Babel Street Solutions for Disrupting the Flow of Fentanyl

BABEL STREET INSIGHTS

Drug cartels based in Mexico, such as the Sinaloa and Jalisco organizations, exert near-total control over the fentanyl supply chain and the flow of the drug into the United States. From sourcing precursor chemicals from China, to manufacturing pills and powders, smuggling them across international borders, and supplying the domestic criminal gangs that distribute them, the cartels have built a powerful logistical operation facilitating the fentanyl trade.

To coordinate these logistics, the cartels predominantly use social media applications, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, and encrypted messaging platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Wire, and Wickr.[1]

Law enforcement officials at all levels are tasked with conducting investigations and building iron-clad cases that lead to the arrest and conviction of cartel operatives and their local distributors. However, the amount of data is overwhelming, and the scope of investigations can be massive and cross international borders.

Investigators need an automated way to search, filter, and analyze data in multiple languages as they follow the complex threads and networks of the fentanyl supply chain. They must be able to craft precise queries that go beyond the surface web and delve into social media platforms, the dark web, and the illicit forums where criminals communicate with their networks – and they must do it anonymously and securely.

What's at risk?

Fentanyl is now the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18–49.[2] The effect on society, both in lives and dollars includes:

- Incarceration costs for people convicted for drug possession, sales, trafficking, and related crimes

- Lost productivity and healthcare costs for those suffering from substance abuse disorders

- Strained public services as first responders devote substantial resources to treating overdoses

- Negative impacts on communities that experience increased violence, disorder, and reduced quality of life where drug dealers operate

- Massive profits for criminals who use those gains to finance other illicit activities

Additionally, the fentanyl trade has political consequences, including increasing threats to Mexican sovereignty due to rising cartel influence, along with continued and escalating threats to U.S. territory as cartels rapidly adopt and refine advanced drones and other technologies.

How Babel Street can help

Babel Street Insights provides the ability to rapidly aggregate structured and unstructured data from thousands of online sources. Leveraging natural language processing and machine learning algorithms, the platform analyzes terabytes of data daily across web, social media, dark web, illicit forums, and other sources to extract insights.

Capabilities include:

Social Media Monitoring and Mapping — Social media is used at all levels of the fentanyl trade. Insights enables law enforcement agencies to monitor social platforms for communications around drug shipments, marketplaces, individual sales, and precursors. Babel Street Insights Synthesis can quickly map social networks, providing valuable insight into the relationships and connections among fentanyl suppliers, buyers, and sellers.

Dark Web Monitoring — Babel Street provides continuous and persistent monitoring of dark web forums, chatrooms, hidden services, and other shadowy spaces that are selling bulk chemicals for the manufacture of fentanyl and other synthetic drugs. The platform parses information in multiple languages to detect emerging transactions, transportation methods, money laundering activity, and underground communications.

Identity Resolution — From minimal identifiers, such as an email address or social media handle, Babel Street Insights can build a profile of an individual or organization from public records. This often includes real names, addresses, and phone numbers that support the investigation.

Real-time Alerts — With customizable dashboards, law enforcement agencies can track trafficking trends in real-time to enable rapid response. Intelligent automation allows setting up alerts for volume or dollar value indicators, routes, principal players and emerging smuggling methods.

Managed Attribution — To protect the identity of investigators, as well as the security of law enforcement networks and infrastructure, Babel Street offers the Secure Access managed attribution platform. It thoroughly shields users and their IP addresses through a hardened proxy network that ensures in-country access to sites around the world. Persistent managed attribution instances allow for secure and reliable online persona management in support of ongoing operations.

With investigative tools from Babel Street, law enforcement professionals can maximize the use of open-source information to build compelling and defensible cases against the drug cartels dominating the fentanyl supply chain.

End Notes

[1]U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, "DEA Operation Last Mile Tracks Down Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartel Associates Operating within the United States," 05/05/2023, https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2023/05/05/dea-operation-last-mile-tracks-down-sinaloa-and-jalisco-cartel-associates

[2]U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, "'Chapitos' Charged in Department's Latest Actions to Disrupt Flow of Illegal Fentanyl and Other Dangerous Drugs," 04/14/2023, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-charges-against-sinaloa-cartel-s-global-operation

Babel Street is the trusted technology partner for the world's most advanced identity intelligence and risk operations. The Babel Street Insights platform delivers advanced AI and data analytics solutions to close the Risk-Confidence Gap.

Babel Street provides unmatched, analysis-ready data regardless of language, proactive risk identification, 360-degree insights, high-speed automation, and seamless integration into existing systems. We empower government and commercial organizations to transform high-stakes identity and risk operations into a strategic advantage.

Learn more at **babelstreet.com.**

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