



## Mid-Year Situation Report on the Illicit Drug Market in Social Media Platforms, 2024 (January–June)

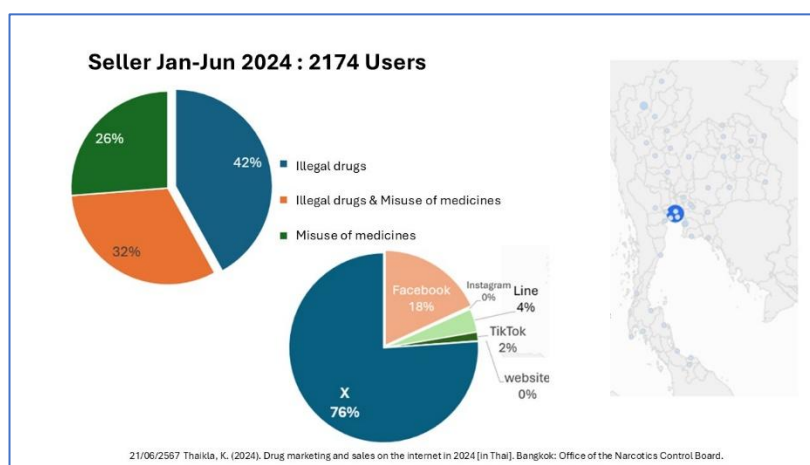
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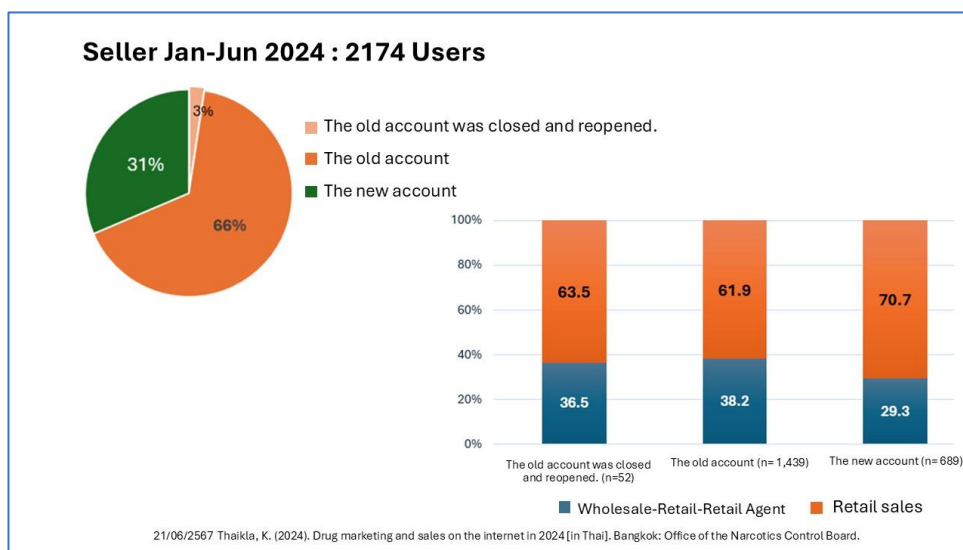
This report presents surveillance findings on online accounts exhibiting behaviors related to the sale of illicit drugs during the first half of 2024. A total of 2,176 accounts were identified as involved in drug-related activities. Of these, 76% were found on the platform X (formerly Twitter), 18.1% on Facebook, 4.0% on LINE, 1.5% on TikTok, and 0.1% on various websites.

The nature of the accounts was categorized as follows: 42% were involved solely in the sale of illegal drugs, 32% in the sale of both illegal drugs and Misuse of medicines, and 26% in the unauthorized sale of Misuse of medicines alone. Among these accounts, 6.2% were classified as "existing sellers," having been registered before 2024; 31.4% were newly registered accounts in 2024; and 2.4% were previously closed accounts that had reopened.

The majority (64.7%) were small-scale or retail-level sellers. Meanwhile, 35.3% engaged in wholesale operations, either exclusively or in combination with retail sales and agent recruitment. Notably, older sellers were more likely to be involved in wholesale activities compared to newer sellers.

Regarding the type of substances sold, 79.1% of sellers offered more than one type of drug, while 20.9% sold only a single substance. These accounts were geographically dispersed across 52 provinces. The provinces with the highest concentration of sellers included Bangkok, followed by Chiang Mai, Chonburi, Pathum Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima, Surat Thani, Nonthaburi, Phitsanulok, Chumphon, Rayong, Samut Prakan, and Ubon Ratchathani.





During the first half of 2024, a total of 9,421 posts related to the sale of illicit drugs and Misuse of medicines were documented across various social media platforms. Among the illicit drug-related posts, the majority advertised crystal methamphetamine (51.1%), followed by methamphetamine tablets (25.5%), ecstasy (10.7%), heroin (10.6%), and ketamine (9.3%). Additionally, cocktail products such as “happy water,” collagen-based intoxicants, and drug-infused candies accounted for 6.8% of posts.

Of particular interest was the presence of posts featuring New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)—a category comprising ketamine, DMT, 2CB, hallucinogenic mushrooms, kratom, and Egyptian blue lotus—which collectively appeared in 14.5% of the total drug-related content.

Posts related to Misuse of medicines mainly involved sedatives and sleeping pills (8.9%), analgesics (6.5%), antihistamines (5.2%), cough suppressants (4.2%), "lean" (1.5%), and Parkinson's disease medications (0.5%).

## Customer Engagement Strategies

Vendors utilized several marketing tactics to engage potential buyers. The most common approach, found in 98.5% of posts, involved sharing text and images of drugs to increase awareness of the product, its effects, methods of use, and associated paraphernalia. Additionally, 61.8% of posts were intended to stimulate purchasing behavior by explaining purchasing procedures, delivery methods, and pricing details.

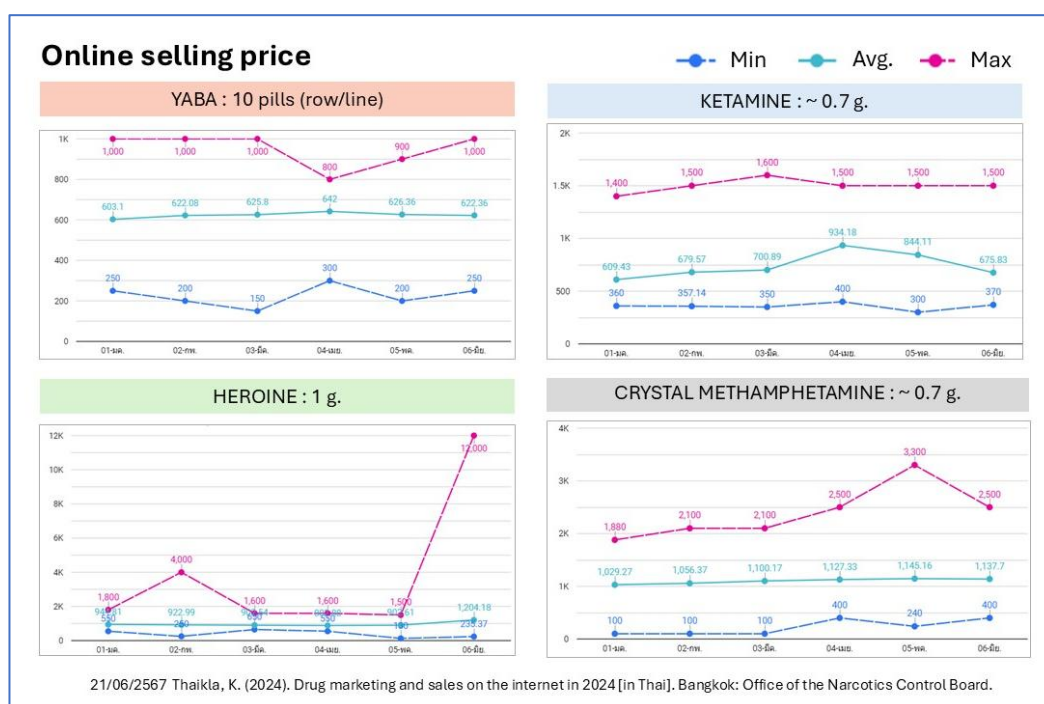
Customer retention strategies were also employed, including price discounts, free samples, promotional giveaways, and free shipping (15.8%). Customer advocacy was observed in 2.9% of posts through sharing, recommendations, and personal reviews. A smaller proportion (0.4%) featured influencer reviews aimed at enhancing consumer decision-making.



## Online Drug Marketing and the Expansion of Access and Promotion Strategies

Drug sellers on social media platforms primarily focus on raising awareness and stimulating user desire by highlighting the characteristics, taste, effects, and methods of consumption of illicit substances, as well as showcasing paraphernalia associated with drug use. These posts are designed to arouse curiosity and desire, eventually driving consumption and purchase behavior.

The digital drug trade allows users to access substances around the clock, with delivery services offering discreet and free home shipping. This reduces the perceived risk of arrest and increases the appeal and convenience of purchase. Online sellers commonly employ marketing strategies similar to those in legal commerce, including discounts, promotional giveaways, loyalty point systems, and guarantees of potency (e.g., “guaranteed to get you high”).



## Key Observations and Emerging Trends (January–June 2024)

1. In the first half of the year, sellers adapted to legal thresholds—such as the 5-tablet methamphetamine possession rule (deemed for personal use)—by packaging five methamphetamine tablets in transparent capsules.
2. Ready-to-use crystal methamphetamine (“ice”) was marketed pre-loaded into syringes, emphasizing convenience and rapid administration.
3. MDMA products, particularly in the form of ecstasy (XTC), became increasingly prevalent and diversified in their forms and branding.



4. A wide variety of packaging styles was observed for cocktail products (e.g., “happy water,” drug-laced collagen, intoxicating candies). Posts often highlighted phrases like “*won’t show up in urine tests*” to reduce user hesitation and encourage experimentation.
5. The sale of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) online has expanded significantly in both type and availability.
6. Notably, the *Blue Egyptian water lily (Nymphaea caerulea)*, known for its active compounds nuciferine and aporphine, has emerged as an NPS of interest. Classified by the UNODC (2013) as a plant- and mushroom-derived psychoactive substance warranting close surveillance, this substance is now being incorporated into “lean” drinks and used as an additive in vaping liquids for e-cigarettes.