

DeliverEph

A Time-Saving Delivery Service for Williams College



Problem and Vision:

If you listen closely, you can always hear a Williams student lamenting about how there isn't enough time in the day. Despite our campus' small size, the numerous trips from building to building to get a snack or retrieve a trivial item add up to mire us in the menial. Plus, sometimes we just get hungry and lazy.

So what if someone could bring what we need to us, whether that's snar or an essay left on the printer?

On remote college campuses, the problem with this vision is exactly what it attempts to solve: students don't have time to carry out these deliveries, and there's no one else around who does.

This is where DeliverEph comes in. Our novel delivery model utilizes the preexisting movement around campus. Rather than go out of their way to do deliveries, runners announce when they're going somewhere on campus and are subsequently matched to requests along the same route.

It's a win-win: requesters get a cheap delivery service (there are no current competitors), and runners make a quick buck just by going about their day.

Where we are now:

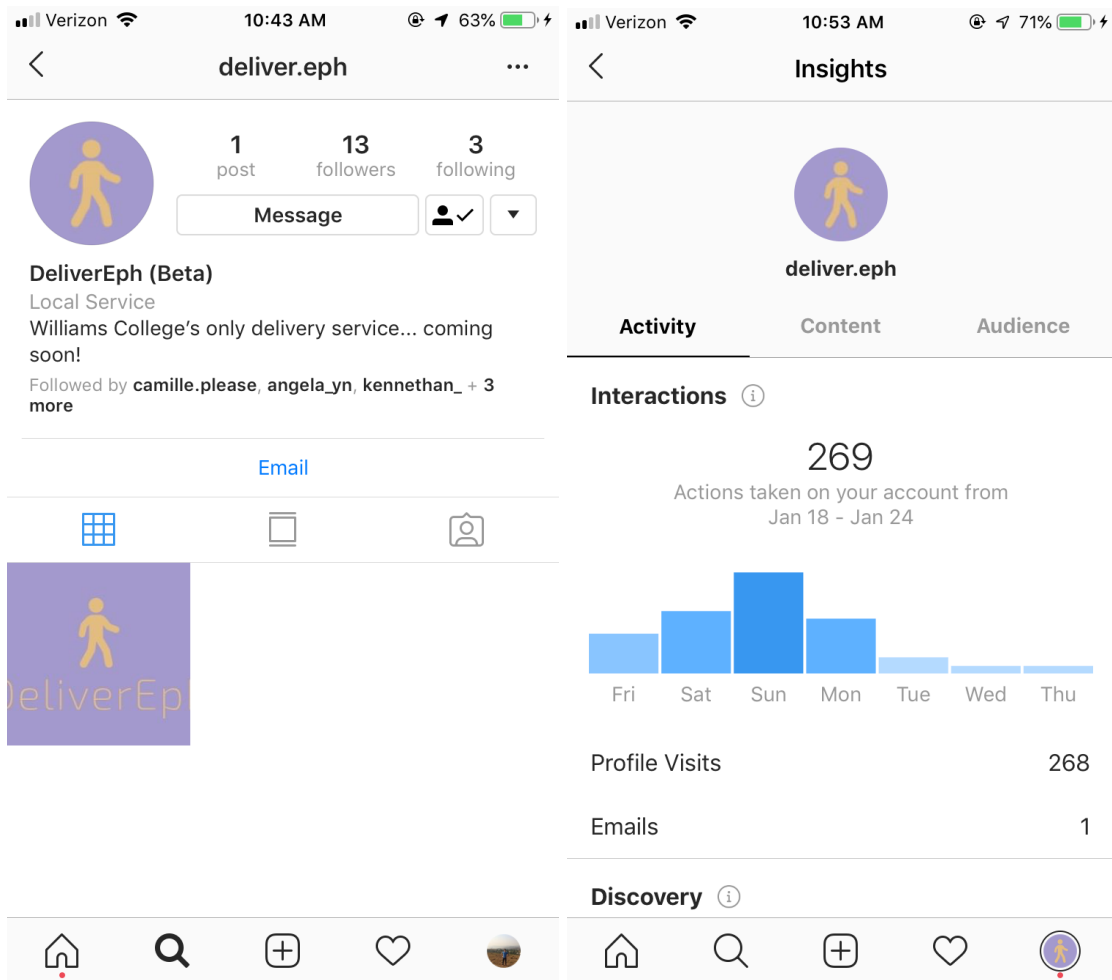
We're currently poised to roll out our MVP, which will enable us to test and refine our concept with real users as we continue to develop our ios application.

Our MVP consists of a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Student users can message either account with a request for delivery or with an itinerary as a runner. DeliverEph will match each request with a compatible runner if one is available, and notify the user otherwise.

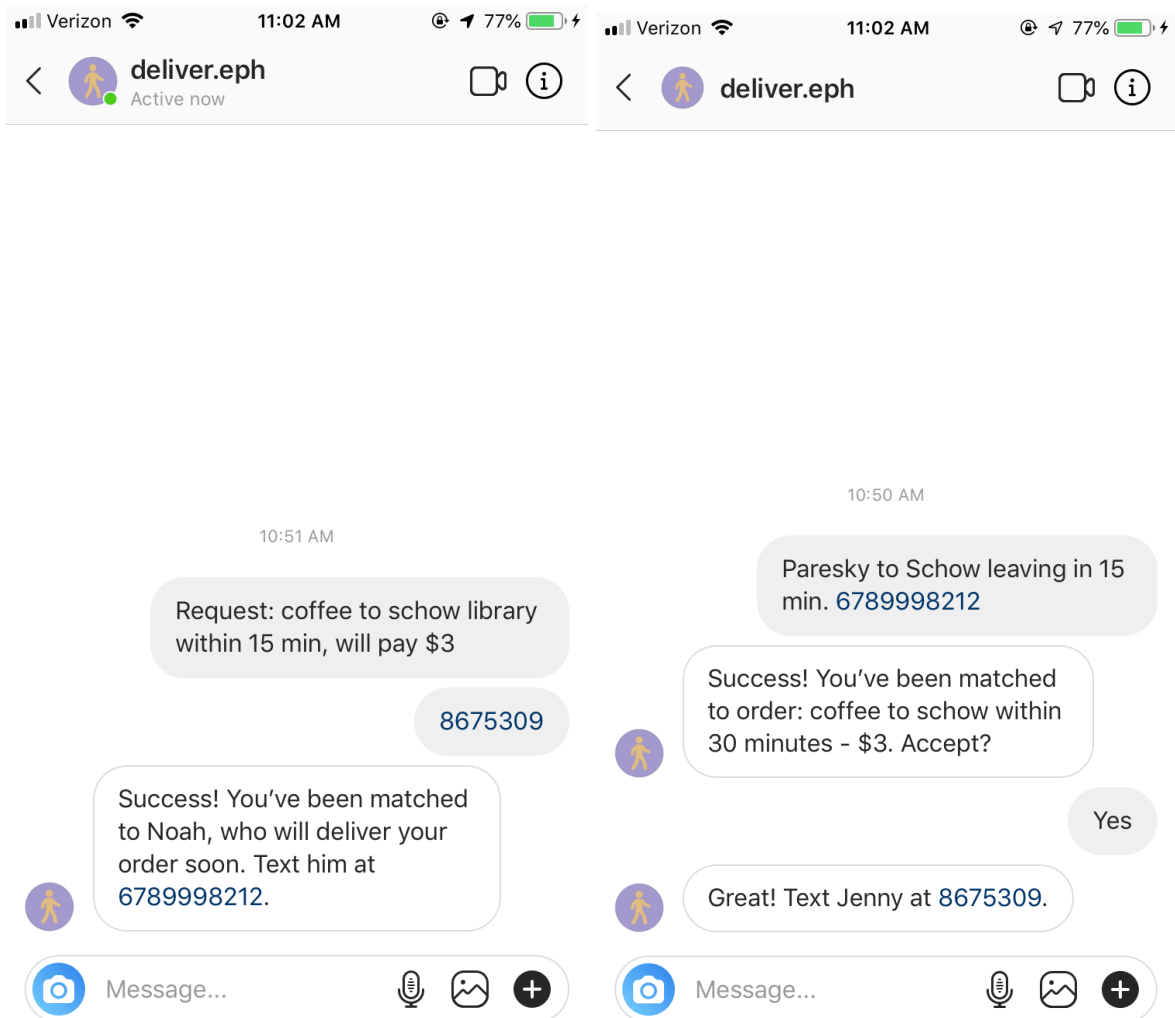
At the time of the request, the requester submits how much they're willing to pay as well as a timeframe in which they'd want the order to be fulfilled. If a runner has submitted a matching itinerary, the runner and requester are 'matched' and their contact information is shared mutually for further communication. The requester must transfer the money at the time of the request, and this money will be kept in the DeliverEph venmo account until the delivery is fulfilled. If the request times out without a runner match, delivery is never fulfilled, or the requester cancels the request, the money will be returned to the requester.

One challenge we're facing is how to deal with the issue of accountability. Emulating Airbnb's policy, we will disclose that we will not be accountable for any loss in items or money. However, we will assist in settling any conflicts and disagreements by providing information of transactions, and partly by overseeing the transaction of money. Furthermore, at a small college such as ours, where it is more likely to see a familiar face rather than a complete stranger, the greatest security is in the trust that people will not steal or lie.

Another challenge is that of dining hall swipe transferral. Currently transactions are limited to dollar exchange. Incorporating meal plan swipe transactions will open up the market to students who don't want to pay for meals or items with cash. We plan to open discussions with the College to negotiate this issue.



Even having not yet begun our marketing scheme, our page has amassed 269 interactions and 13 followers. Our name is spreading naturally across campus.



Above is a use-case for our MVP. On the left is the requester's screen after submitting a request and receiving a match. On the right is the runner, who has submitted his itinerary and received a match.

What's next...

We plan on starting our MVP experiment in the beginning of February, for that is when the semester starts and we are planning to move forward with this project after our Winter Study term. We will first reach out to a group of people -- some volunteers for delivery, and a few customers. From there, the market will expand as a result of awareness of the application throughout the campus. We have high expectations based on the abundance of Instagram profile views that resulted despite little to no marketing. We are not planning to make profit as the experiment runs, and will have monetary interactions occur between those that deliver and those that request. As soon as we see success in the MVP we will implement a profit system derived from service fees.

We are also on our way to building the actual application. We are planning on building an iOS application using Swift and XCode, but because we currently lack proficiency in both, this journey will also be an educational experience. If the iOS application is built and shows success, we will also build a hybrid web-mobile application and possibly even an android application so any user will be able to access our services.

As a result, we will need funding to provide payment for those that volunteer. We are thinking of providing them money or some other form of prize for volunteering (if the willingness to act in generosity does not do the job). We will also need the funding in terms of marketing -- online advertisements, posters, etc. to get our name out and spreading awareness of our app. We also plan on hiring someone or paying an online logo creator for a logo.

We are excited to pursue this project further, for our goals are not only to succeed, but provide every Williams students an easier access to late night food, printing, and other forms of services without having them to feel like they are wasting time. A majority of the campus goes through this situation, and we envision a stress-free Williams with DeliverEph.