

From “I can wait” To Sustainable Impact In E-Commerce Delivery

Paul Buijs

University of Groningen

Do we really need every online order tomorrow—or even today? In surveys, many shoppers say they’re happy to wait a few days. But do they actually choose slower delivery at checkout, and what can carriers do with that extra time? This talk brings together two studies. First, we report a field experiment in a live Dutch webshop checkout. We tested three nudges toward slower delivery: sustainability information, a delivery fee discount, and making the slower delivery option the default. Second, we use a strategic modeling approach with Dutch e-commerce delivery data to show how carriers can use this flexibility: either by bundling deliveries to cut distance or by smoothing peaks to operate with fewer vehicles. Together, the studies show that a well-designed checkout can shift most customers to a slower delivery option (up to 93%) and that the biggest impact can be achieved by smoothing demand. Even when willingness to wait is much lower—around 25% in many settings—carriers can reduce fleet size by up to 20% and substantially cut the delivery fleet’s life-cycle emissions.