



Workstream 3

Online survey among NPS users

French national survey report

Observatoire français des drogues et des toxicomanies (OFDT)

Co-funded by
the European Union



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Date: September 2015

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Summary

French questionnaire has been displayed online from mid-May 2014 to the end of October 2014.

Up to 1 355, persons entered the questionnaire but only 511 completed all questions. Analysis was finally performed on a sample of 607 questionnaires.

Most participants were concerned by the survey because they had tried at least once in lifetime a psychoactive substances sold online (51 %), a substance sold as a “research chemical” (43 %) and/or a substance apparently new on the market (33 %).

Respondents and NPS users' profiles

Three out of four respondents were male. Mean age was 28.2 and 46 % were under 25. Most of them had completed higher secondary education (85 %), 6 out of 10 having passed low tertiary level, and 8 % had intermediate vocational qualification. Nearly half of them had a job (50 %), a third (32 %) were still students (college included) and 12 % were job seekers. NPS users were not characterized by a particular level of income, which was closely associated with age. They were divided almost equally in incomes classes with “800€ to 1500 €” as a central and modal class. Most of respondents (64 %) reported leaving in an urban area (> 50 000 in.) or in the suburbs (less than 30 mn. with transports)

Nearly all respondents had experienced alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. Cocaine, MDMA/ecstasy, classical hallucinogens (LSD, magic mushrooms...) and solvents were also experienced each by around 7 to 8 out of 10 respondents, while heroine, ketamine, herbal extract had been used by about 4 out of 10 respondents at least once during lifetime. The more there were evidences that respondents were really NPS users, the more drugs use prevalence were high. Last year and last month's use prevalence remained high for cannabis (84 % and 71 %) but also MDMA/ecstasy, cocaine, and hallucinogens.

NPS use

Respondents were 63 % to report a NPS intake during the last year and 33 % during the last month. The most frequently used NPS during the past 12 months were methoxetamine (38%) and NPS belonging to the 2C-X serie (34%), both displaying hallucinogenic effects. Then came mephedrone (4-MMC), 25X-NBOMe and methylone. The last used NPS were, by far, methoxetamine (14%), then ethylphenidate (6 %), but the 2C-X group considered as a whole and the 25X NBOMe group respectively gathered 20 % and 6 % of answers. The most common chemical family was phenylethylamines' one.

NPS use's frequency appeared very heterogeneous. Among the last 12 months' NPS users, one third had 1 to 3 use sessions, one third had 4 to 19¹, and the last third declared 20 or more sessions. Nearly one half of the last year's consumers reported NPS use during the last month: 6 out of 10 used NPS during 1 to 3 days the month; 2 had 4 to 10 sessions and 2 had at least 10 using sessions.

As far as the last intake is concerned, most of the respondents used NPS with some friends (76 %), but 2 out of 10 declared having used a NPS alone, mostly at home. The latter session took place at home for nearly 6 out of 10 users, in a festive place or in the countryside each one for 2 out of 10. Ingestion (48 %) and snorting (39 %) were the main routes of administration, excepted for cannabinoids which were much more smoked. Less than 0.5 % of respondents reported having injected NPS during the last intake. Main expected effects were, by far, “to modify perception” (60 %) then “to get high” (47%), but “to socialize” drew 42 % of answers and “to provide me with energy”, 39 %. NPS users were 44 % to report having experienced unpleasant effects after the last intake. These were mainly psychiatric

¹ One sixth consumed NPS 3 to 9 times and one sixth used some, 10 to 19 times.

disorders (strong paranoia, fear, anxiety, 16 % of respondents and 36 % of those who reported side effects), then cardiac symptoms (palpitations, pains, 14 %), muscle symptoms (12 %) and, for around 10 % each, headaches, fever, nausea, or extreme agitation.

NPS Procurement

Just around a half of respondents get the NPS online by themselves, be it the last used NPS (41 %) or the 12 last month's procurement mean (55 %) . One user out of four, got it for free last time, and others (last quarter) mainly bought it from a friend or a dealer.

Among those who bought online within the last twelve months, 1 out of 4 ordered only 1 time and 1 out of 2, between 2 and 5 times. Nearly all of them ordered only up to 5 substances during the last order and 1 out of 2 purchased only one. They spent an average of 100 € (median 57 €).

Most of respondents (76.8 %) who bought a NPS within the previous year got it on a so called « RC-shop », i.e. a website that calls NPS by chemical names with few marketing coating. Only 1 out of 5 used a so-called “commercial shop”, i.e. a shop targeting youngest users and people who are not very familiar with substances and chemical approach. Nearly a quarter of “buyers” got a NPS on the deep web (Silk Road and similar).

Information needs

Items on which numerous NPS users felt having enough information on the last used NPS were routes of administration (85.6 % users felt well or rather well informed), legal status (77.5 %), effects (76.7 %), and, finally, the dose to take in order to get the required effect (75.3 %). Nevertheless, around a quarter of respondents thought they did not have sufficient information on these issues.

On the opposite, users felt the highest need for information about health risks (64.1 % of respondents stated having no or rather no information) and safe dose to take (54.5 % feeling informed, 45.5 % missing information).

The main source of information mentioned about NPS was web forums (56 % of respondents). “Friends, family, acquaintances” counted for 34.3% and “TV/radio”, “On line shops” and “newspapers/magazines” drew around 15 % of answers each.

General opinion on NPS

A majority of respondents thought that the following statements were false: “NPS are of better quality than illicit substances” (52 %) and “The effects of NPS are stronger than those of other illicit drugs” (63 %). Remaining answers showed that respondents had no idea. Opinion related to the assertions “NPS are less harmful...” and NPS are less addictive...” obtained more balanced answers between “Yes, it is true for a few of them”, “No it is not true” and “I don't know”.

Key findings and discussion

- The results of this quantitative survey confirm many elements of knowledge gathered from qualitative methods already implemented (analysis of users 'online forums as well as TREND and SINTES monitoring system...) [1]
- First of all they confirm that the concept of NPS is not really clear among respondents. Despite the extended definition that was given in the entrance page of the survey, in order to enable potential respondents to understand whether they were or not concerned, around 140 out of 607 respondents included in the analysis are believed not to be really NPS users. Some others gave answers (notably names of substances they took) that suggest they actually consumed NPS, but did not report having experienced one during their life, in the general table exploring levels of experimentation of the main drugs. Finally, some respondents cited conventional substances (type MDMA) as NPS.
Thus, it seems possible to find criteria able to select a core of NPS users (labelled "NPS Surely users" in the survey) who seem familiar with NPS. This group of confirmed NPS users are characterized by the fact they report having consumed a substance sold online (69 %), a substance labelled "RC" (research chemical) (67 %) and, to a lesser extent, a substance apparently new on the market (49 %). But a second group of respondents (labelled "No evidence of NPS use"), whom the vast majority did not use NPS within the past 12 months, probably includes lifetime users rather than regular and current users. They appear much more difficult to discriminate. Respondents belonging to this latter group are also characterized by the fact that they have consumed substances sold online (55 %) but, unlike the first group, less than 2 out of 10 of them reported having used substances called "RC". Their answers are scattered on several items such as "having consumed substances referred to as legal highs or designer drugs" (37.0%), "meant to be imitating the effect of existing drugs" or "sold in a head shop or in a smart shops" (32.0%).
- NPS users are primarily drugs users. Only 3 % of respondents never used any illicit drug or opiate substitution substance and 8 % did not use any of them in the previous year. Prevalence rates of experimentation and of last year use are not only high for cannabis (last year use, 84 %) but also for stimulants, especially those emblematic of the "electro" party scene (synthetic stimulants and hallucinogens²). This aspect adds further weight to the idea that users are rather closed to alternative cultures and have an appetite for experimentation of mental states (psychonautism). Use prevalences over the past 30 days remain high, especially in the group "surely NPS users" and the more evidence there is that respondents are NPS users, the more prevalence rates are high.
- Among this sample, NPS users appear to be on average younger than found in surveys carried out in French drug users. Half of them are indeed under 25. However, 2 out of 10 have 35 and over. It should be checked whether these are "previous" heroin users taking a substitution treatment, among whom some are described to have found a new motivation to use drugs with NPS arrival on the psychoactive substances market. NPS users are mostly urban: more than 6 out of 10 live in

²last year's use of MDMA /ecstasy or amphetamine, 65 %, last year use of a hallucinogen, NPS not included, 53 %.

cities of over 500,000 inhabitants or in their suburbs (less than 30 mn. by public transport).

They are educated: among those under 25, 82 % already passed the exam that ends high school in France (matriculation certificate, so-called “Baccalauréat” in France) and half reached at least +2 level after high school. Beyond 25, 88 % passed the Matriculation Certificate and 30 % attained an educational level equal to at least + 5 years after this certificate (Master level). As far as their employment status is concerned, the situation depends on age. Among those under 25, a majority are students (63 %) or employed (25 %) but young adults (25-34) display a particularly high unemployment rate (19 %) especially with regard to their general educational level.

- **Two major types of contexts and motivations** for the use of NPS stand out from the survey. **First is experience research:** “to modify perception” makes 60 % of responding to intended effects question, to which must be added the 47 % who place “to get high” as one of the most important intended effects. This is confirmed by the elements reported by respondents for choosing the last consumed NPS: simple curiosity draws 82% of users.

The other axis refers to conviviality. This aspect can be documented thanks to answers related to the circumstances of the last use. The item “taking place with friends” is mentioned in 76 % of cases; likewise “to bond with others, to socialize” appears as the second most important intended effect of the last NPS intake; furthermore, among the elements behind the choice of the last NPS consumed, the opportunity is quoted as an important or very important reason by 73 % of users; and finally, the NPS “given by someone for free” appears to be the second among most prevalent access modes regarding the last used NPS. It seems relevant to note that these intakes “by opportunity” might be more dangerous as they are not anticipated and might reach naïve³ users.

Other intended effects mainly deal with fonctionnal purposes (to provide me with energy, to relax, to fight tiredness...) and each gathers a few proportion of respondents, except the first one (39 %). **NPS are nearly never used in order to modulate other drugs effects.**

It is also clear that the legal status or the fact that NPS are supposed undetectable in urinary and saliva tests are not important motivations for them. Mephedrone, methylone and 32C-B which are among the most quoted molecules were indeed already scheduled at the time the survey took place.

- One out of ten last 12 months’ NPS users shows a very sustained NPS use frequency: at least 20 sessions in the year and 10 within the last month. One third of NPS users can be regarded as regular or recurrent users (more than one session a month, up to 10 sessions).
- When respondents are asked about taken substances during the past year or the last month, **the range of quoted substances is very large, meanwhile, only a few substances seem really popular.** The high number of quoted substances may be due to a possible bias in respondents’ selection and the facts that **psychonauts** are overrepresented in this self-selected sample. Most reported substances are indeed NPS with **hallucinogenic effects** (molecules that belong to 2C-X series as, methoxetamine and 25X-NBOMe series) even if stimulants also appear to be among the more

³ People who never used drugs or who are not familiar with using drugs.

prevalent (4-MMC, also called mephedrone, ethylphenidate...).

This result is quite consistent with other data sources (forums, qualitative, seizures...) and the online survey can therefore be used as one of various sources to build the top list of circulating substances.

- Synthetic cannabinoids were expected to have a higher place in top list of consumed substances. They count only for 1 out of 10 of last used NPS, although they were thought to be more largely used than other NPS in the general population. One out of possible explanations is that they are often sold as plants mixes and only known by commercial names. Users can even ignore they are consuming synthesis substances. Another point is that they have perhaps been more experienced than other NPS, notably by cannabis users, without being involved in a regular use. Apart from users close to chemical NPS culture, it seems indeed that some classical cannabis users had experienced bad effects with synthetic cannabinoids which were considered too strong. Furthermore, trends in cannabis supply in France, where local production and competition leads to a flourishing market, certainly do not draw cannabis users towards synthetic substances. Finally, the survey potentially failed to reach possible population only interested by synthetic cannabinoids among all NPS i.e. only cannabis users.

- Frequency of side effects appears to be rather important: 4 users in 10 have experienced unpleasant effects related to the last intake, although one could consider that these are users who probably know the NPS better than others. The latter point may explain, however, that among these, only 4 % searched for medical care, although the most frequently cited symptoms may seem quite disturbing: strong paranoia, fear, anxiety, cardiac symptoms (palpitations, pains, 14%), muscle symptoms... It is noteworthy to underline that the share of intakes while being alone at home is low but significant (17 %) and could lead to risky situations.

- French respondents who bought NPS within the last 12 years, clearly prefer the so-called “RC shops” i.e. a website that calls NPS by chemical names with few marketing coating. They were 77 % to order on that kind of shop and 1 out of 2 only ordered on “RC-shops”. Furthermore, 1 out of 2 French respondents only ordered on that type of shops (Table 39). Only 1 out of 5 only used a so-called “commercial shop”, i.e. a shop targeting youngest users and people who are not very familiar with substances and chemical approach. Nearly a quarter of “buyers” got a NPS on the deep web (Silk Road and similar), confirming a clearly observed growing trend. Surprisingly, only 14 % of under 25 years old reported purchasing in “commercial shops” but they ordered on the deep web twice more than older respondents (32 % vs 15 %). This observation seems related to a generational effect and as such could increase.
 Regarding selection criteria to choose online shops, used by people who purchased a NPS within the last 12 months, it is noteworthy that the most prevalent items are those related to experience: more than half of them attach importance to online shops assessments published on dedicated sites, 42 % trust their own experience and 37 % follow other users’ advices. Less frequently, users have quoted more precise items: from the more important to the least, these are: secure payment access, quality of NPS and shipment in discreet packets. According to statistic correlations between items, it seems that for some users, quality concerns are on the first stage while for some others, security concerns are the most important.

- It could be considered that purchase practices remain moderated and maybe controlled for most of people who order online. Among those who bought online within the last twelve months, 1 out of 4 ordered only 1 time and 1 out of 2, between 2 and 5 times. Nearly all of them ordered only up to 5 substances during the last order and 1 out of 2 purchased only one. They nevertheless bought an average of 100 € (median 57 €). A quarter of respondents bought for 100 € to 753 €, making it possible the supposition they order for a group or they deal. This supposition is quite consistent with the fact that only one out of two users purchase NPS by himself.
- The first source of information related to NPS clearly appears to be web forums which 56 % of respondents are familiar with and notably 77 % of “Surely NPS users”, while this figure decreases when the respondent’s links with NPS seems less clear. Second source consists on friends, family or acquaintances that gathers 34 % of respondents but is the number 1 source of information for people classified in the group “No evident of NPS use” (43 %). This suggests this latter group that seems less familiar with NPS than “Surely NPS users” gets access to a “second hand knowledge” as it does for NPS.

Media such as TV, radio, magazines, newspapers are only quoted by 15 % of respondents. Their importance as an information source grows as the link with NPS decreases. They are the main information source (35 %) for people classified as “Probably not NPS users”.

Though also 1 out of 6 respondents state they get information from the online shops, very few (4.8 %) report they get it from their dealer. Given these various situations, it appears possible to conceive and adapt prevention messages to targeted users profiles.

The main lack of information mentioned by NPS users is the one related to risks taken with a given substance (70 %) and to the safe dose to take (46 %). Therefore, it could be important to communicate on substances known as the most dangerous ones, but also to explain that many individual and contextual factors interfere with effects and doses and that harm reduction practices have to be applied systematically. Respondents felt rather well informed on how to use the substance or on its legal status, although about a quarter of users said they also need information on these aspects. Furthermore only users who used NPS over the previous year answered this question, most of them classified as “Surely NPS users”. Users the least familiar with NPS probably express a greater need for more information.

- The results confirm the model of NPS users positioned in concentric circles around a core of psychonauts. At first, indeed, users classification show 3 groups whose links with NPS are differently tight: “NPS surely users” who are able to quote chemical names, “Users with no evidence of NPS use”, who have ticked criteria of entry questions but mostly report they are unable to give the name of the taken substances, and “Probably not NPS users” who mostly did not meet entry criteria or seemed to make no difference between NPS and classical drugs. Supplying methods back up the idea according which there is a second circle of users around the core expert users. Just about a half of respondents get the NPS online by themselves, be it the last used NPS or the 12 last month’s procurement mean. One user out of four, got it for free last time, and others (last quarter) mainly bought it from a friend or a dealer.

These groups prove to have different levels of information and ways to get information. The more they are far from the “core” group of NPS users, the more, they have second hand information, and the more they may be susceptible to get a NPS by opportunity, without knowing harm reduction practices.

- Finally, NPS users prove they do not share any simplistic belief related to characteristics of NPS taken as a whole. It seems they do not believe there are fundamental differences between NPS and classical drugs in terms of quality. Indeed, more than a half of the respondents (52 %) assert that overall NPS quality is not better than other drugs’ one and 63 % that their effect is not stronger, while more than a quarter of them (respectively 27 % and 32 %) answered they did not know.

Their opinion can differ according to substances. When it comes, indeed, to the last NPS intake, “better quality” or “stronger effect” play a “rather important” or a “very important” role in the choice of the substance (respectively 75 % and 80 %), showing that users make differences between molecules.

Concerning potential harm of NPS, users show rather heterogeneous opinions but only few think NPS are less harmful than classical drugs. Facing the assertions that the NPS were less harmful, then less addictive than other drugs, answers were scattered between the items “It’s true for a few of them”, “It’s not true” and “I don’t know”.

A short majority of respondents among those who seem to be the most familiar with NPS (“Surely NPS users”) thinks that some NPS can be less harmful (58 %) or less addictive (54 %) than classical drugs. However, when they consider their last intake, 29 % assert that choosing a poorly addictive substance is very important to them, while only 14 % consider as very important the fact that the substance was weakly harmful.

Key findings (short)

- This survey confirms many elements of knowledge already gathered from qualitative methods.
- The concept of NPS is not clear among French respondents.
- In France, NPS users are primarily drugs users.
- NPS users who answered the survey are, on average, younger than French drugs' users. Half of them are under 25 years old. Thus, French participants appear to be older than other countries' respondents. They are mostly urban. Most of them attained a high level of school education.
- NPS users are mostly motivated by research of experience (perceptions modification). Other reasons mentioned deal with conviviality/ opportunity which can imply unexpected NPS intake.
- The legal status does not seem to play a major role in the choice of a specific NPS.
- The list of mostly used NPS within the last 12 months or of the one of the last used NPS obtained by an online survey can help building the Top list of substances in circulation. The most frequently used NPS in the last 12 months were the ones belonging to the 2C-X serie (38 %) and methoxamine (34 %), both substances with hallucinogenic effects, suggesting that most respondents share a "psychonautic" alternative culture. Then came 4MMC (mephedrone, 20 %), substances from the 25x-NBOMe serie (18 %) and methylone (17 %). The more quoted molecules as the last used were methoxetamine, ethylphenidate and 2C-B. The range of quoted molecules were very large. Mephedrone, methylone and 2C-B were already scheduled when the study was conducted.
- Side effects are frequent: 4 users in 10 experienced some unpleasant effects following the last intake. Only 3.7 % of them looked for medical help.
- Only half of NPS users purchase NPS on online shop by themselves. Respondents mostly purchased NPS on "RC shops" that call NPS with chemical names (77 %). Nearly one out of 4 bought NPS on the deep web, twice more for respondents under 25 than others. This observation seems related to a generational effect and this proportion should therefore increase.
- The main information source of NPS users is NPS related forums or discussion threads (56 %). This part is very high for the core "NPS surely users" and decreases when respondents' link with NPS seems to untie. First information source for people classified in the group "No evidence of NPS use" is "friend, family or acquaintance" (43 %), which means a second hand information. "Probably not NPS users" mainly get information from media (35 %) that only draws 15 % of the whole sample. It seems then possible to adapt prevention messages to targeted users profiles.
- Information related to risks of each given substance and safety dose to take are the main missing to users. Therefore, it could be important to communicate on substances known as the most dangerous ones, but also to explain that many individual and contextual factors interfere with effects and doses and that harm reduction practices have to be applied systematically
- Opinion of the major part of respondents about quality or risk of NPS use does not appear as simplistic. They do not think it exists fundamental quality differences between NPS and classical drugs but their opinion can differ according to some molecules.
- The results confirm the model according which there are around a hard core of psychonauts different circles of NPS users. These groups prove to have different levels of information and ways to get information. The more they are far from the "core" group of NPS users, the more, they get second hand information, and the more might get a NPS by opportunity without knowing harm reduction practices.

1. Methodology

1.1. Questionnaire elaboration

A research questionnaire has been developed from two questionnaires proposed by France and the Czech Republic which combined different approaches of the problem and was adapted to different local situations. The research questions and the contents of the questionnaire were first discussed via e-mail. Then Skype meetings were organized to facilitate discussions (around 10 half-days). A large common set of questions has finally been approved by partners.

- The English questionnaire has been translated in each national language.
- A test phase took place, running until the 14th of April 2014.
- Concurrently, an external French programmer⁴ designed the Dutch, French, and Polish versions of the questionnaire and an internal programmer designed the Czech version.

Design of a strategy for the promotion of the online survey based on previous experience and information found in the literature: partners identified the targeted populations and the different ways to reach them: negotiating entry points on relevant websites, mailing lists to introduce the survey and disseminate the links to the questionnaire, press release...Partners then promoted the survey in order to launch it by mid- May 2014.

1.2. Data collection

French questionnaire has been displayed online from mid-May 2014 to the end of October 2014.

In total, 1 355, persons entered the questionnaire; only 511 completed all questions.

Each time it was possible, answers items were appearing in random order.

1.3. Communication methodology

One of the main issue of the online survey was to catch a range of NPS users as large as possible, knowing that NPS use seems to date not to be a large phenomenon in France. First French general population surveys still show low prevalence use of synthetic cannabinoids [2] NPS presumed to have the larger potential audience, due to high level of cannabis use in France.

The French I-TREND team identified several specific targets and the means that could help to reach them. It appeared that one of the most hard to reach population was socially inserted users, specifically those who do not attend festive events or who are only cannabis users. The targets were the followings:

Specific population

- Drug users forums or NPS users forums ;
- Self-support associations (ASUD, AIDES);
- Health centers and professional associations dedicated to drug users;
- Harm reduction facilities (around 150 in France) or French Association for Harm Reduction (AFR), and other harm reduction associations in festive events (MDM);
- The regional network of OFDT's TREND scheme (Emerging Trends and New Drugs)
- GLBT associations

⁴ Marc Bonnard from BGA Consult Society

General population

- General media or media specialized on music;
- General prevention : INPES (Prevention Education for Health Agency)

The process included several stages.

Before the collection

Upstream the survey launch, OFDT team first took contacts with **networks or representatives of professional associations for care or harm reduction or of self-support users associations** in order to request any help in the communication, directly by speaking with users, by the means of an article, by a banner on their Web site or through their information letter. They all received the press release several days ahead of the beginning of the survey, as well as communication tools such as the I-TREND banner and models of Flyers.

All contacted organisations accepted to promote the survey and to spread the questionnaire address. There were announcements of the I-TREND survey on the following sites :

- <http://www.federationaddiction.fr/lofdt-lance-grande-enquete-les-nps-destination-usagers/>
- www.safe.asso.fr (in the part of the site devoted to drug users)
- sos-addictions.org
- <https://www.facebook.com/pharmaddict>
- <https://www.facebook.com/revue.flyer?fref=ts>
- asud.org, a-f-r.org
- technoplus.org.

Chart 1: I-Trend banner, inserted in web-sites.



The same request was made to **users' forums**, which we were already in contact with the moderators, as part of the forums analysis also conducted in the I-TREND project (see WS1 report). One of the more tricky point within the discussions with moderators and more largely, NPS users, is the administrative position of OFDT, perceived as a kind of governmental agency, and the role that the OFDT implication could play in accelerating NPS ban by delivering information.

One "forumer" offered his help by creating a flyer including a QR code that was mainly fitted for festive environment. OFDT's team used this latter as a basis to design some other flyers, fitted to different environments. Support was obtained from the three contacted forums.

<https://www.psychoactif.org> : Administrator's support with an advertisement located on the front-page + a dedicated sub-forum created for the I-TREND project. This document was passed on to threshold services.

<http://www.psychonaut.com/forum.php>: OFDT animated a dedicated thread on this site with the agreement of moderators. The welcome was not very warm but we received the help of the sites'

moderators and the thread offered the opportunity to exchange on the role of the OFDT on NPS surveillance.

<http://lucid-state.org/>: It was proceeded the same way for this website. However the welcome was more kindly and offered a great opportunity to talk on the project.

We used OFDT's **network of coordinators for regional surveillance, TREND** (7 cities) to spread the information toward local prevention or harm reduction associations.

As far as general-interest media is concerned, it had been decided by OFDT's communications department as a general principle of communication policy, not to ask directly media to communicate on the survey. This attitude allows OFDT to remain independent when facing the media requests. However a press release introducing the survey was elaborated and it was decided to use opportunities of speaking about the survey when receiving requests for interviews on NPS. On the 17th of May, OFDT answered an interview on NPS to a limited audience radio station "Radio Jazz".

Data collection launch

We launched the data collection and communicated through:

- a [press release](#) on the 19th of May 2014 disseminated and uploaded on the web site;
- A special announcement on the front page OFDT web site with an area dedicated to the survey;
- a e-letter to professionals' OFDT network
- a tweet about the survey from OFDT Twitter account. This tweet has been retweeted by some associations including ground prevention associations.
- a new add on OFDT Facebook page

Data collection period from the 19th of May to the end of October

During the long period of data collection communication were continued to increase number of potentially touched consumers:

- New e-letter and Tweet from OFDT about the survey on the 26th of June (UN [International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking](#)). The message has been retweeted by several correspondents until the 4th of July.
- 17th of July : announcement on the web site of the **French agency for health prevention (INPES)** until the end of the collection
- 17th of July : on the web site on the **French free Call Centre for public on Drugs and Addictions (Drogues Info Service)**
- 18th of July: new message to all harm reductions facilities

Several series of mails were sent again to professional and self-support network and association during the duration of the data collection in order to recall that the survey was still ongoing, to send **flyers by e-mail**, to announce the prolongation and finally, the end of the data collection.

Chart 2: examples of Flyers



The flyers were to be print and put up I festive events or low threshold facilities.

OFDT's team tried to back on **general media** each time it was possible.

From the 25th to 27th of May we answered media interview requests following the release of EMCDDA report, e.g. a rather large audience radio station, France Info.

The survey was mentioned in a specialized publications. (http://www.techniques-ingenieur.fr/actualite/biotech-chimie-thematique_6343/le-marche-des-drogues-de-synthese-explose-article_285670/)

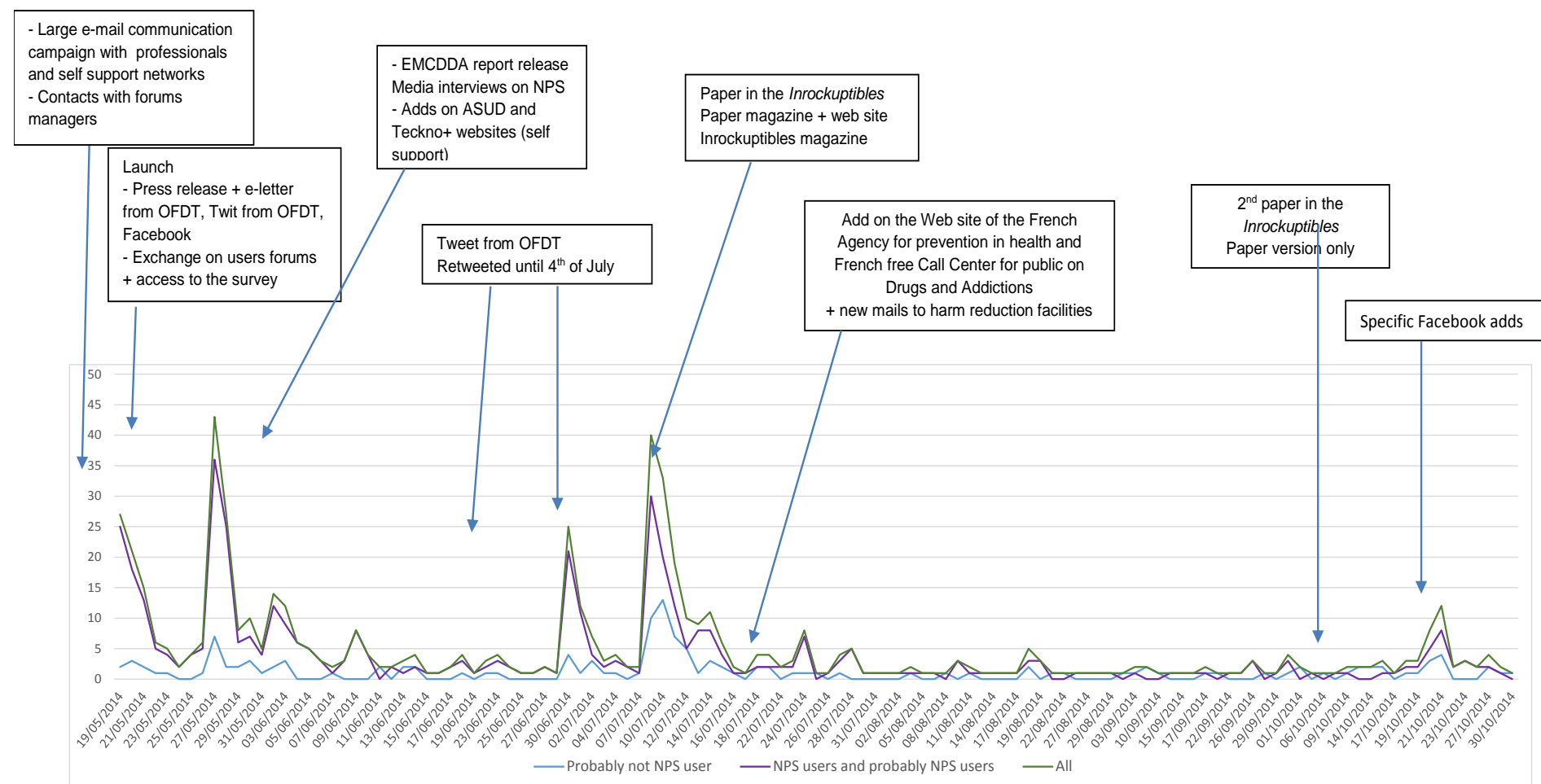
On the 9th of July a magazine specialized in slightly alternative culture released an interview from OFDT on NPS and settled a short announcement for the survey on its web site. This tool was one of the most efficient of the whole coverage (<http://www.lesinrocks.com/2014/07/09/actualite/nouvelles-drogues-synthese-participez-lenquete-lofdt-11514193/>)

A new interview on NPS on the Inrocks Magazine (8th of October) without article on website had no efficiency at all (<http://special.lesinrocks.com/reader/issue.php?num=984>).

Finally, nearby the end of the collection phasis, It was tried to use **Facebook advertisements** from a specially created account. It was done quickly and not really on a professional way. The result was discernible but rather disappointing in comparison with those obtained by the Polish partner.

As a conclusion, it seems that most efficient communication means during the survey were the first general information notably on users' forums, and the media buzz on NPS, especially the article published on the website of *Les Inrocks*, potentially connected with an audience of NPS users among general population. The help of associations directly in contact with drugs users during festive events seems to have been efficient too. The Facebook ads, lastly tried did not provide answers as it was the case for some partners' surveys. It may be due to two main reasons: the Facebook profile was of poor quality, build quickly while the ads have probably not be used properly. Another explanation could be linked with the fact that NPS use has not spread largely in France among youngest population such as students.

Chart 3: Evolution of number of completed questionnaire by date.



Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

1.4. Data analysis

In total, 1 355, persons enter the questionnaire, 825 respondents filled out the questionnaire at least 40 % of French questionnaire, but only 511 completed all questions. Analysis was finally performed on a sample of 607 questionnaires

Checking for NPS users

“NPS” does not constitute a well-known phenomenon in France, including among drug users. In addition, there is no commonly shared name to designate them in French and it seems that most of NPS users who are aware of the phenomenon employ the English terms of “RC” (research chemical), at least in festive events. Finally, the outline of the so named group of substances is unclear and uncertain, as it encompasses substances that are not always really new, although their circulation was previously very rare (2C-B, for example), molecules that are also medicines (dextromethorphan) and because not all users are aware that they take synthetic substances. It was therefore necessary to check if respondents to this survey were really NPS users even if respondents were given a kind of definition before entering the questionnaire.

From quantitative variables and all qualitative variables where respondents were asked to quote some NPS they took (in the last 12 months, the last used NPS, the chemical category of the last substance) a new variable was created in order to class respondents depending it was evidence or not of the fact they understood what NPS were.

Three classes have been created

Certainly NPS users (N=360): these respondents had ticked a name of NPS or quoted qualitatively a NPS; most of them have filled in the central part of questionnaire that dealt with NPS consumed during the 12 past months and the last NPS use.

Probably not NPS users (N=147): a second class gathers respondents who gave no name of NPS whatever the question, but quoted a name of classical drug as a NPS. We made the hypothesis that these ones were not really familiar to drugs and did not make the difference between NPS and other drugs or were accidental NPS users.

No evidence of NPS use (N=100): These users did not give any information that could prove they were NPS users, but we had no proof that they were not. Most of them did not answer the part of the questionnaire about the last 12 months and last use, suggesting that a part had perhaps experienced a NPS but did not use any during that period. Many of them did not remember the name of the substances they took. They were at first 232.

Then we considered the first question, which aimed to assess how respondents got into contact with NPS and the question about lifetime use prevalence of classical drugs and NPS. We decided to consider as “Probably not NPS users”, respondents placed in the present class AND who were not concerned by any of the proposed item of the first question AND who note that they had never used a NPS in their life.

We made the hypothesis that the second group consisted on probably not NPS users or just life-time users not familiar at all with drugs field, and that the two others could consist on different population of NPS users. The former could include people who are more familiar than the second with NPS and molecular names.

This classification has been used for a more accurate analysis concerning socio-demographics, background drugs use, information seeking on NPS, and opinion related to some assertions.

The analysis of the last twelve months NPS use and of the last intake focused on “Surely NPS users”, who constitutes the very large majority of those who completed that part of the questionnaire.

Among all respondents, 3.0 % were Belgian people and 1.7 % lived in another country than France or Belgium. Regarding these low rates, all questionnaires have been analysed together.

1.5. Methodological discussion

The main methodological issue of such an online survey without sampling frame is its representativeness. This latter depends at first on the ability of the communication campaign to reach the larger possible range of NPS users’ profiles.

The need for an access to the Internet is, at first, a limit for more precarious users to answer. Thus, even if some low threshold facilities for drug users allow an access to computers for their clients, most of them certainly did not answer. However, our purpose was much more to reach people from the general population who are more difficult to meet than some precarious drug users.

Yet, we are not sure to have really reached all kinds of NPS users among general population.

Even if further editions of the same survey will be moderately expensive, the link with dissemination process could make it not comparable. So, it will be necessary to build a stabilized dissemination process after one or two sessions, notably concerning media communication which was reactive and not really controlled by the team.

The impact of media release in the number of answers lead us to consider the fact to use them on a systematic way. That may imply a loss of independency for a neutral monitoring centre. On the other hand, the fact that media communication can also create bias in the survey recruitment has to be examined: e.g. a publication like “*the Inrocks*” draws a non-representative public, especially interested in music.

Otherwise, some adjustments will have to be performed on the questionnaire, in order to extend some questions to all respondents (not only last year NPS users) and to avoid discouraging respondents when they have to quote a NPS name.

2. Tracking criteria to define NPS use

A kind of filter question was allowing entrance in the questionnaire in order to precise links between users and NPS. It also intended to explore how it would be possible to select NPS users in further surveys.

The first point that links respondents to NPS is the fact they bought a drug sold on the Internet: half of them are in this case (Table 1). Declaring the use of a “RC” labelled drug is the second one (4 out of 10), followed by the “Use of an apparently new drug” (3 out of 10).

Table 1: Criteria of NPS use

Q. 1 Have you ever used a psychoactive substance that was (*several answers are possible*)?

N=607	Frequency	Percent
Referred to as 'legal highs' or 'designer drugs'	141	23.6
Sold as a “research chemical” (RC)	259	43.3
Sold under a fanciful marketing name (e.g. NRG-3, Benzofury, Funky, Cocolino etc.)	104	17.4
Sold as a “bath salt”, “incense”, or “good not intended for human consumption (collector goods)”	129	23.2
Meant to be imitating the effects of existing illegal drugs, but definitely not being one of them	164	27.4
Sold online	306	51.2
Sold in a head shop or a smart shop	122	20.4
Was apparently new on the market	200	33.4
None of those one	162	27.1

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

These figures show disparities between the different classes of respondents⁵ (Chart 4). Among “Surely NPS users”, the use of a “RC” labelled substance rises up to 67.0 %, while it is rather low in respondents for whom there is “No evidence of NPS used” (17.0 %). In contrast, the latter are 37.0 % to have used a drug referred as “legal high” or “designer drugs” (vs 28.5 % in “Surely NPS users”).

This result suggests that the two groups do not belong to the same population of drug users, as the hypothesis was a priori made. “RC” indeed appears as the most usual name of NPS among festive events goers who have particular knowledge about substances and probably in the group of users sharing a geek culture. Qualitative data refer to this last population as the core expert users of NPS. The class “Not evidence of NPS use” probably includes, as previously imagined, NPS users with a lower level of knowledge about this type of substances.

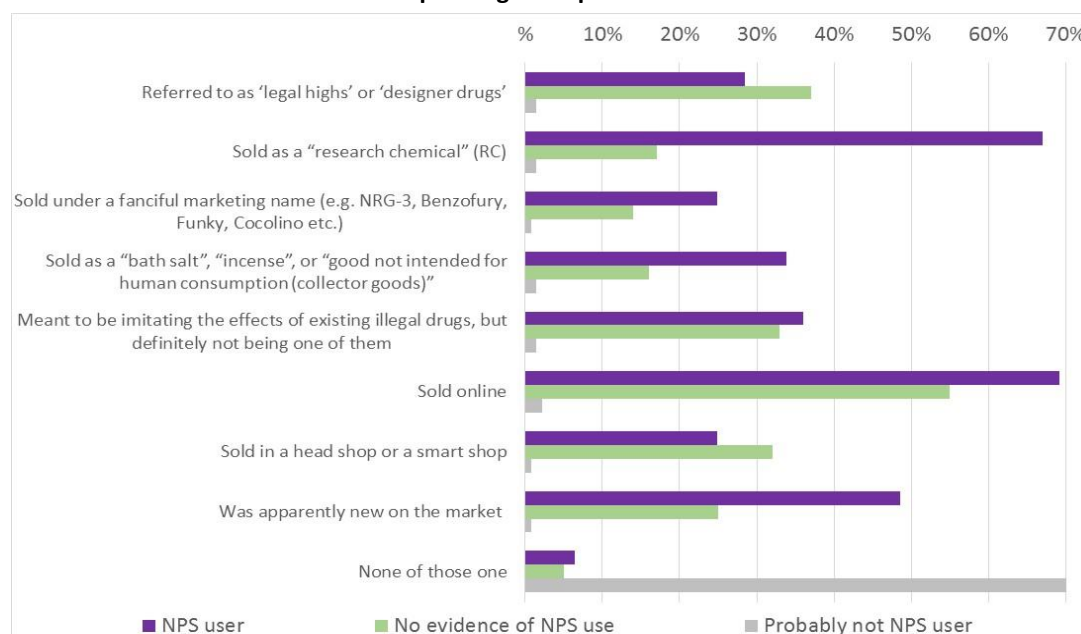
More than 9 out of 10 respondents classified as “Probably not NPS users” according to their answers to the questions about NPS use, were non concerned by any of the proposed items.

The consequent part of respondents stating having bought a substance on Head shops or Smart shops (24 %) is slightly surprising as there are no such shops settled in France. One could estimate respondents did not understand the item did not mean an online shop, but it is quite possible too that

⁵ See the point “Checking for NPS users” in Data analysis

these answers refer to consumed substances bought abroad by these people or one of their relatives.
(Chart 1: I-Trend banner, inserted in web-sites.).

Chart 4: Declaration of use of NPS depending of respondents' classification



Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

3. Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Age and sex

Respondents were around 3 males for 1 female. The sex ratio was higher when the link with NPS was tighter (Table 2bis). Thus, among "Surely NPS users", the proportion is the same as those observed in most of surveys on drugs users i.e. 4 males for 1 female (Table 2bis).

Table 2: Declaration of use of NPS depending of respondents' classification

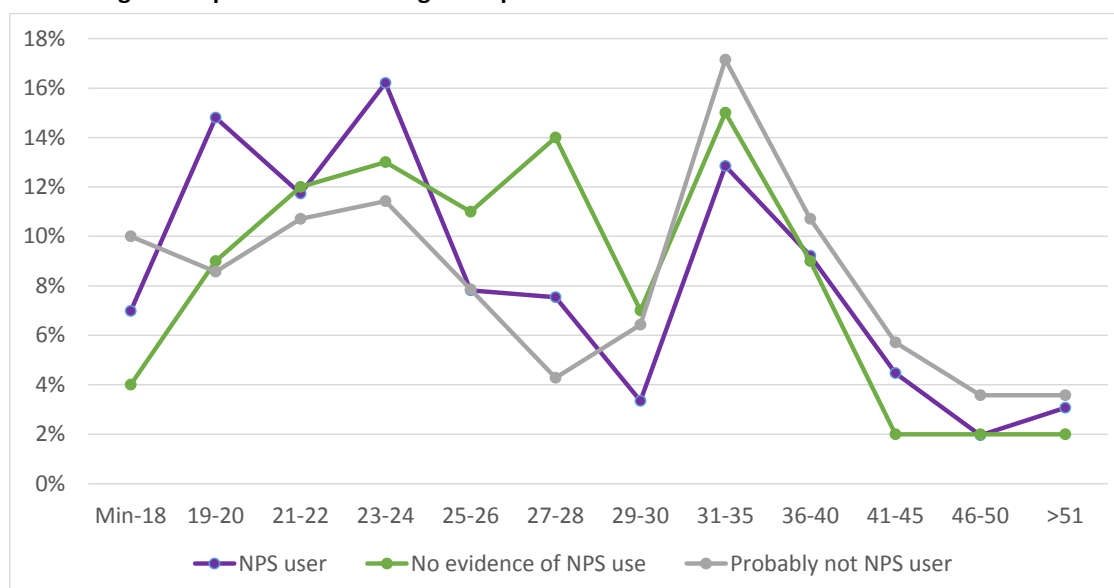
	Probably not NPS user N=147	No evidence of NPS use N=100	Surely NPS users N=360	All N=607
Male	58.6	70.0	81.0	73.9
Female	41.4	30.0	19.0	26.1

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See frequencies in Annex 1

Mean age of respondents is 28.2 years and a large part of respondents (45.7 %) are under 25 (Table 3). This figure goes up to 49.7 % among "Surely NPS users". They appear to be younger than French problematic drug users, 12 % of which are under 25 in harm reduction facilities [3]. Yet they are older than people met in festive events [4].

According to these elements it appears NPS draw a majority of young people but that, as qualitative approaches had already suggested, some older drug users found them interesting.

Chart 5: Age of respondents according to respondents' classification

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 3: Age of the respondents depending of respondents' classification

	Probably not NPS user N=147	No evidence of NPS use N=100	Surely NPS users N=360	All N=607
<25	40.7	38.0	49.7	45.7
25-34	32.1	44.0	29.3	32.4
>=35	27.1	18.0	20.9	21.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See frequency in Annex 1

Social data

Most of respondents declare themselves as Table 4 shows: 64.3 % claim they live in large cities, over 500 000 inhabitants or close to such a city (less than 30 minutes with transport). Geographically isolated people (13.6 %) represent just a fringe of the respondents. Unfortunately, this figure can't be compared with the French population distribution in cities depending on the size of the latter, as a consequence of the aggregation of large cities and their suburbs in this survey. We can yet suppose that respondents are more urban than French population. Official statistical figures indeed state that 38.9 % of French population live in cities below 5 000 inhabitants while 37.7 % live in "medium sized cities" (from 5 000 to 50 000 inhabitants) and only 25.4 % are in city over than 50 000 inhabitants [5].

Table 4: Place of residence of the respondents

Q. 31 How would you describe your place of residence?

N=518*	Frequency	Percent
A large city (>50,000 inhabitants) or its close suburb (less than 30 minutes transport)	333	64.3
A small or medium city of around 5,000 to 50,000 inhabitants	114	21,0
A village (<5,000 inhabitants) far from a large city (more than 30 minutes transport)	71	13,7
Total	518	100

* Number of respondents is lower than previous questions because this one was asked at the end of questionnaire.

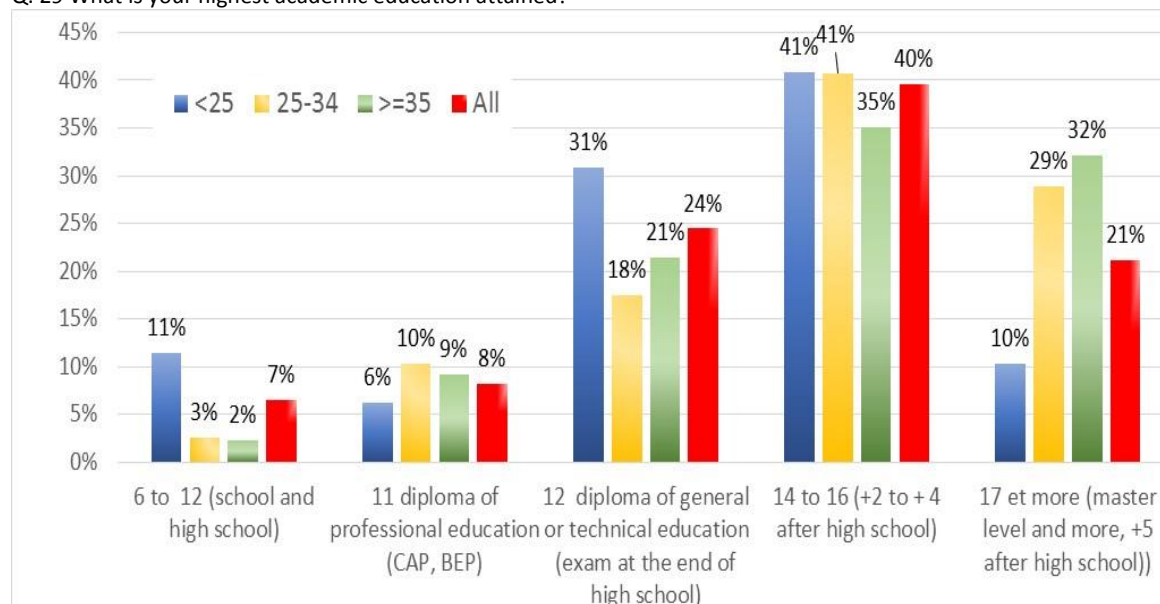
Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

More than 8 respondents out of 10 have passed the exam that ends high school in France ("baccalaureat") (* Years of education from the beginning of primary school (at age 6)

Highest attained academic level depends on respondents' age. Under 25, most of respondents just passed the exam at the end of High school (30.9 %) and 40.8 % got the level +2 or + 4 years after high school. Among the older (25 and more), the reached level is usually higher: nearly 9 out of 10 passed the "baccalaureat", 38.5 % are within 2 to 4 years after high school while 30.2 % got the + 5 level. Only 8.2% have a diploma of professional education. Those figures among respondents over 24 show a higher education level than the average one in French people aged from 25 to 49 [6]. Only 36.7% of them reached a high school +2 or over level (vs 60.6 % respondents with the same age).

Chart 6: Education of respondents depending on age of respondents (Years of education from the beginning of primary school at age 6)

Q. 29 What is your highest academic education attained?



Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

As the education level, the position on the labour market (Table 32) is related to the age of the respondents. Thus, the part of students in under 25 years old respondents is up to 63.2 %, most of them involved in tertiary education (University level) (Chart 6). Respondents from 25 to 34 are characterized by an unemployment rate that reached 19.1 % of all, if are only counted those who are registered to the job's Office. This figure is much higher than the one in general active population, particularly with regards to their education level. Current unemployment rate in 25-49 is indeed 9.3 % for third semester of 2014 [7].

Table 5: Position of respondents on the labour market depending on age of respondents

Q. 30 Currently, what is your position on the labour market?

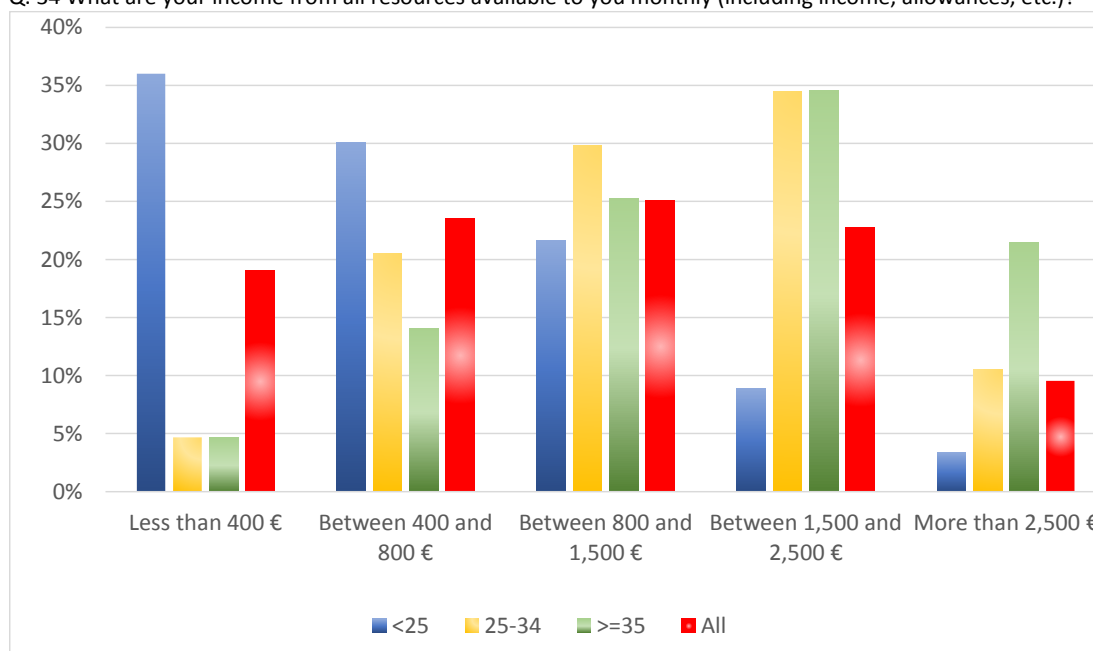
N=597	<25 y N=272 (%)	25-34 y N=194 (%)	>=35 y N=131 (%)	All N=597 (%)
Employed	20.6	52.1	63.4	40.2
Self-employed (licence holder, businessperson)	2.9	6.7	9.2	5.5
Employed and self-employed in parallel	1.1	4.1	2.3	2.3
Retired	.0	.0	1.5	.3
Working retired	.0	1.0	5.3	1.5
Retired due to disability *	.0	.0	.0	.0
Student (high school)	12.5	.0	.0	5.7
Student (university)	50.7	10.3	.8	26.6
On maternity or parental leave	.0	.5	.0	.2
Unemployed – registered at the Job's Office	7.7	19.1	9.2	11.7
Unemployed – not registered at the Job's Office	3.3	4.6	8.4	4.9
Other	1.1	1.5	.0	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

The same issue can be raised about income levels (Chart 7). Respondents under 25, most of whom are students have the lowest income: 36.0 % get less than 400 € per month (Chart 7) while 56.1 % of people over 44 get more than 1 500 € per month. So, the range of income levels is quite large.

Chart 7: Income of respondents by age

Q. 34 What are your income from all resources available to you monthly (including income, allowances, etc.)?



Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

It is not clear if there is any difference between the respondents and the French population. Further investigations should be needed.

The median net annual salary in France in 2011 was equal to 17 680 € (around 1500 € per month) but this figure includes only salaried people [8]. As a point of comparison, even if the two statistics don't compare the same thing, the median annual income (all income included, all social charges removed) in France in 2010 was equal to 29 010 € per year that means around 2 400 euros per month and per household (and not per person) [9]

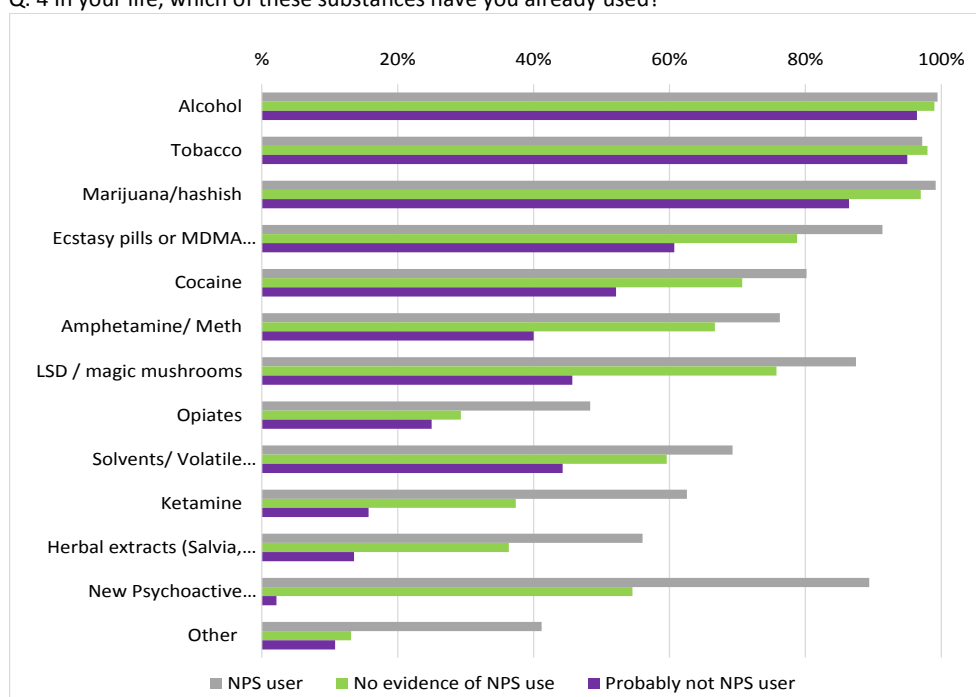
4. Patterns of use

4.1. NPS in the context of other psychoactive substances

Patterns of use clearly show that respondents know high levels of drugs experimentation (Chart 8), especially for substances usually found in techno festive (ecstasy, amphetamine) and alternative (LSD, ketamine, plants...) events. However, it is not possible to assert whether most of them attends festive event or if they share a geek culture interested in psychoactive substances. Anyway, it is possible to assert they are not only cannabis users.

Chart 8: Declaration of lifetime use of various psychoactive substances depending of respondents' classification

Q. 4 In your life, which of these substances have you already used?



* Possible answer yes or no. Frequency of yes-answers.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

If we focus on use during the last past year (Table 6), it appears that alcohol and cannabis remain highly used whereas stimulants and hallucinogenic substances are consumed by an average of 5 to 6 persons out of 10, and opiate or solvents (probably mainly poppers) are only used by 2 out of 10 respondents. Experimentation's prevalence as well as last year use's prevalence increase from the class "Probably not NPS users" to the class "Surely NPS users", via the class "No evidence of NPS use" (Chart 8). The difference is more important for figures related to hallucinogenic and opiates. This can, once more, be interpreted as a growing proximity with psychoactive substances between classes.

Respondents were also questioned about their lifetime NPS use. Surprisingly, not all people who proved to be able to give the name of a NPS they have taken, declare having used one during his lifetime (89.4 %). Only half of the people who give no evidence of NPS used declared a lifetime NPS consummation and most of people classed in "Probably not NPS users" declare no experience of NPS, partly due to the way the classes were built.

It is so noticeable that this question, in France, cannot be used to assess who is NPS user and who is not with a high degree of reliability, due to the fact that many people in general population and even in drug users ignore what a NPS is. Drug users employ different words to call NPS and many of them are not aware of scientific classifications.

Table 6: Declaration of use of various psychoactive substances over last 12 months

Q. 4B Did you use it during the last 12 months*

N=597	Frequency	Percent
Alcohol	565	94.6
Tobacco (including hookah / shisha)	NA	NA
Marijuana/hashish	503	84.3
Ecstasy pills or MDMA powder, amphetamine, methamphetamine	389	65.2
Cocaine	319	53.4
LSD or psilocybin mushrooms / magic mushrooms, ketamine	318	53.3
Opiates: heroin or Buprenorphine in (Subutex, Suboxone, Opium	112	18.8
Solvents or glues or paints or other volatile substances, Poppers	110	18.4
New Psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids included (Spice, etc.)	373	62.5**

** calculated from the number of respondents to the questions related to the past 12 months NPS use. The statistic is actually 96 % in "Surely NPS users" and 12 % in other classes.

* Possible answer yes or no. Frequency of yes-answers.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 7: Declaration of use of various psychoactive substances over last 30 days

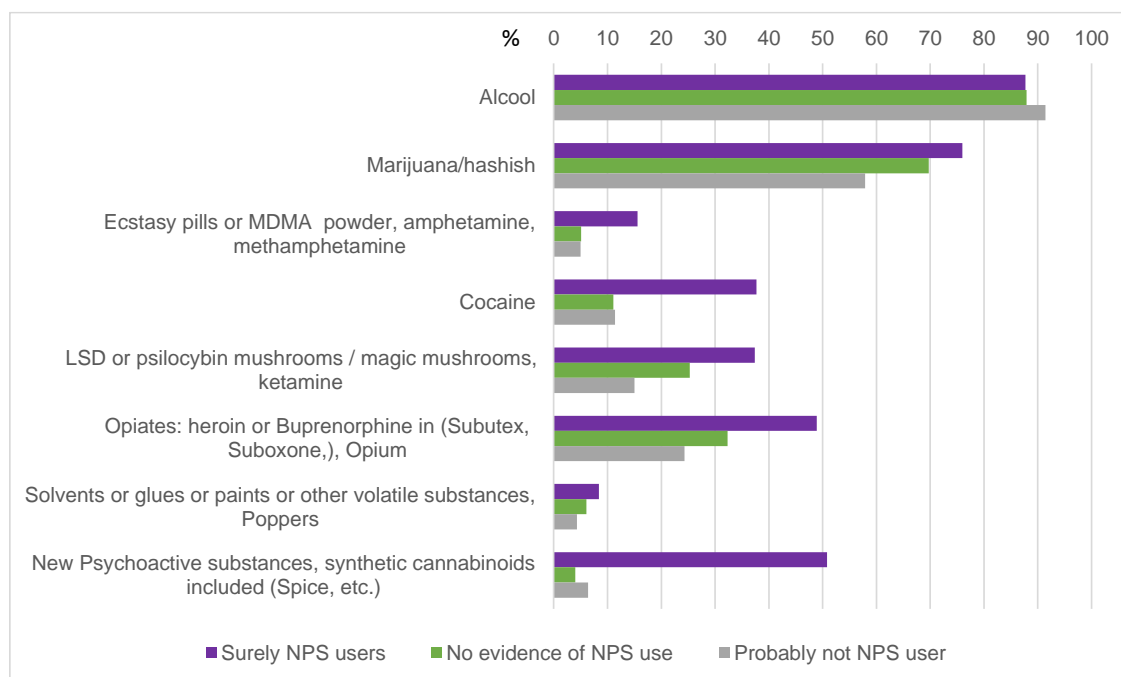
Q. 4C Did you use it during the last 30 days*

N=597	Frequency	Percent
Alcohol	529	88.6
Marijuana/hashish	422	70.7
Ecstasy pills or MDMA powder, amphetamine, methamphetamine	241	40.4
Cocaine	180	30.2
LSD or psilocybin mushrooms / magic mushrooms, ketamine	162	27.1
Opiates: heroin or Buprenorphine in (Subutex, Suboxone, Opium	68	11.4
Solvents or glues or paints or other volatile substances, Poppers	42	7.0
New Psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids included (Spice, etc.)	195	32.7**

* Possible answer yes or no. Frequency of yes-answers.

** calculated from the number of respondents to the questions related to the past 12 months NPS use. The statistic is actually 96 % in "Surely NPS users" and 12 % in other classes.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Chart 9: Declaration of use of various psychoactive substances over last 30 days depending of respondents' classification

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

Ages of first use related to the different substances (Table 8), even if not really comparable with data from other surveys, due to non-identical age structure of the population, are roughly not very different of those observed in drug users populations.

Table 8: Declaration of age of first use of various psychoactive substances

Q. 4A When did you try this product for the FIRST TIME in your life

N=597	Mean (year)
Alcohol	
Tobacco (including hookah / shisha)	
Marijuana/hashish	15.6
Ecstasy pills or MDMA powder, amphetamine, methamphetamine	20.6
Cocaine	20.7
LSD or psilocybin mushrooms / magic mushrooms, ketamine	19.9
Opiates : heroin or Buprenorphine in (Subutex, Suboxone,), Opium	20.7
Solvents or glues or paints or other volatile substances, Poppers	17.2
Herbal extracts (Salvia, Kratom)	
New Psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids included (Spice, etc.)	

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

4.2. NPS use

Use frequency

Two thirds (62.5 %, N=373) of all respondents have filled in the questions reserved to “last year NPS users” (Table 6). So, 37.6 % are supposed not to have used NPS during the last 12 months.

Among 12 months’ NPS users (Table 9), about 1 out of 3 has only consumed NPS, 1 to 3 times during the year; also 1 out of 3 used some NPS from 4 times to 19 and the last one out of 3 used some, 20 times or more. Within the subpopulation of these last year users, half only (52.6 %) consumed NPS during the last past month and 12.6 % used NPS more than 10 times in the same time.

Table 9 Frequency of use of selected NPS during last 12 months and last 30 days

Q 5.1 During the last twelve months, on how many days have you taken? *

Q 5.2 During the last 30 days, on how many days have you taken? **

	Usage frequency during last 12 months	Usage frequency during last 30 days (%)	
	N=371 (%)	Last year users N=371	Last month's users only (N=195)
0 days		47.4	
1-3 days	34.0	30.2	57.4
4-9 days	18.6	10.8	20.5
10-19 days	16.2	5.7	10.8
20 days or more	31.3	6.9	11.3

* Possible answers: 1 to 3 days; 4 to 9 days; 10 to 19 days; 20 days or more

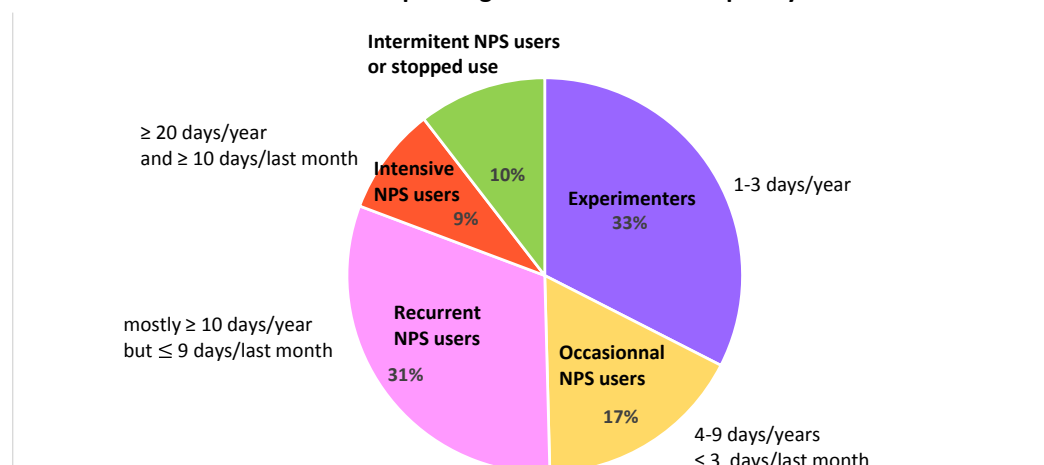
Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

A users’ classification depending on use frequency during the last years and during the last month leads to consider 4 main groups of NPS users among last years’ consumers (Table 10, Chart 10). One out of three (33%) can be regarded as an NPS “experimenter”; one out of six seems to be an occasional user (less than once a month); another third encompasses recurrent or regular NPS users (more than one session a month, up to 10 sessions); finally one out of ten shows a sustained rhythm of use (at least 20 session in the year and 10 during the last month).

Table 10 Users classification depending on their NPS use frequency

		Use frequency during last 12 months				
		1-3 days	4-9 days	10-19 days	20 days or more	Total
Use frequency during last month	0 days	25%	8%	5%	10%	48%
	1-3 days	7%	9%	9%	6%	31%
	4-9 days	0%	2%	2%	7%	11%
	10-19 days	0%	0%	1%	4%	5%
	20 days or more	0%	0%	0%	4%	4%
	Total	33%	19%	17%	32%	100%

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Chart 10 NPS users classification depending on their NPS use frequency

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

NPS used during the last year

Among the 373 respondents who have used NPS during the last 12 months, 106 (28.4%) don't know the name of the substance(s) they use.

Table 11 Declaration of use of selected NPS over last 12 months

Q. 5 Did you use any of the following new psychoactive substances in the last 12 months?*

N=373 users	Frequency	Percent in last year users
2C-X	141	37,8
Methoxetamine (MXE)	125	33,5
4 MMC (mephedrone)	73	19,6
25x-NBOMe	66	17,7
Méthylone	62	16,6
x-FA	48	12,9
4-MEC	46	12,3
X-APB	43	11,5
dextrometorphane	40	10,7
AKB-48-X	38	10,2
methiopropamine (MPA)	34	9,1
ethylphénidate	35	9,4
3MMC	32	8,6
AM-2201	28	7,5
Dox	24	6,4
MDPV	21	5,6
5-MeO-DALT	21	5,6
BONG BASTIC	20	5,4
JWH-x	19	5,1
UR-144	19	5,1
AMT	19	5,1
2Meo-Ketamine	18	4,8
...		
Do not know the name	106	28.4

* Several answers were possible, but no more than 10, respondent was asked to select the 10 which use most often

** Possible answers: I didn't use a NPS this last month; 1 to 3 days; 4 to 9 days; 10 to 19 days; 20 days or more

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Within the 12 last months, molecules that belong to the 2C-X series and methoxamine have been the most quoted, each by at least one third of last 12 months users (Table 11).

4.3. Last used NPS

When it comes to the last used NPS (Table 12 and 14bis), the range of quoted substances is very large: 265 users quoted around 70 different NPS. Only 3 ones have been consumed by more than 5 % of respondents. Ethylphenidate reaches now the second place after methoxetamine, and before 2C-B, if the classification is realised by molecules. If we consider 2C-X as a whole as well as, Top 4 turns to methoxetamine, 25X-NBOMe and ethylphenidate.

Top list

NPS that belong to Phenethylamines which includes 2C-X and 25X-NBOMe are, by far, the more cited as the last NPS used (Table 14). This result is quite consistent with other data sources (forums, qualitative...)

Synthetic cannabinoids count only for 8.9 % of last used NPS, although we thought them to be more largely used than other substances in the general population. One of the possible explanation is that they are often sold as plants mixes and known by commercial names. . For example, many respondents who certainly used cannabinoids (quoted as a family or described) were not able to precise the molecular name. It is possible that users aren't always aware that they include synthetic substances. Another point is that they have perhaps been more experienced, notably by cannabis users, than other NPS, but most of experimenter did not settle in a regular or even occasional use. Outside users close to chemical NPS culture, it seems that cannabis users had some bad experiences with synthetic cannabinoids considered too strong. Furthermore, trends in cannabis supply in France, where local production and competition leads to a flourishing market do not draw cannabis users toward synthetic substances.

Table 12: Last NPS used by respondents (by series of molecules)

Q. 6 What was the new psychoactive substance you used last time?

<i>list of NPS, which were selected by 5 % of respondents at least</i>	Frequency	Percent*
2C-X	52	19,6
Methoxetamine	37	14,0
25X NBOMe	19	7,2
Ethylphenidate	17	6,4
...		
Total	265	100

* Percent are only related to respondents who gave a substance name.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 13: Last NPS used by respondents by molecules

<i>list of NPS, which were selected by 3 % of respondents at least N=265</i>	Frequency	Percent*
Methoxetamine	37	14.0
Ethylphenidate	17	6.4
2C-B	14	5.3
2C-P	12	4.5
3-MMC	10	3.8
25I-NBOMe	11	4.2
2C-D	9	3.4
2C-E	10	3.8
4-MMC (mephedrone)	10	3.8
4-MEC	8	3.0

* Percent are only related to respondents who gave a substance name.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 14: Last NPS used by respondents by chemical classes

	Frequency	Percent N=370	Percent N=324*
Phenethylamines	105	28.4	32,4
Cathinones	42	11.4	13,0
Arylcyclohexylamines	37	10.0	11,4
Canabinoïdes	33	8.9	10,2
Tryptamines	23	6.2	7,1
Piperidines	17	4.6	5,2
Opiates	16	4.3	4,9
Arylalkylamines	15	4.1	4,6
Others	36	9.7	11,1
Do not know	46	12.4	

Note: the chemical classes are based at first on the specified substance and if not, on the user declaration.

* Percent are only related to the respondents for whom a chemical classification of the last used substance was possible. The number of answers is different from the molecular classification, essentially due to cannabinoids that many users were not able to quote precisely (in the previous question) but could precise roughly which family they belong to or a proxy.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Mode and circumstances of last NPS intake

During the last intake of NPS, most of the respondents used them with some friends (76 %), but 2 out of 10 used a NPS alone, mostly at home (Table 15).

The session took place at home for nearly 6 out of 10 users, in a festive place or in the countryside each one for 2 out of 10. Very few used a NPS when working or attending school.

Table 15: Circumstances of last NPS usedQ. 9. Last time when using the substance which you selected, what were circumstances? (*one answer was possible*)

N=370	Frequency	Percent
Alone at home	65	17.6
With friends at your or their home	151	40.8
Alone in a club, pub or at a party	4	1.1
With friends in a club, pub or at a party	68	18.4
Alone outside/in the countryside	10	2.7
With friends outside/in the countryside	62	16.8
At school/work	3	0.8
Other circumstances	7	1.9
Total	370	100

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 16 Way(s) of administration during the last NPS use, by chemical classesQ. 10. Last time when using the substance which you selected, what were the typical ways of administration for you? (*several answers are possible*)

	N	Smoking (com- bustion)	Vapor inhalation (bong, chasing the dragon, waterpipe)	Vapo- rizer	Sub- lingual	Inges- tion	Snor- ting	Rectal	Injec- tion
Phenethylamine	105	1%	0%	0%	19%	73%	10%	0%	2%
Do not know	46	17%	2%	2%	0%	61%	39%	0%	2%
Cathinone	42	2%	2%	0%	2%	33%	74%	5%	10%
Arylcyclo- hexylamines	37	0%	0%	0%	3%	8%	84%	8%	0%
Canabinoïdes	33	85%	24%	3%	0%	9%	3%	0%	0%
Other classes + mixed +branded names	27	0%	4%	0%	7%	48%	52%	4%	11%
Tryptamine	23	17%	13%	0%	9%	57%	43%	0%	9%
Piperidine	17	0%	6%	0%	0%	35%	59%	6%	12%
opiate	16	13%	19%	0%	6%	38%	50%	0%	6%
Arylalkylamines	15	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%	33%	0%	0%
Total	361	12%	5%	1%	7%	48%	39%	2%	4%

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See non broken data on annexe 1

Ingestion and snorting were the two main routes of administration (Table 16). Smoking and vapours inhalation have been used by a part of users, mostly for cannabinoids intake as well as the sublingual route was reserved to a few substances, mainly 25X-NBOMes. Out of 370 users, 15 say they have used injection; 11 are males and 4 females. Vaporizer, such as e-cigarette, which is known from qualitative sources being experienced by some users in order to take cannabinoids, wasn't a prevalent tool for NPS use at the time of the data collection.

Indented effects

Most of respondents users first aimed at experiencing psychoactive effects such as modifying perception (60.0 %) or getting high (46,5 %) (Chart 11). Another type of motivations is sociability (to bond with other).

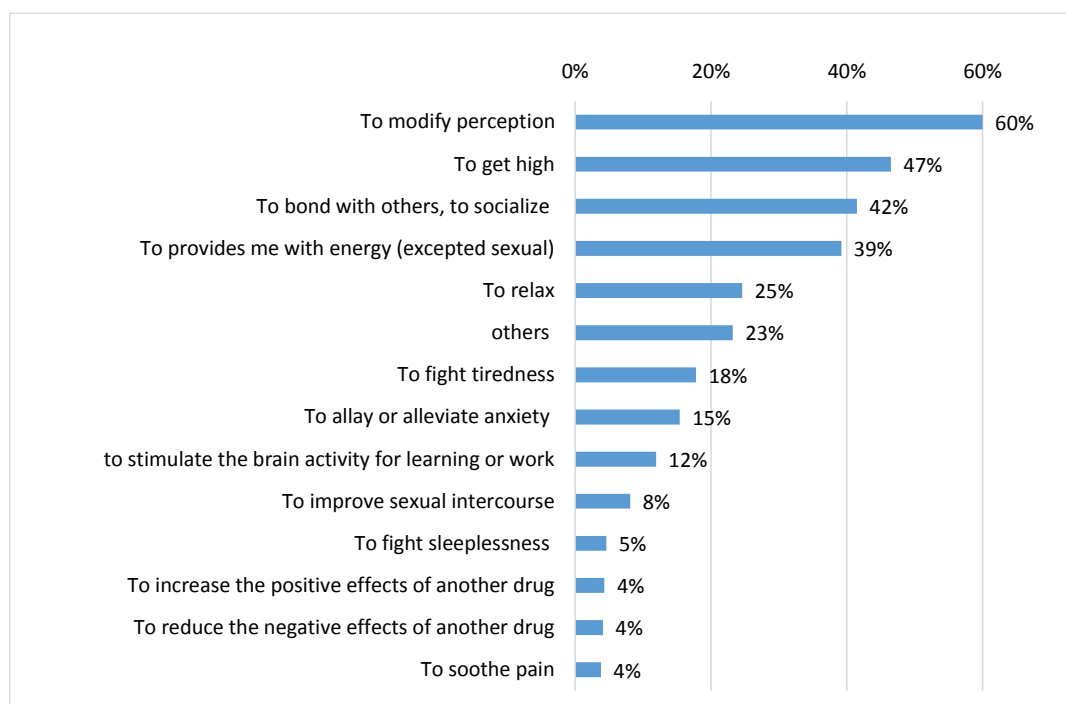
A third type of motivations encompasses functional ones, such as providing energy (39.2 %), relaxing (24.6 %), stimulating brain activity (11.9 %), or improving sexual intercourse (8.1 %).

Then, comes the use on NPS in order to tackle a symptom: to fight tiredness, sleepiness, to alleviate anxiety...

Finally, the use of NPS in order to modulate the effect of other substances (up or down) is quoted by just 4 % of respondents for both items.

Chart 11: Indented effects during the last NPS use

Q. 11. What are the most important intended effects that you seek when you used the substance which you selected? (*several answers are possible*)



NB: the category "others" has not been recoded: it dealt mostly with creativity and concentration. Some of users spoke about introspection or reaching a different view on life.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Unpleasant effects

Part of NPS users who experienced unpleasant effects during the last session of NPS use appears to be quite high: 44.1% were in that case. The most quoted symptoms are psychiatric ones (strong paranoia, fear, anxiety) which has been suffered by 16 % of users (n=59) (Table 37). The second one is strong palpitations or heartache (14 %). These symptoms can both lead users to hospital. Thus, only 6 users

(3.6 % of those who suffer unpleasant effects) declare they looked for medical attention related to these unpleasant effects (Table 38).

With regards to this result, we can first assume that health issues in NPS tacking are much more prevalent than cases which can be reported by health facilities.

It is also worthy to consider the possibility of population bias, related to the inclusion method. It is indeed possible, given the fact we had previous contacts with drugs forum moderators and were notably able to promote the survey by this way, that NPS users who belong to Geek culture were maybe over-represented in the respondents. Now, we know that they have, on average, better knowledge related to harm reduction than other user's profiles and were perhaps more able to manage some health issues by themselves.

Table 17 Description of unpleasant feelings after use of NPS

Q. 13. What were the unpleasant feelings after you used the substance? (*Several answers are possible*)

N=162	Frequency	Percent in users stating unpleasant effects (N=162)	Percent in users affected by the question N=370)
strong paranoia, fear, anxiety	59	36.4	15.9
strongly increased heart rate, palpitation, chest pain	52	32.1	14.1
muscle ache, cramps, jaw clenching	46	28.4	12.4
headache	38	23.5	10.3
overheating	37	22.8	10.0
nausea, vomiting	36	22.2	9.7
extreme agitation and excitement, sleeplessness	34	21.0	9.2
sweating	32	19.8	8.6
fatigue, exhaustion, sleepiness	30	18.5	8.1
problems of sight	28	17.3	7.6
strong craving to use more	27	16.7	7.3
unpleasant, intensive hallucinations, delusions	24	14.8	6.5
tremors	22	13.6	5.9
depression, dejection	21	13.0	5.7
dehydration and/or diarrhea	19	11.7	5.1
could not control my muscle, I have problems with moving	18	11.1	4.9
breathing difficulty, dyspnea	15	9.3	4.1
aggression	7	4.3	1.9
itches, skin changes, changed colour, spots, blisters, rash etc.	3	1.9	0.8
seizures	2	1.2	0.5
other	26	16.0	7.0

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Information need about the last used NPS

Users have been questioned whether they feel a lack of information on several items the last time they use NPS. This question aimed at assessing, not general information need on NPS, but specific need when somebody is about to take a NPS in real context.

Items on which numerous NPS users feel having enough information are, at first, the routes of administration (85.6 % users feel well or rather well informed), their legal status (77.5 % of well or

rather well informed respondents), their effects (76.7 %), and, finally, the dose to take in order to get the required effect (75.3 %). Nevertheless, around a quarter of respondents thinks they do not have sufficient information on these issues.

On the opposite, users feel the highest need for information about health issues: 64.1 % of respondents state having no or rather no information about health-related risks while opinion related to the safe dose to take are most divided (54.5 % feeling informed, 45.5 % missing information).

It is important to note that people who filled in the questionnaire until this question are maybe not totally representative of all the NPS users. Most of them were indeed able to give a name of NPS and probably had perhaps a better level of knowledge than other users' profiles.

Table 18 Information needed about the last used NPS

Q. 15. About the New Psychoactive Substance you, used last time do you consider having enough information on the following aspects?

N=368	Yes %	rather yes %	rather no %	No %
On their legality or illegality	58,2	19,3	11,1	11,4
On their effects	40,8	35,9	14,4	9,0
On their risks to health	17,1	19,0	31,8	32,1
On the doses to take to get the required effect	43,8	31,5	12,0	12,8
On the safe dose to take	33,2	21,5	24,7	20,7
On the routes of administration	59,2	26,4	6,3	8,2

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Reasons for using the last NPS

The most important reason for having taken the last NPS is, by far, is [personal curiosity](#) (Table 19). This result is quite consistent with the most declared intended effects (Chart 11, to modify perception, or to get high).

The second most important reason is the simple opportunity of use. This statement is also very coherent with what qualitative data say about circumstances of NPS use (mostly with some friends).

Two other items that gather more "Very important" than "Not important" statements deal with the quality of the substance (good quality) and its strong effects. Opinion are quite divided when it comes to health issues ("It's not so much addictive" and "It's less harmful"). About these answers, we can assume that they partly mean that some users thought the propositions did not apply to the last substance they used and so, they necessarily were not important. This hypothesis should be consistent with results displayed in Table 26 about items of General opinion about NPS where most NPS users express the idea they don't think NPS are of better quality of with stronger effects than classical drugs. Concerning the item: "It was easy to get for me" it appeared of second importance for some users or not important at all for most of the respondents. Access to NPS does not seem to be an issue.

Finally, it seems clear that, among respondents of the survey, legal issues are not a priority. The higher scores of "Not important" are concentrated on following statements "The use wasn't forbidden" and "It's difficult to detect by tests".

Table 19 Reason for use of last NPS classified by importance for respondents

Q. 16. What are the most important reasons that make you use the substance you used last time? Please specify their importance for you?

	Not important %	Rather important %	Very important %	
Just for my personal curiosity	17.7	32.1	50.1	Very
I had the opportunity (through friends. etc.)	26.8	33	40.3	Rather important
It is of good quality (much pure. less cutting agent)	25.4	38	36.6	
The effects are strong	20	46.2	33.8	
I like the effects (used it before)	37.7	28.5	33.8	Balanced
Is not so much addictive	32.1	38.6	29.3	
It was easy to get for me	31.8	44.2	23.9	
It is less harmful	46.8	38.9	14.4	Rather
The use was not forbidden	74.4	18.9	6.8	Not important
It is difficult to detect during tests (urinary and saliva tests)	80.6	13.5	5.9	

Note: To simplify the questionnaire, it was not asked to the respondents if they considered these items as right or wrong, knowing that only respondents who think a statement is right can really give an opinion about its importance to them. It was assumed that when somebody stated that an item was important in the fact he/she used THIS substance, he/she considered the item as right AND important. If a respondent thought that a statement was false with regards to the NPS he/she used, he/she was supposed to consider it as not important in the fact he/she used this substance.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Mode of purchase of last used NPS

First access mode to the last used substance is online purchase but less than half of the users bought it by themselves (**Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). For more than half of respondents, it is a second hand acquisition.

A quarter of respondents were given it for free. Once more, this observation is quite consistent with qualitative data that shows that NPS use spreads partly by concentric circles from expert users to opportunistic users who frequently do not know what product they use.

Table 20 Mode of purchase of selected NPS

Q. 17. Thinking about the substance which you selected, how did you get it the last time?

(N=352)	Frequency	Percent
bought it from a shop online	145	41.0
been given it by someone for free	86	24.3
bought from a friend who is not a dealer	54	15.3
bought it from a dealer	43	12.1
bought it from a shop (not online)	6	1.7
bought it from a classified ad online	4	1.1
I made it myself	0	0
other	16	4.5

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

5. Mode of procurement

Nearly half of the respondents did not buy any NPS on the Internet during the previous year (Table 21). This confirms answers to question 17 related to procurement of last used NPS (**Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). Just around a half of respondents get the NPS online by themselves.

Online purchasing seems to be less prevalent among NPS users over 34 years old than among younger users: 29 % of them ordered a NPS online during the previous year vs 49 % of others.

Among those who bought online within the last twelve months, 1 out of 4 ordered only 1 time and 1 out of 2, between 2 and 5 times.

During the last NPS online purchase, respondents spent an average of 100 € but 50 % spent less than 57 € (Table 22). A quarter of the respondents indicate they bought for at least 100 € up to 753 €.

When purchases reach this level, one may think they order for a group (shared purchase) or to deal these NPS.

Most of respondents (6 out of 10) assert that they ordered only one substance during their last order. Focusing on the last 12 months' buyers, this figure falls slightly (52.4%) but remains quite high (Table 23). The other part of respondents bought only 2 to 5 substances. Very few declare they buy more (< 5 %).

Table 21 Frequency of ordering of NPS on online shops

Q. 18. During the last 12 months. how many times have you ordered any new psychoactive substance from an online shop?

N=353	Frequency	Percent	Percent among buyers
None	159	45.0	
One time	52	14.7	26.8
2-5 times	98	27.8	50.5
to 10 times	21	5.9	10.8
11 to 20 times	15	4.2	7.7
More than 20 times	8	2.3	4.1

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 22 Money spent on NPS

Q. 19. During the last online order. how much have you spent?

	with extreme values* N=188	With 6 outlier values removed* *, N=182
mean	112	99
Modal	50 (N=34)	50 (N=34)
median	57.5	57

*All answers of people who did not buy during the last year have been removed.

** Further more six outliers have been removed: 5 answers equal to 1 euros and 1. equal to 3000 euros.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 23 Quantity of NPS ordered from online shops

Q. 20. During the last online order, how many different New Psychoactive Substance have you bought?

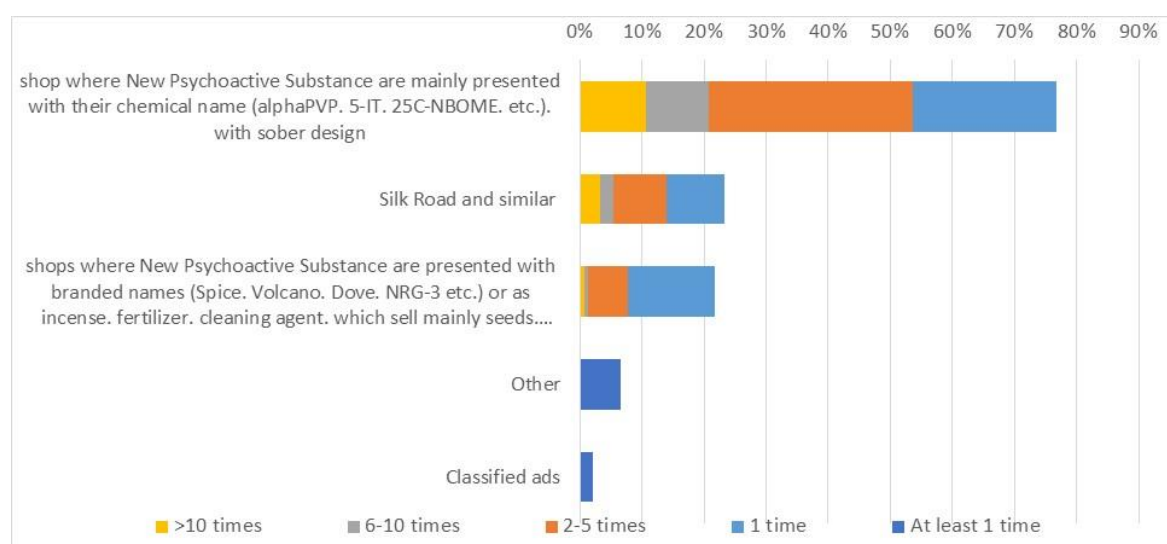
	All respondents N=251		Respondents who bought within 12 last months, N=187	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
One	153	61.0	98	52.4
2-5	91	36.3	83	44.4
>5	7	2.8	6	3.2

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Online shop selection

Most of respondents (76.8 %) who bought a NPS within the previous year got it on a so called « RC-shop », i.e. a website that calls NPS by chemical names with few marketing coating. Furthermore, 1 out of 2 French respondents only ordered on that type of shops (Chart 12). Only 1 out of 5 used a so-called “commercial shop”, i.e. a shop that targets youngest users and people who are not very familiar with substances and chemical approach. Nearly a quarter of “buyers” got a NPS on the deep web (Silk Road or similar).

The frequency of the purchases processed on each type of websites shows preference for “RC shops”. Indeed, the number of orders made during the previous year appears to be more important on these ones than on “commercial sites” where 65 % of users have purchased only once (vs 30 % on RC shops). On the opposite, up to 27 % of persons who ordered on “RC shop” did it more than six times during the last twelve months vs only 6 % for “commercial shops”.

Chart 12 Websites where NPS are purchasedQ. 22. During the last 12 months, on which website did you order New Psychoactive Substances? (*several answers possible*)

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

It is noteworthy to underline that, the younger respondents purchased on “commercial shops” than other groups. This is the exact opposite of what could be expected, with regards to the fact that young people appear to be the marketing target of these shops. Among respondents under 25 y-o, 13.6 % got a NPS on such a shop, vs 20.4 % within 25-34 and 36.0 % within 35 and over. On the opposite, young people indicate twice more than older ones they have ordered on the deep web (32.2 % vs 15.3 %, $p < 0.01$).

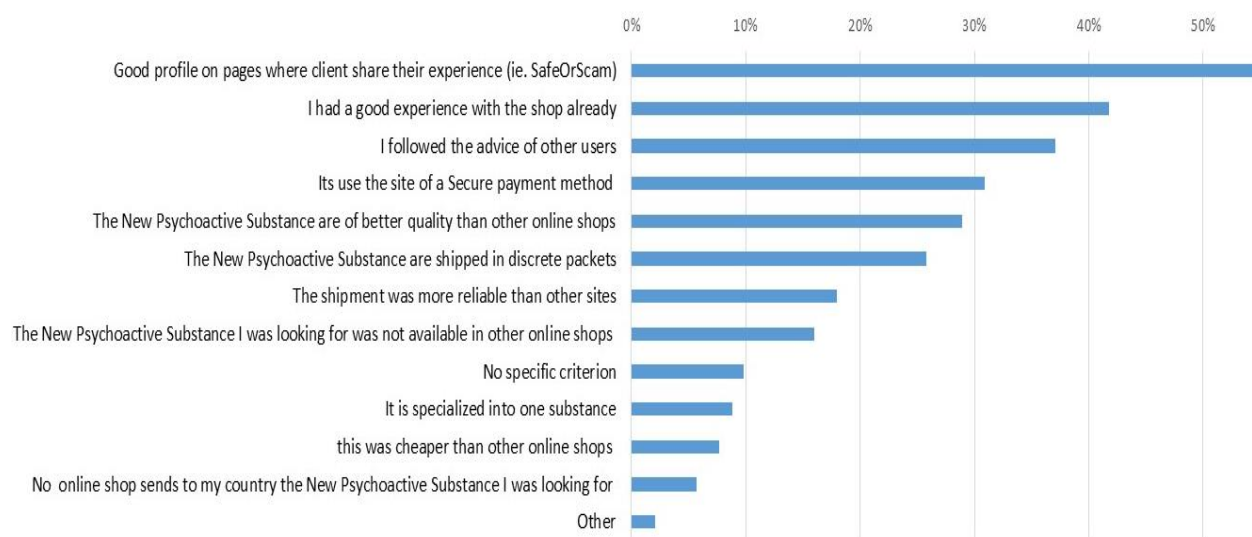
Several hypothesis can be proposed: at first it could be assumed that young people who purchase the more intensively on this type of shops did not answer the questionnaire. Secondly, it is quite possible that, in France, commercial shops do not really reach their target. First quantitative data show indeed a rather low prevalence of NPS experimentation in general population (1.7 % of 17 years old French people report having once use a NPS, mainly synthetic cannabinoids, which seem mostly experienced but rarely consumed on a regular way); only half of users seem to order online by themselves, these are probably users familiar with chemical approach, who rather attend “RC shops”.

Respondents have been asked about the way they select online shops.

Experience based criteria were the more prevalent to choose online shops among users who purchased a NPS during the last 12 months; more than half of them care about online shops assessments published on dedicated sites (Chart 13), 41.8 % trust their own experience and 37.1 % trust other users’ advices.

Less frequently, users quoted more precise items. In decreasing order, these are the security of the payment method, the quality of NPS and the shipment in discreet packets.

Chart 13 Criteria of online shops selection



Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

Correlations are observed in pairs between the 3 items “I had a good experience of this shop already”, “the site had a good profile on pages where clients share their experience and “The NPS are of better quality than on other shops”, each equal to 0.45 ($p < 0.000$).

An other group of correlations appears between items dealing with the security : "The site uses a secure payment method" and "The NPS are shipped in discrete packets" ($r=0.40$ $p<0.00$) or with "The shipment was more reliable than on other sites" ($r=0.37$ $p<0.00$).

This can indicate that for some users, quality concerns are on the first stage while for some others, security concerns are the most important ones.

Half of "purchasers" ordered on only one shop during the previous year, the others, on 2 to 5 sites (Table 24).

Table 24 Number of online shops used by respondents

Q. 25. During the last 12 months, on how many different online shops have you ordered?

N=180	Frequency	Percent
1	90	50.0
2 to 5	88	48.9
5 to 10	2	1.1
More then 10	0	0

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

6. Information about NPS

The first source of information related to NPS clearly appears to be web forums (Table 25) which is used by 56.0 % of respondents. The secondary source (34.3 % of respondents) consists of friends, family or acquaintances. Media such as TV, radio, magazines, newspapers are quoted by around 1 out of 6 respondents.

In the end, 1 out of 6 respondents state they get information from the online shops, very few (4.8 %) report they get it from their dealer.

Table 25 Sources of information about NPS

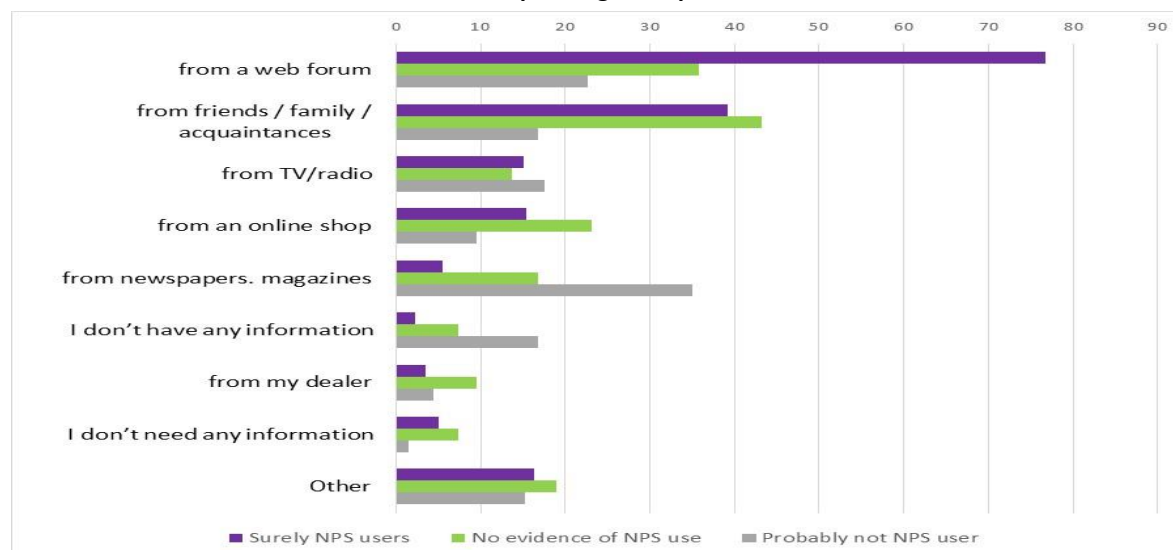
Q. 26. Where did you look for information about New Psychoactive Substances? (*several answers are possible*)

N=543	Frequency	Percent
from a web forum	304	56.0%
from friends / family / acquaintances	186	34.3%
from TV/radio	84	15.5%
from an online shop	83	15.3%
from newspapers. magazines	81	14.9%
I don't have any information	37	6.8%
from my dealer	26	4.8%
I don't need any information	25	4.6%
Other	90	16.6%

Note N = number of respondents to question 24 (to have ticked 1 for at list 1 item of Q 26)

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Chart 14 Sources of information about NPS depending of respondent's classification



Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

See data in Annex 1

Respondents, according to their proximity with NPS, do not use exactly the same information sources (Chart 14). “Surely NPS users” seek mostly for information on forums (76.8 %) and from friends, family or acquaintances (39.2 %).

People who probably used a NPS but did not give a name of NPS or who did not consume within the previous year, get firstly knowledge from friends, family or acquaintances (43.2 %) as well than from forums (35.8 %) but also from online shops (23.2 %).

Finally, people from whom we think they were not NPS users, mainly get information from newspapers and magazines (35.0 %), then from online forums (22.6) and 16.8 % among them assert they don't have any information at all.

At last, the questionnaire asked respondents to report their opinion on several assertions related to NPS as a whole (Table 26).

First of all, the weight of "do not know" answers to each assertion ranges from 1 out of 4 to 1 out of 3. It probably acknowledges the lack of information a part of respondents suffer from. Once more, differences between different groups of respondents can be observed: "NPS certainly users" show more precise ideas on the raised issues. They indeed use the "do not know" answer only for 10 % to 20 % of them, depending on the items, while other groups' levels are between 30 % and 59 % to report they cannot answer.

A majority of respondents did not agree or reported that they have not enough information to answer two of the proposed assertions (2 and 4) dealing with a difference of characteristics between sold NPS and classical drugs (stronger or best quality). "Surely NPS users" are more radical in their answers: 60 % ticked "It's not true" for assertions (2) and 73 % for (4).

Respondents were rather more balanced about the remaining two other quotes (1 and 3) related to drugs potential harms. Facing the assertions that the NPS were less harmful, then less addictive than other drugs, answers were there scattered between the items. "It's true for a few of them", "It's not true" and "I don't know". "NPS certainly users" were more numerous to declare that NPS are less harmful (58 %) or less addictive (54 %) than illicit drugs but most of them chose the sentence "Yes it's true for a few of them".

Table 26 General opinion about NPS

Q. 28. Do you agree with the following statements?

N=522	Yes. it's true for most of them	Yes. it's true for a few of them	No. it's not true	I don't know
New Psychoactive Substance are less harmful than illicit substances (1)	14,4	28,2	28,5	28,9
New Psychoactive Substance are of better quality than illicit substances (much pure. less cutting agent) (2)	2,3	13,8	51,7	32,2
New Psychoactive Substance are less addictive than other illicit drugs (3)	11,1	35,2	28,4	25,3
The effects of New Psychoactive Substance are stronger than other illicit drugs (4)	2,5	7,9	63,1	26,5

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Conclusion

More than classical drugs users, NPS users appear as a hidden population. In drug users population the most hard-to-reach people are those who consume psychoactive substances in private spaces and who

neither search for specialised medical help nor attends any harm reduction facilities. Thus, some can sometimes be reached by ethnographical observation- or law enforcement services- when they get contact with suppliers. Meanwhile, French typical user of NPS receive substances at home by the postman and consume them in private spaces, getting so the archetype of hidden user.

That is why the Internet provides a means to reach those people with no counterpart.

Despite all its methodological limits, the main being the lack of a sampling framework, this online survey has been a very profitable tool, in a context where both qualitative and quantitative data are missing. Triangulation with information based on other I-Trend tools (e.g. forum monitoring) or ethnographic data from OFDT's ground surveillance system (TREND) helped to get a more precise picture of the phenomenon. For example, a core of psychonauts tend to try a very large range of molecules, but a large majority of users only focuses on a short list of NPS. Probably most of NPS users do not buy them directly on the Internet, indicating that the diffusion on face-to-face market is not any more a micro-phenomenon etc.

Comparison with partner's results helped OFDT to better underline particularities of the respondent's population and confirmed some differences qualitatively perceived in NPS spread in France, such as a low dissemination (up to now) among very young people and high school attendees.

Further editions will certainly be planned in order to follow trends. They will aim to enlarge reached population and to best appreciate which users profiles are represented within related data.

Participation rate will therefore depend on how searchers will be able to give back information to substance users and ensure that results utilization won't be detrimental for NPS users.

Annex 1 Additional tables

Table 27: Declaration of use of NPS depending of respondents' classification

	Probably not NPS users N=147 (%)	No evidence of NPS use N=100 (%)	Surely NPS users N=360 (%)	All N=607 (%)
Referred to as 'legal highs' or 'designer drugs'	1.4	37.0	28.5	23.6
Sold as a "research chemical" (RC)	1.4	17.0	67.0	43.3
Sold under a fanciful marketing name (e.g. NRG-3, Benzofury, Funky, Cocolino etc.)	.7	14.0	24.9	17.4
Sold as a "bath salt", "incense", or "good not intended for human consumption (collector goods)"	1.4	16.0	33.8	23.2
Meant to be imitating the effects of existing illegal drugs, but definitely not being one of them	1.4	33.0	36.0	27.4
Sold online	2.1	55.0	69.3	51.2
Sold in a head shop or a smart shop	.7	32.0	24.9	20.4
Was apparently new on the market	.7	25.0	48.6	33.4
None of those one	95.7	5.0	6.4	27.1

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 28: Sex of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
A man	442	73,9
A women	156	26,1
Total	598	100

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 29: Age of the respondents

Q. 3 What is your year of birth?

	Frequency	Percent
Under 19	43	7.2
19-20	74	12.4
21-22	69	11.5
23-24	87	14.5
25-26	50	8.4
27-28	47	7.9
29-30	28	4.7
31-35	85	14.2
36-40	57	9.5
41-45	26	4.3
46-50	14	2.3
>51	18	3.0
Total	598	100.0

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 30: Declaration of use of various psychoactive substances in lifetime depending of respondents' classification

(N=598)	F	Probably not NPS users	No evidence of NPS use	Surely NPS users	All
Alcohol	589	96.4	99.0	99.4	98.7
Tobacco (including hookah / shisha)	578	95.0	98.0	97.2	96.8
Marijuana/hashish	572	86.4	97.0	99.2	95.8
Ecstasy pills or MDMA powder	490	60.7	78.8	91.3	82.1
Cocaine	430	52.1	70.7	80.2	72.0
Amphetamine (speed)or Methamphetamine (Ice)	395	40.0	66.7	76.3	66.2
LSD or psilocybin mushrooms / magic mushrooms	452	45.7	75.8	87.4	75.7
Heroin or Buprenorphine in (Subutex, Suboxone,), Opium	237	25.0	29.3	48.3	39.7
Solvents or glues or paints or other volatile substances, Poppers	369	44.3	59.6	69.3	61.8
Ketamine	283	15.7	37.4	62.6	47.4
Herbal extracts (Salvia, Kratom)	255	13.6	36.4	56.0	42.8
New Psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids included (Spice, etc.)	377	2.1	54.5	89.4	63.1
Other	175	10.8	13.1	41.2	29.4

* Possible answer yes or no. Frequency of yes-answers.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 31: Education of respondents depending on age of respondents

Q. 29 What is your highest academic education attained?

Year of education from age 6	<25 y N=272 (%)	25-34 y N=194 (%)	>=35 y N=131 (%)	All N=597 (%)
6 to 12*: <i>primary and secondary general education</i> (school to high school)	11.4	2.6	2.3	6.5
11* : diploma of professional education (CAP, BEP) Intermediate vocational qualification	6.3	10.3	9.2	8.2
12* : matriculation certificate (general or technical exam at the end of high school)	30.9	17.5	21.4	24.5
14 to 16* :(+2 to + 4 after high school Lower tertiary	40.8	40.7	35.1	39.5
17* et more : (master level and more) Higher tertiary	10.3	28.9	32.1	21.1
Other	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Years of education from the beginning of primary school (at age 6)

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 32: Position of respondents on the labour market

Q. 30 Currently, what is your position on the labour market?

N=597	Frequency	Percent
Employed	240	40.2
Self-employed (licence holder, businessperson)	33	5.5
Employed and self-employed in parallel	14	2.3
Retired	2	0.3
Working retired	0	0.0
Retired due to disability *	9	1.5
Student (high school)	34	5.7
Student (university)	159	26.6
On maternity or parental leave	1	0.2
Unemployed – registered at the Job's Office	70	11.7
Unemployed – not registered at the Job's Office	29	4.9
Other	6	1.0
Total	597	100.0

*In France they are not said "retired"

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 33: Income of respondents by age

Income N=514	F	<25 y N=272 (%)	25-34 y N=194 (%)	>=35 y N=131 (%)	All Percent
Less than 400 €	98	36.0	4.7	4.7	19.1
Between 400 and 800 €	121	30.1	20.5	14.0	23.5
Between 800 and 1,500 €	129	21.6	29.8	25.2	25.1
Between 1,500 and 2,500 €	117	8.9	34.5	34.6	22.8
More than 2,500 €	49	3.4	10.5	21.5	9.5
Total	514	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 34: Declaration of use of various psychoactive substances over last 30 days depending of respondents' classification

	Probably not NPS user (%)	No evidence of NPS use (%)	Surely NPS users (%)	All (%)
Alcohol	91.4	87.9	87.7	88.6
Marijuana/hashish	57.9	69.7	76.0	70.7
Ecstasy pills or MDMA powder, amphetamine, methamphetamine	5.0	5.1	15.6	11.4
Cocaine	11.4	11.1	37.7	27.1
LSD or psilocybin mushrooms / magic mushrooms, ketamine	15.0	25.3	37.4	30.2
Opiates: heroin or Buprenorphine in (Subutex, Suboxone,), Opium	24.3	32.3	48.9	40.4
Solvents or glues or paints or other volatile substances, Poppers	4.3	6.1	8.4	7.0
New Psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids included (Spice, etc.)	6.4**	4.0**	50.8**	32.7**

* Possible answer yes or no. Frequency of yes-answers.

** calculated from the number of respondents to the questions related to the past 12 months NPS use. The statistic is actually 96 % in "Surely NPS users" and 12 % in other classes.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 35 Indented effects on the last NPS used

N=370	Frequency	Percent
To modify perception	222	60.0
To get high	172	46.5
To bond with others, to socialize	154	41.5
To provides me with energy (sexual performances not included)	145	39.2
To relax	91	24.6
To fight tiredness	66	17.8
To allay or alleviate anxiety	57	15.4
to stimulate the brain activity for learning or work	44	11.9
To improve sexual intercourse	30	8.1
To fight sleeplessness	17	4.6
To increase the positive effects of another drug	16	4.3
To reduce the negative effects of another drug	15	4.1
To soothe pain	14	3.8
Others	86	23.2

NB: the category "others" has been not recoded: it dealt mostly with creativity and concentration. Some of users spoke about introspection or reaching a different view on life.

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 36 Typical way of administration on the last NPS use

Q. 10. Last time when using the substance which you selected, what were the typical ways of administration for you? (*several answers are possible*)

(N=370)	Frequency	Percent
Ingestion	184	49.7
Snorting	140	37.8
Smoking	45	12.2
Sublingual	28	7.6
Injection	15	4.1
Chasing the dragon	7	1.9
Rectal	7	1.9
Bong	6	1.6
Waterpipe	5	1.4
Vaporizer	2	0.5
Total	370	100

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 37: Declaration of feeling anything unpleasant after use of NPS

Q. 12 Did you feel anything unpleasant after you used the substance last time?

N=370	Frequency	Percent
Yes	163	44,1
No	207	55,9

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 38 Declaration of looking for medical attention

Q. 14. Because of unpleasant feelings from this substance, did you ever look for medical attention?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	3.7
No	156	96.3

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 39 The website where NPS are purchased

Q. 22. During the last 12 months. on which website did you order New Psychoactive Substances? (*several answers possible*)

N=185	Fre- quency	%	How many times ? %			
			1 time	2-5 times	6-10 times	>10 times
shop where New Psychoactive Substance are mainly presented with their chemical name (alphaPVP. 5-IT. 25C-NBOME. etc.). with sober design	142	76.8	30	43	13	14
shops where New Psychoactive Substance are presented with branded names (Spice. Volcano. Dove. NRG-3 etc.) or as incense. fertilizer. cleaning agent. which sell mainly seeds. plants. accessories. natural products.	40	21.6	65	30	3	3
Classified ads	4	2.2				
Silk Road and similar	43	23.2	40	37	9	14
Other	12	6.5				

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 40 Criteria of selection of online shopsQ. 24. Which were the most important criteria for you when you selected the shops in the last 12 months? (*no more than 5*)

N=194 (people who bought NPS online during the 12 past months)	Frequency	Percent
Good profile on pages where client share their experience (fe.; SafeOrScam)	107	55.2
I had a good experience with the shop already	81	41.8
I followed the advice of other users	72	37.1
Its use the site of a Secure payment method	60	30.9
The New Psychoactive Substance are of better quality than other online shops	56	28.9
The New Psychoactive Substance are shipped in discrete packets	50	25.8
The shipment was more reliable than other sites	35	18.0
The New Psychoactive Substance I was looking for was not available in other online shops	31	16.0
No specific criterion	19	9.8
It is specialized into one substance	17	8.8
this was cheaper than other online shops	15	7.7
No online shop sends to my country the New Psychoactive Substance I was looking for	11	5.7
Other	4	2.1

Note: N = number of respondents to question 24 (to have ticked 1 for at least 1 item of Q 24)

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Table 41 Source of information about NPS depending of respondents' classification

	Probably not NPS user N=137	No evidence of NPS use N=95	Surely NPS users N=311	All N=543
from a web forum	22.6	35.8	76.8	56.0
from friends / family / acquaintances	16.8	43.2	39.2	34.3
from TV/radio	17.5	13.7	15.1	15.5
from an online shop	9.5	23.2	15.4	15.3
from newspapers. magazines	35.0	16.8	5.5	14.9
I don't have any information	16.8	7.4	2.3	6.8
from my dealer	4.4	9.5	3.5	4.8
I don't need any information	1.5	7.4	5.1	4.6
Other	15.3	18.9	16.4	16.6

Source: I-Trend Online Survey-French report

Annex 2: English and French version of the entry page on I-Trend.eu website



Click on your flag and you will be led to the text in your language.



The focus of the I-TREND project survey is New/ Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS), or 'New Synthetic Drugs'. These substances are often and popularly referred to as 'legal highs' or 'designer drugs'. They are also commonly sold as "research chemicals" (RC) or under a diverse range of fanciful marketing names (e.g. NRG-3, Benzofury, Funky, Cocolino etc.). In order to circumvent the law, retailers sell New Psychoactive Substance under a disguise of misleading purposes such as "bath salts", "incense", or "goods not intended for human consumption (collector goods)".

New Psychoactive Substances imitate the effects of existing illegal drugs such as cocaine, (meth)amphetamines, ecstasy, cannabis, ketamine or even opium. Most New Psychoactive Substance can be purchased online, but they can also be sold in head shops and smart shops or on the street within traditional drug markets. They come in different forms such as powder, pills, capsules, herb and resin.

Why a questionnaire?

These substances have little history of consumption and consequently, little is known about their effects, potency and potential consequences on health. There is a need of a better understanding on how these substances are perceived and used. A questionnaire has been developed in order to address these questions.

It is intended for people who have previously experience of using at least one NPS. The survey takes 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is completely anonymous and no personal information is requested. For more information about getting involving in I-TREND and the aims of this project, please [click here](#).



Cette page de présentation vous permet d'accéder au [questionnaire de l'étude I-TREND](#).

L'étude I-Trend menée en France par l'Observatoire français des drogues et des toxicomanies porte sur les nouvelles substances psychoactives désignées par les termes **Nouveaux Produits de Synthèse (NPS)**. Ces substances sont aussi couramment dénommées « legal highs » ou « designer drugs » ou encore « research chemicals » (RC).

Chacune d'entre elles peut se présenter sous des noms fantaisistes, des marques (par exemple NRG-3, Benzofury, SPICE, etc.). Sur les sites de ventes en ligne, ces substances sont

parfois présentées comme des sels de bain, de l'encens avec la mention « not for human consumption », afin de détourner la loi sur les produits psychoactifs ou alimentaires.).

Ces nouveaux produits de synthèse imitent généralement les effets de drogues illégales comme par exemple, la cocaïne, l'ecstasy, l'amphétamine, la kétamine, le LSD ou même l'héroïne.. La plupart de ces nouvelles substances psychoactives peuvent être commandées sur Internet. Dans certains pays, elles peuvent être achetées dans des magasins appelés smart shops. Elles peuvent aussi être vendues par des dealers sur le marché des drogues, parfois comme des substituts des drogues cités plus haut.).

Les NPS se présentent sous toutes les formes : poudre, liquide, comprimé, herbe, gélule ou même résine.

Pourquoi ce questionnaire ?

Ces substances sont souvent très récentes et par conséquent, peu d'informations sont disponibles sur leurs effets, leurs compositions réelles, et les conséquences sur la santé.

Il est donc nécessaire de mieux comprendre comment ces substances sont perçues et utilisées. Cette enquête a été conçue pour apporter des réponses aux questions posées.

Il est destiné aux personnes qui ont déjà utilisé au moins une de ces substances. Si c'est votre cas, nous vous invitons à partager votre expérience.

La passation de ce questionnaire vous prendra 20 minutes environ. Il est totalement anonyme, aucune information sur votre identité ne vous sera demandée.

Merci beaucoup pour votre participation.

Pour plus d'informations sur les acteurs du projet Européen I-TREND et sur ses objectifs, [cliquez ici](#).

Démarrer le questionnaire

Annex 3 Overview of the French questionnaire



p1 - s7 - 20140628 - 024925

0 %

Q1 Avez-vous déjà consommé une substance psychoactive ...

Plusieurs réponses possibles

- ☐ Annoncée comme « legal highs » ou « designer drugs » ou encore « party pills »
- ☐ Vendue comme « research chemical » (RC)
- ☐ Vendue sous un nom commercial (NRG-3, Benzofury, SPICE, etc.)
- ☐ Vendue comme « sels de bain », « encens » ou étiquetée « not for human consumption »
- ☐ Présentée comme imitant les effets d'une drogue illégale, sans en être exactement une
- ☐ Vendue sur Internet
- ☐ Vendue dans des smart shops ou head shops
- ☐ Apparemment nouvelle sur le marché des drogues
- ☐ Aucun de ceux-là

Suivant



p2 - s7 - 20140628 - 024925

1 %

Q2 Vous êtes ?

- ☐ Un homme
- ☐ Une femme

R2 Vous résidez ?

Une seule réponse possible

- ☐ En France
- ☐ En Belgique
- ☐ Dans un autre pays

Q3 Quelle est votre année de naissance ?

Saisissez un nombre entier (sans virgule) entre 1920 et 2002

Suivant



p3 - s7 - 20140628 - 024925



5 %

R3 Quel est votre niveau d'étude ?*Une seule réponse possible*

- ☐ Collège, lycée
- ☐ CAP, BEP
- ☐ Baccalauréat
- ☐ Bac + 2, Bac + 3 et 4
- ☐ Bac +5 et plus
- ☐ Autre

R3f Précisez votre niveau d'étude ...**Suivant**

p4 - s7 - 20140628 - 024925



8 %

S3 Actuellement, quelle est votre situation professionnelle ?

(sélectionnez la situation que vous considérez comme la plus proche de la votre)

Une seule réponse possible

- ☐ Salarié
- ☐ Entrepreneur individuel
- ☐ Salarié et auto-entrepreneur à la fois
- ☐ Retraité
- ☐ Retraité actif
- ☐ Retraité suite à une impossibilité de travailler
- ☐ Etudiant (lycée)
- ☐ Etudiant (université)
- ☐ En congé parental, maternité
- ☐ Au chômage (en recherche d'emploi)
- ☐ Inactif non retraité
- ☐ Autre

S3f Précisez votre situation professionnelle ...**Suivant**




11 %

Q4 Au cours de votre vie, avez vous consommé une ou plusieurs de ces substances ?*Une seule réponse par ligne*

	Oui	Non
Alcool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tabac (ou shisha)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cannabis / shit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ecstasy ou MDMA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cocaine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amphétamine (speed) ou Méthamphétamine (crystal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LSD, 2C-B ou champignons hallucinogènes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Héroïne ou Buprénorphine (Subutex, Suboxone), Opium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solvant, colle ou poppers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kétamine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salvia, Kratom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nouvelle substance psychoactive (ex : méphédronne, Spice, 2C-E, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4m Écrivez le nom de cette ou de ces autres substances ?**Suivant**



p6 - s7 - 20140628 - 024925

13 %

R5a

A propos de l'Alcool, précisez si vous en avez consommé au cours des **12 derniers mois** ?

☐ Oui

☐ Non


S5a

Précisez si vous en avez consommé au cours des **30 derniers jours** ?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

Suivant



p7 - s7 - 20140628 - 024925

16 %

Q5b

A propos du Cannabis/ shiz, précisez à quel âge vous en avez consommé pour la première fois ?

Saisissez un nombre entier (sans virgule) entre 10 et 90

ans

R5b

Précisez si vous en avez consommé au cours des **12 derniers mois** ?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

S5b

Précisez si vous en avez consommé au cours des **30 derniers jours** ?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

Suivant

56/57

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