

Sabrina Vidal, étudiante au doctorat,
École de Criminologie, Université de Montréal

Prof. David Décary-Héту
École de Criminologie, Université de Montréal
Centre International de Criminologie Comparée

Prof. Frédéric Ouellet
École de Criminologie, Université de Montréal
Centre International de Criminologie Comparée

Cooks or chemists: exploring synthetic drug producers' competence based on discussion retrieved from an online drug production forum

Synthetic drug producers can be categorized into two groups: 1) professional chemists and; 2) amateur cooks that follow drug 'recipes' found online or shared through their social network. Because of the technical nature of synthetic drug production and the many changes in regulations, drug producers have been known to visit online forums where they exchange on synthetic drug production. Online forums are especially important for cooks as they provide them with opportunities to improve their skills, by reading testimonials of synthesis or through direct mentoring. The aim of this research is to understand the role of forums in the development of competence. We identified 10 online forum participants that were active on an online forum that discussed synthetic drug productions. We collected the messages in the forum threads where these 10 participants posted and analysed qualitatively the evolution of their criminal competence. Synthetic drug producers can increase their chemistry knowledge through online forums. Online forums host communities where when one is stuck in a production step, others help by explaining the following steps, enabling the completion of the drug synthesis. Cooks can therefore hope to become professional chemists given a long enough involvement in online forums.