It's a lot easier to write a column if you don't care about accuracy

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Raymond Chen

Now that Longhorn Rumor Season seems to have kicked up, I'm reminded of Windows 95 Rumor Season. The great thing about writing a rumors column is that you don't have to be right! Even if you're wrong, you can just say, "Well, Microsoft changed it before they shipped," and nobody can say you were wrong. It's a victimless crime! The only victim is Microsoft!

Here's a classic example from early 1995:

> **Notes from the Field**
>
> Microsoft's latest security scheme could leave users of Windows 95 dongling
>
> BY ROBERT X. CRINGELY
>
> One thing that will be pretty darned hard to steal, come Aug. 24, is a renegade copy of Windows 95. Just before heading to the DMV, I heard that the kids in Redmond plan to cut Win95 piracy to zilch by requiring the use of a dongle. Yes, a dongle.
>
> Just in case you've led a charmed or boring life, a dongle is a thingamajig that plugs into one of your PC I/O ports. One dongle is shipped for each copy of the OS and the software won't work if it can't detect the proper dongle.
>
> The upshot of this plan is that you can load as many copies of Win95 as you like, but only the machine with the dongle will work.
>
> Now the requisite qualifiers, pre-paid backpedaling, and so on: I believe this information to be true, but I have it from only one source, so it should be classified as a rumor. <u>Microsoft could change its mind on the dongle security strategy tomorrow.</u>

Emphasis mine. And the great thing is, if the story turns out untrue, you can even take credit for it! "Thanks to public uproar over my amazing scoop, Microsoft changed their mind and decided not to do this thing" (that they weren't planning on doing anyway).

It's very frustrating reading rampant bogus rumors about your product and not being able to do anything about it.

So remember, all you Lonhorn rumor-consumers: Just because you saw it in the newspaper doesn't mean that it's true.

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