Disease On The Door Handle
Campus Infection Prevention

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The Problem
College campuses, like many urban areas, promote high volumes of human traffic and contact with common surfaces. Specifically, door handles are a shared surface that is used by all in an urban area, such as Worcester Polytechnic Institute. This common surface harbors and distributes bacteria and viruses, which facilitates the spread of disease on campus.

The Goals
1. Investigate the infectiousness of door handles and the habits of people who use them.
2. Promote sanitary changes

Three Phase Investigation

Bacterial samples were collected from the door handles of buildings on campus using sterile supplies.

27 Handles Harbor 1,323 Colonies

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35% of respondents said they actively avoid touching door handles.

A survey was distributed among students at WPI asking questions regarding health habits and past/present illnesses.

1,060 People Observed 561 Touched Door Handles 86 Touched Faces

A GoPro was used to record fifty thirty minute clips of human behavior, each in a different shared area of WPI.