

The Legacy of the Silk Road

Let's start at the end of this rather divisive story; **One of Donald Trump's** One of US President Donald Trump's first decisions was to grant a pardon on 21 January 2025 to **Ross William Ulbricht**, the founder of **Silk Road** (*Silk Road*) platform. Ross was serving two life sentences plus 40 years in Tucson, a sentence handed down in 2015, meaning he ultimately served 10 years for developing Silk Road.



Donald Trump and Ross William Ulbricht

At 3.15 pm on 1 October 2013, Ulbricht was arrested by plainclothes FBI agents in a public library in San Francisco, and charged him with conspiracy to traffic drugs and weapons online. The charges against him were later expanded to include aiding and abetting the distribution of illegal drugs, operating a criminal organisation, computer hacking, distribution of forged documents and money laundering. **Under the alias**, the 31-year-old Ulbricht, operating under this pseudonym as the platform's operator, allegedly earned the equivalent of approximately 15.8 million euros in bitcoin through the operation of Silk Road.

"Ulbricht's arrest and conviction (...) must send a clear message to anyone attempting to run a criminal enterprise on the internet" – emphasised Prosecutor Preet Bharara in his closing speech – *"The supposed anonymity of the dark web cannot serve as a shield against arrest and prosecution."* The verdict was reached following a trial lasting almost a month and four hours of jury deliberation; on 5 February 2015, the Manhattan jury found Ulbricht guilty on seven counts and ordered him to pay \$183 million.

Throughout the proceedings, Ulbricht maintained his innocence. He argued that he was merely *anarcho-capitalist libertarian* (whatever that means) and had already handed over the running of Silk Road to others.

Deep web, darknet, marketplace

I'll now try to explain this in layman's terms, simplifying these rather complex concepts considerably, so please bear with me.

The **deep web** is the part of the internet that isn't visible to the average person, as search engines (*Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, Yandex*) do not index this content. There are essentially two reasons for this: either these sites do not allow indexing, or they simply cannot be indexed. This is where you'll find various databases, functions accessible via specialised protocols, cloud storage, **Tor**-indexed sites, or even the Darknet.

The **Darknet** is indeed the internet's 's *"dark corner"*, accessible via a specialised browser – the open-source Tor – but much of its content is usually only visible via special links. Silk Road and similar marketplaces are still relatively easy to find here, but access to the truly sensitive sites is generally only granted to potential customers privately, *"just like that"* you cannot simply stumble upon this content.



These marketplaces are 'eBay'-style platforms for this specialised content, connecting sellers with buyers. Obviously, traders here mostly offer illegal products or services for sale, and payment is made almost exclusively in some form of blockchain currency, also known as a cryptocurrency, such as *Bitcoin (BTC), Ethereum (ETH), Tether (USDT), Cardano (ADA)* or even Elon Musk's favourite, *Dogecoin (DOGE)*.

The Silk Road

The Silk Road, as it turned out, was developed by Ross William Ulbricht, and began its triumphant rise in 2011 as the first truly widely used marketplace where one could trade in everything – or almost everything. Drugs, illegal goods, forged documents, ammunition, weapons – in short, almost anything could be found here.



Shop by Category

Drugs 6,625

Cannabis 1,080

Dissociatives 190

Ecstasy 829

Opioids 382

Other 450

Precursors 59

Prescription 1,429

Psychedelics 828

Stimulants 1,079

Apparel 310

Art 114

Biotic materials 1

Books 858

Collectibles 1

Computer equipment 43

Custom Orders 60

Digital goods 590

Drug paraphernalia 247



Generic XANAX (Alprazolam 1mg): 400 pills Grade A+
B1.52



Pure Oxycodone HCL Powder (OC, Roxy)- 1/4
B0.53



TESTOSTERONE CYPIONATE 250mg/ml x 10
B0.69



100 GR - MDMA 84%



Pack of Five (5) Suboxone (Buprenorphine) 8mg/2mg



ML/Methylone
SALE SALE!!!!!! 250 grams METHYLONE!

The Silk Road

Surprisingly, the site had a code of ethics (how surprising that phrase is in this context), according to which weapons of mass destruction, child exploitation materials, child pornography, stolen credit cards and contract killing services were also banned on this platform. Furthermore, the site's terms and conditions prohibited the sale of any goods or services intended to deceive or cause harm.

Interestingly, cryptocurrencies – and specifically the **Bitcoin**, were largely linked to this site, although, of course, the issuers have since significantly consolidated these funds and frequently attempt to deny this early period. In any case, between 2011 and 2013, the marketplace handled roughly ten million in Bitcoin transactions; in March 2013, 10,000 items were available on the site, and seventy per cent of this range of goods consisted of drugs.

Welcome! | Silk Road

messages 0 | orders 0 | account \$0.0000

Search Go

Hi,

Shop by Category

- Drugs 12,072
 - Cannabis 2,821
 - Dissociatives 200
 - Ecstasy 1,290
 - Intoxicants 63
 - Opioids 362
 - Other 31
 - Precursors 86
 - Prescription 3,674
 - Psychedelics 1,303
 - Stimulants 1,425
 - Tobacco 316
- Apparel 530
- Art 14
- Biotic materials 2
- Books 1,161
- Collectibles 21
- Computer equipment 106
- Custom Orders 80
- Digital goods 852
- Drug paraphernalia 440
- Electronics 165

Valium (Apaurine) 10mg x 100. \$1.6865

Oxycontin 30 mg "Roxys" Pharmacy Fresh Free Ship! \$0.4260

10 Grams Pure Crystal Meth Methamphetamine \$6.1324

1.5 GRAMS DUTCH WEED GROWN IN ITALY!!! \$0.1678

Prima Lux Slims 6 (10 packs x 20 cigarettes) \$0.3166

[HGH] Human Growth Hormone 200iu Set (8iu x \$7.5712

Silk Road

The downfall

The FBI had been "set its sights" Silk Road from the very start, feverishly trying to track down the site's creator and operators. The indictment states that an FBI expert codenamed Agent-1 found an early online reference to Silk Road in 2013 in a post dated 27 January 2011 : "I'll post this on this website called Silk Road" - wrote the **Altoid** , a user, whilst pasting a link to the platform. - "I'm thinking of buying it all up..."

Eight months later, Altoid posted another message on Bitcoin Talk; he was looking for an IT specialist for a Bitcoin start-up. According to the post, interested parties could contact **rossulbricht@gmail.com** . Following this, they began to keep a close eye on Ulbricht, who almost always sent emails from an internet café in San Francisco; the VPN log files they obtained matched these times, as did the email account records retrieved from Google. (Note: never trust a VPN provider that keeps logs). Later, agents seized a parcel from his postbox that had arrived from Canada; it contained forged identity documents under nine different names, all of which featured Ulbricht's photograph.

Ulbricht was also charged with incitement to murder when a *Canadian user* attempted to blackmail him by threatening to publish the names of thousands of Silk Road users unless he paid half a million dollars in exchange for his silence. According to the FBI, Ulbricht then hired a hitman, who confirmed that the job had been carried out, but no further evidence of this murder was found in Canada.



Silk Road seized

After Silk Road

Following Ulbrich's downfall, the FBI also tracked down the marketplace, which was subsequently shut down in October 2013. Shortly after the arrest, the marketplace's administrator, Thomas White, launched **Silk Road 2.0**, but the authorities shut this down rather quickly as well, and White also found himself in court.

Clearly, the demand for illegal services or drugs did not cease; it simply found new avenues. To my knowledge, the demise of Silk Road created a 'marketplace vacuum' was filled by several smaller marketplaces, such as *Versus*, *Torrez*, *AlphaBay Market*, *Kingdom Market*, *TOR2DOOR*, *Abacus Market*, *TorZon Market*, *Ares Market*, *Cocorico Market*, *BlackSprut Market*, *OpenBazaar* or the **Wall Street Market**, which [itt in my previous post at](#).

The **OpenBazaar 3.0**, the open-source software platform for distributed and decentralised online marketplaces, is still in beta (and is currently unavailable), but it appears to be a fairly effective alternative to centralised marketplaces, as its operation resembles a torrent programme rather than eBay.

These new platforms have one thing in common: they have no code of conduct, meaning anyone can trade whatever they like on them.

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Továbbra is keresek megjelenési lehetőséget az írásaim számára. Ha esetleg van ötleted, oszd meg velem! Elérhetőségeim az [Impresszum](#)ban találhatók.

A passport.blog jelenlegi egyetlen megjelenési lehetősége a Facebook. Ha értesülni szeretnél az új bejegyzésekről, kövesd a [Bolyongó Facebook oldal](#)t.

Ha szeretnéd a bejegyzést kinyomtatni, vagy önálló formában menteni, ennek a legegyszerűbb módja a PDF formába konvertálás. Ezt a jobb oldali, fentről negyedik (Adobe) ikonnal teheted meg.

Eddigi bejegyzések a bolyongó.hu-n

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2026/05/28 18:05

Sources

CCN: [Visiting the Darknet - Getting There Via Tor](#)

Wikipedia: [Ross Ulbricht](#)

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