

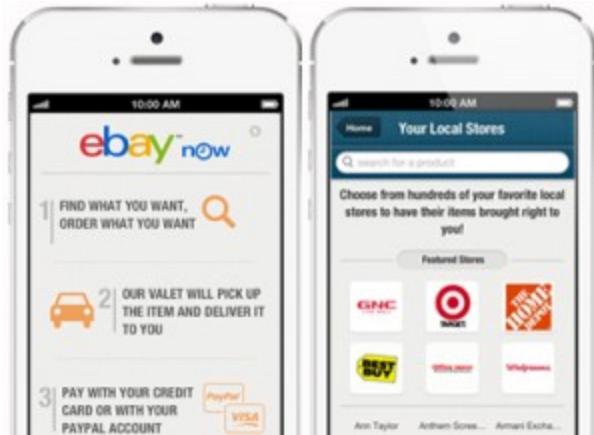
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Game On, Amazon! eBay Rolls Out One-Hour Delivery, Targeting The Web And Wal-Mart

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Author: Clare O'Connor – Forbes.com

Picture this anxiety-provoking scenario: you're at an all-day conference, sweating bullets as you prep for a presentation in an hour's time. But you packed in haste and left your laptop charger at home. Your battery capacity is perilously close to zero. You don't have time to dash to Best Buy and you wouldn't dare ask a fellow presenter for a favor lest you show your hand.



eBay knows its customers (including you, the disheveled executive) and has been quietly working on a solution for this thoroughly modern conundrum.

The eBay Now app allows you to instantly order that laptop charger and have it in your clammy palms within the hour, courtesy of eBay's partnerships with big-name retailers including Best Buy, Target and Macy's.

An eBay "valet" will find whatever you need at a store nearest you and deliver it, much like a same-day courier but for a far more reasonable price (a flat \$5 delivery charge).

If you live in New York, San Francisco or San Jose you can already download eBay Now. If you happen to be in Chicago or Dallas, you're next; the service will roll out across U.S. cities this summer.

I recently tried out this technology on an iPhone 5 (the app works on all iOS and Android devices, as well as the mobile Web). I tested the app with a \$30 cell phone charger — the one item I always find myself without when I'm stuck somewhere, in a time crunch. I chose from a selection eBay Now found for me at stores in my area of downtown Manhattan and paid for it instantly through eBay's secure PayPal mobile payment system.

An eBay Now valet, decked out in the company's colorful insignia, arrived in about 30 minutes by bicycle. She'd grabbed the charger at Best Buy and zipped through the downtown traffic. For now, all of these valets are employed by eBay, but as the program extends to new cities, eBay may well hire couriers from outside contractors. "We're testing and learning," said Dave Ramadge, director of eBay Now. "This is a pilot."

If eBay Now catches on, it could be a coup for the site, which has been increasingly making moves to cement its status in the brick and mortar world. In April, eBay subsidiary PayPal announced that its

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cloud-based payment system is up and running in 250,000 stores across the country, from big-name chains like Home Depot, American Eagle and Foot Locker to smaller family-run businesses.

The aim is for shoppers to be able to use PayPal at the cash register in two million stores by the end of 2013. In many of these transactions, all a customer will need to do to make a purchase is type in his or her cell phone number and PIN.

If PayPal's evolution seems aimed at digital payment competitor Google Wallet, there's no doubt eBay Now poses a greater threat to Wal-Mart and Amazon.com. Both retail giants have recently made high-profile advances in the race towards same-day delivery, the holy grail of online commerce.

After launching its pick-up lockers nationwide in 2012, Amazon is trialing same-day delivery in 10 urban centers. Wal-Mart countered with a bold but much-maligned plan to have customers deliver parcels to each other.

As eBay Now rolls out across the country, the company already has its next delivery milestone in mind. "We'll have scheduled delivery," said Ramadge. "You can decide if you want your charger in an hour or, if you'll be in a meeting, in two hours."

Link: www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2013/05/07/game-on-amazon-ebay-rolls-out-one-hour-delivery-targeting-the-web-and-wal-mart/