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Bike couriers are quicker to bring deliveries, smartphone data shows

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Picture:



Topic:

Urban freight/city logistics

Link:

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Body:

Bike couriers deliver faster than delivery vans - and sometimes they outperform motorised two-wheelers, too. Forbes journalist Carlton Reid draws this conclusion based on figures from the food delivery company Deliveroo.

Some 30 000 couriers - by car, bike and moped - deliver meals for the company on a daily basis. Data from their smartphones give insights into millions of their trips. Perhaps not surprisingly, bike couriers appear to bypass parks, roundabouts, one-way streets, traffic jams and car-free areas more easily than vans do - and they don't have to search for parking when they stop. Motorised vehicles lose a lot of time when searching for a place to park, usually in city centres. Bike messengers are able to use this time more efficiently.

Also the company's algorithms make the journeys even more efficient. Initially, deliveries were planned based on the principle of 'first in, first out'. But now it is routing algorithms that plan trips based on the data of millions of earlier journeys. They factor in the predicted dispatches of meals, the restaurants' locations, the time of day, the day of the week, the number of logged-in couriers, and the distance between the restaurant and the customer.

Carlton Reid concludes that speed is the main motivator for all parties in food delivery logistics. It is not only consumers that demand a quick delivery. Restaurants want to send off meals while they're still steaming. Bike couriers aim to complete multiple journeys per hour because they're being paid per drop-off. The delivery company, finally, makes profits on the number of deliveries.

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