing is also typically limited because of the logistics of distribution. Typically a dealer needs to create a network within a relatively small area of a city or suburb in which they can distribute their product. The silk road completely changed this dynamic. The network of the drug dealer was no longer limited geographically, as they were able to access consumers throughout the country and even the world.

The website changed the way in which consumers were accessing and buying the drugs as well. A common fear in purchasing drugs is that the customer must put some trust in their dealer. It is nearly impossible for the customer to know, particularly with synthetic drugs, the purity/potency and whether or not it has been cut with something. The website allowed the users to see reviews and ratings for each dealer and given product. This <https://assignbuster.com/silk-road-and-drugs-issues-connected-with-it/>

completely changed the relationship between consumer and seller. The consumer no longer had to trust the seller for a good product, and thus the sellers were more motivated to be providing the best products possible.

An element of trust was also now required from the sellers who were distributing their products on the website. The typical drug dealer on the Silk Road website had very limited understanding on computer science that went into ensuring their anonymity on the website. Each and every dealer had to simply trust that the creator of the website had done an adequate job protecting them from law enforcement groups. This is a social dynamic that is completely unique to this online drug distribution website. Often drug dealers exist in some sort of criminal organization hierarchy in which they must trust their superiors to protect them from police intervention. However, risks are much more clear cut. The typical dealer doesn't blindly trust and accept protection from risks that he or she doesn't quite understand.