



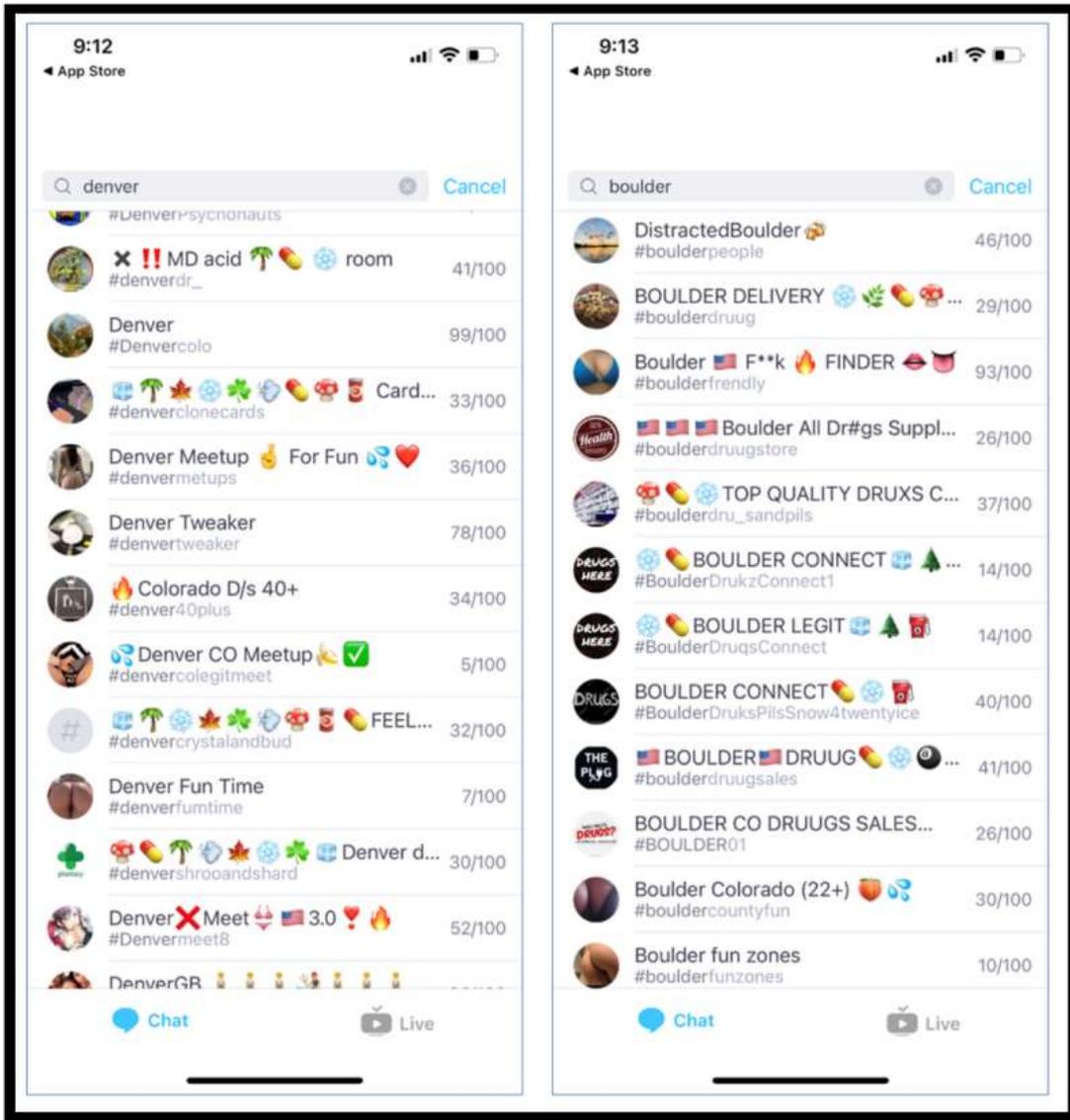
AG Report on Illicit Substances Online

Unsurprising main point

The online market for illicit substances arises from the convergence of two major sea changes in American society within the last 30 years.

1. The evolution of the Internet, and particularly the rise of social media platforms
2. The progression of the opioid crisis

The availability of fentanyl and other illicit substances online is staggering.



Search results for public groups in the Kik messaging app using only the terms “Denver” and “Boulder” (with no reference to illicit drugs) returned dozens of local drug buying/selling groups open to the public.



EMOJI DRUG CODE | DECODED

COMMON EMOJI CODES

FAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

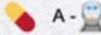
PERCOCET & OXYCODONE



XANAX



ADDERALL



DEALER SIGNALS

DEALER ADVERTISING



HIGH POTENCY



UNIVERSAL FOR DRUGS



LARGE BATCH



OTHER DRUGS

METH



HEROIN



COCAINE



MDMA & MOLLIES



MUSHROOMS



COUGH SYRUP



MARIJUANA



This reference guide is intended to give parents, caregivers, educators, and other influencers a better sense of how emojis are being used in conjunction with illegal drugs. Fake prescription

Some stats

- Those who had purchased drugs on social media described this method of sourcing as “more convenient to organize a transaction” (78.8%) “the speed at which drugs can be obtained” (58.6%) and “the wide range of drugs available” (23.4%) as clear advantages to brokering deals on apps rather than seeking out street dealers, relying on friends, or navigating complex dark web platforms and cryptomarkets.

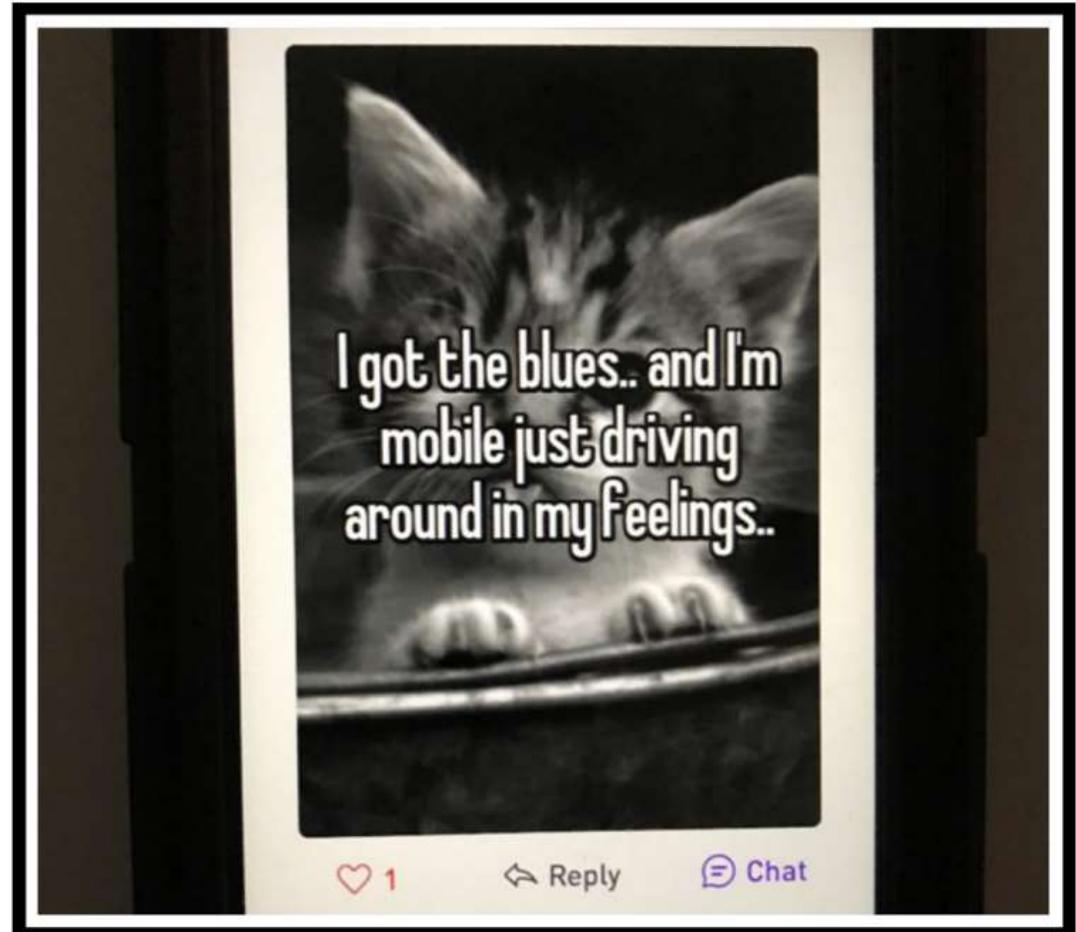
Some stats

- A survey conducted in 2021 revealed that 35% of young people had seen drugs for sale online.
- Based on various DOL public listening sessions, interviews with community stakeholders, and confidential conversations with former drug users and sellers broadly indicated that a *significant portion of illicit substance transactions occur at least in part online, and on social media platforms in particular.*

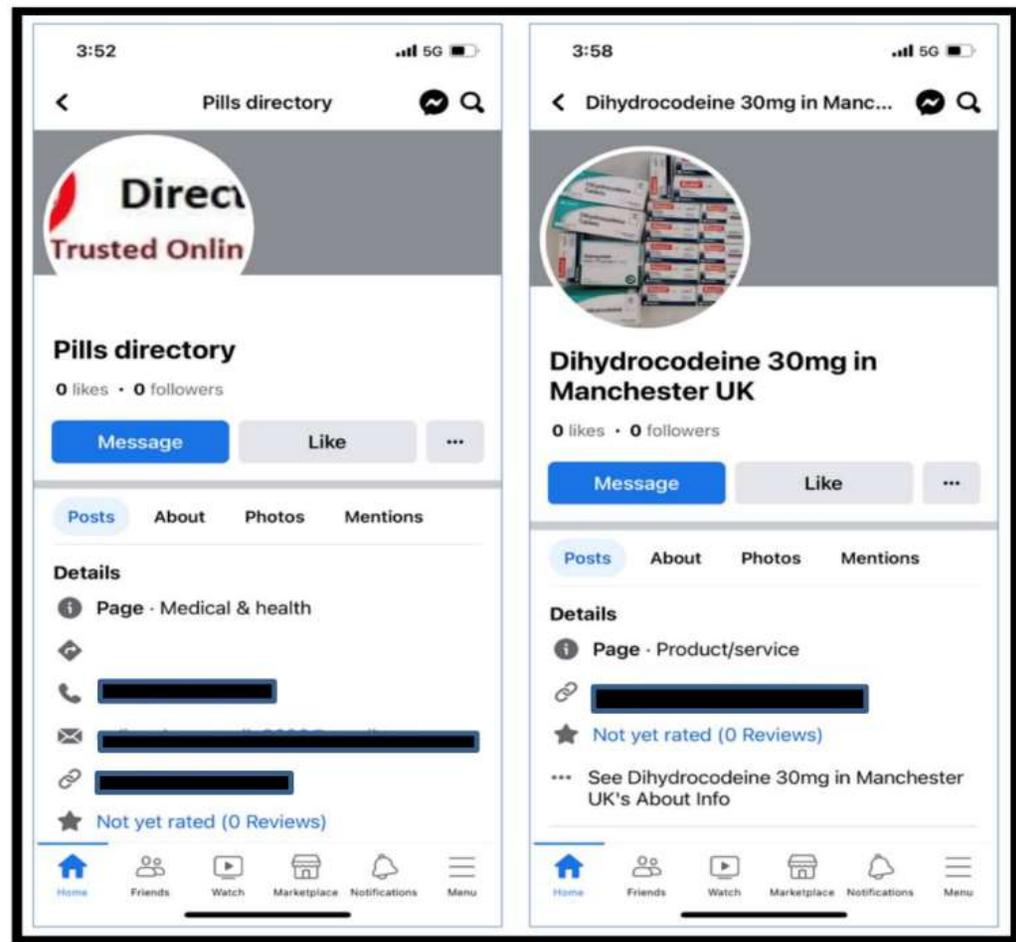
Drug Dealer Tactics Online



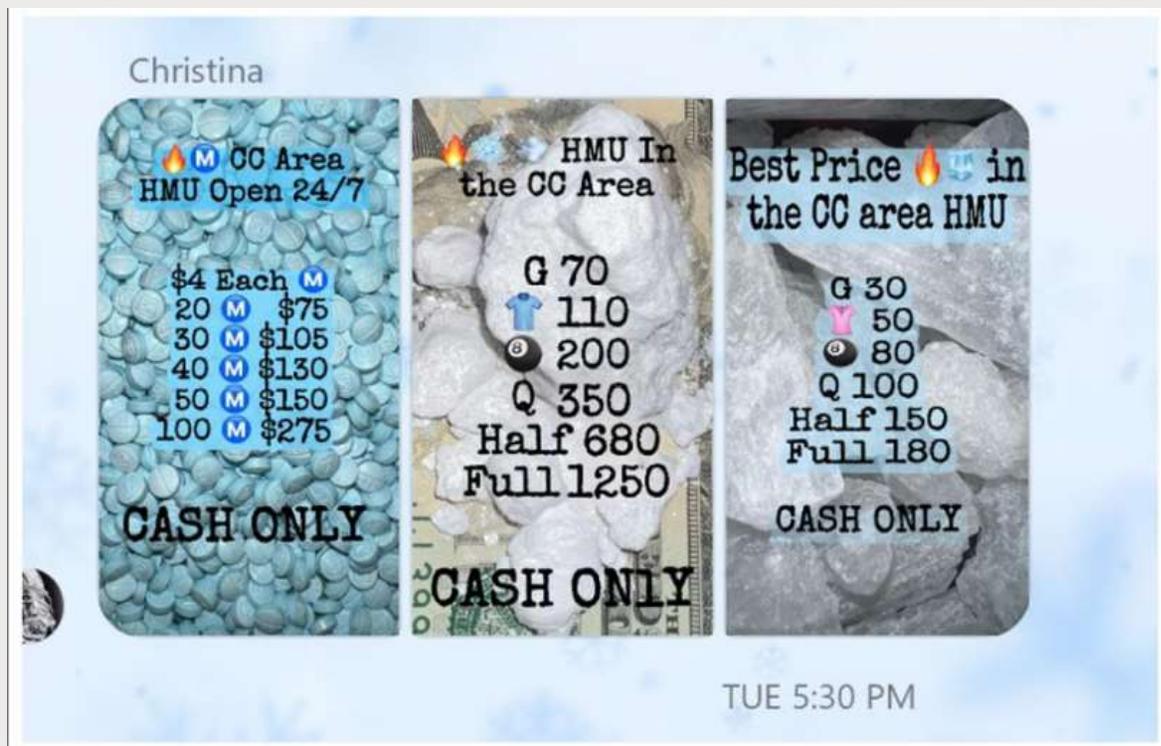
TACTIC: create posts, reels, or stories that contain only images or videos



TACTIC: Using hyperlinks to redirect end users to other sources of drug access.



TACTIC:
Private
encrypted
Messages



Certain platform features make buying drugs on social media easier

- Publicly available user profiles and content, especially on dating apps.
 - End-to-end encryption
 - Ephemeral content
 - Anonymous engagement
 - Geolocation mapping
 - Algorithmic amplification
- 

Companies' responses to drug activity on their platforms generally have been both uneven in application and limited in effectiveness.

In the absence of effective regulation and oversight, social media companies have enjoyed broad discretion to decide:

- What kinds of drug-related content or conduct are prohibited on their platforms
 - Which content moderation and enforcement tools to use in response to drug activity
 - What kinds of data they will publish about drug activity on their platforms
 - The extent to which they will support law enforcement investigations
- 

What to do about this



Some Legal Limitations

- Section 230
 - Stored Communications Act
 - The First Amendment
 - Data Privacy Laws
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Platform best practices

1. Allow interfacing with third-party content moderation applications.
 2. Submit to independent, external oversight
 3. Develop clear, unambiguous policies prohibiting the promotion, purchase, sale, or advertisement of illicit substances.
 4. Allocate sufficient resources to preventing, detecting, and taking action against illicit drug activity.
 5. Utilize a multi-lateral, cross-platform approach to proactive content moderation
 6. Fully cooperate with law enforcement investigations.
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Colorado recommendations

Require disclosure of policies on illicit substance transactions and related enforcement data.

For example:

- # of drug related items, how long they were up, how content was flagged
 - # of accounts removed for violating drug policies
 - # or proactive reports to law enforcement
 - # of requests from law enforcement and average response time
- 

Colorado recommendations

1. Structure enforceable best practices for community guidelines and terms of service via an MOU
2. Provide increased resources to support local law enforcement efforts to investigate online narcotics cases
3. Increase investment in substance abuse treatment and harm reduction resources specifically targeted for teens and young adults.
4. Increase Internet and social media literacy for parents and caregivers of adolescents and teens.

Federal recommendations

1. Empower a federal regulatory agency to oversee social media platforms.
2. Create federal regulation to improve information transparency from social media platforms.

**SOCIAL MEDIA, FENTANYL & ILLEGAL DRUG SALES:
A REPORT FROM THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LAW**



Access the full report
here:

<https://coag.gov/app/uploads/2023/03/Colorado-AG-Report-Social-Media-Fentanyl-Illegal-Drug-Sales.pdf>