



Newsletter n.6

Due to the COVID-19 global emergency and the resulting lockdown of most of the European countries, the **training and pilot sessions**, with the investigators of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) involved in the project, have been postponed indefinitely. The strong involvement of the Law Enforcement Officers in fighting with the coronavirus, makes also impossible to arrange remotely sessions with them. On the 2nd of April the consortium met together for the 8th Electronic General Assembly (e-GA) to discuss about the contingency plan to adopt for effective facing the current difficult situation. Taking into account the importance of both training and pilot activities with LEAs, the consortium agrees on postponing the already planned events of the two rounds of pilots and training. At the same time the ANITA consortium is determined to reorganise such crucial activities as soon as the situation becomes safe for everybody. A short extension of the project duration could surely help completing the entire workplan.

In the meanwhile, partners are delivering the expected solutions. Most of the tools and services for textual and multimedia contents analysis have already been integrated into the ANITA platform. New crawlers for dark markets and Surface Web have been implemented and are accessible through the platform. Features for managing investigations on illegal activities are integrating step by step.

A demo of the current version of the ANITA platform was presented by ENG during the 8th e-GA. The platform and the integrated services received encouragements from the officers that had the opportunity to attend the meeting.



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Illicit Synthetic Drugs: AI to track evolution

Tracking synthetic illicit drugs production and their traffic online is a challenging job due to the fast pace with which the market evolves. For the ANITA project, Expert System has designed and developed a module for the automatic learning of new knowledge.

New scientific papers which expose chemicals as new precursors to synthesize drugs are regularly published:

“Instead of importing the prohibited but necessary chemicals, offenders started to produce these chemicals themselves, resulting in the use of pre-precursors (such as safrole for PMK and APAAN for BMK). A side effect of this methodical displacement was that it became possible to produce significantly cheaper chemicals, which could result in much cheaper ecstasy.” [E.R. Kleemans & M.R.J. Soudijn (2017). Organised crime. In: N. Tilley and A. Sidebottom (eds.). Handbook of Crime Prevention and Community Safety. Second edition. Routledge]

From this scrap, we know in advance that PMK and BMK are used to produce ecstasy,

(KNOWN) RECURSOR	(KNOWN) DRUG
PMK	ecstasy
BMK	ecstasy

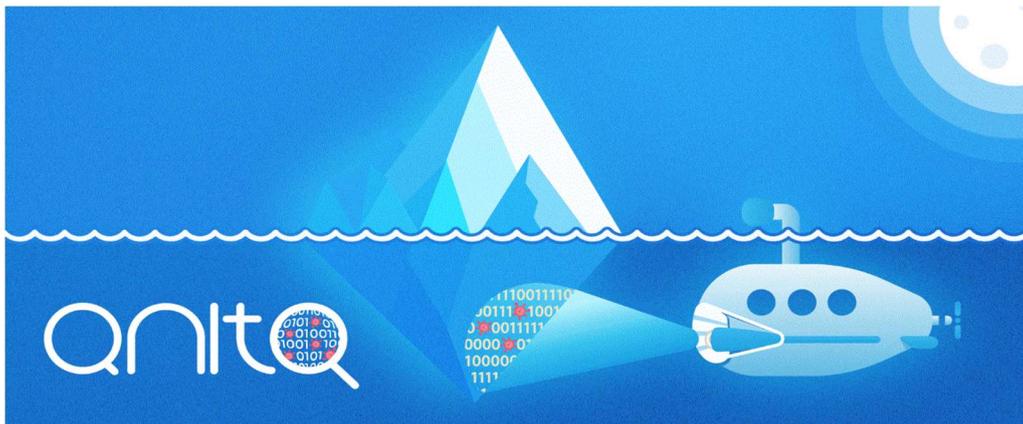
so we look for markets that sell these products to discover producers of ecstasy. Also, there are other substances named in the paper that are not contemplated by the ANITA knowledge base (safrole and APPAN). In cases like these, the NLP algorithms developed by Expert System are capable of identifying these new chemicals of interest starting from the context. Upon the validation of experts, new knowledge is automatically identified, learned, and acquired by the System.

(NEW KNOWLEDGE) PRE-PRECURSOR	(KNOWN) PRECURSOR
safrole	PMK
APAAN	BMK





The ability to use AI techniques to automatically gain new knowledge about the latest techniques to produce illicit substrates is of great aid to LEAs who would otherwise spend a lot of valuable resources not to be outpaced by the fast evolution of the illicit synthetic drugs production.



UPCOMING EVENTS

The planned dissemination and training events are suspended. The new dates will be communicated as soon as possible. *An updated list with all dissemination activities is available here:* <https://www.anita-project.eu/events.html>

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