

# Gossip Is The News Spectator Sport

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For football fans, today will be a whirlwind of expectation and disappointment as the 6pm transfer window deadline approaches. Imagine a kind of sporting Christmas Day morning, only hyper-fuelled by astronomical wages and even more astronomically unrealistic hopes on the part of the fans. And for football journalists it is just as busy as for the players' agents (but somewhat less profitable I suspect).

Go onto any of the [live blogs](#) and you will see a feast of multi-media including texts from fans claiming to have spotted superstars passing through airports or arriving in limos at training grounds. It's all clearly marked as 'gossip' and I suspect that most readers/viewers take everything said with huge pinches of salt.



But it is also an extreme example of how sports journalism, and perhaps news in general, has now accepted that gossip and speculation are all part of reporting. It also reminds us that speed is of the essence. Actually calling things right is important, but in the hurly-burly of deadline day it is merely the end of the news process where to be first to a new rumour is as important as reporting a new fact.

As [@markwoodward](#) pointed out on Twitter in response to this post, one of the interesting factors is the clubs themselves. Increasingly, they seek to break transfer news first on their own social media platforms which leaves the journalists even more dependent on speculation much of which proves to be wrong at the most basic level.

Today Sky Sports News reported that West Ham's Carlton Cole was not at their Chadwell Heath training ground with his colleagues as if this indicated that he was off negotiating a transfer. In fact, he is training with England. Doesn't mean he's not off, of course...

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