

Internet storm over William and Kate's #royalbaby

4 December 2012, by Katy Lee



Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge (left) and Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (right) visit Peterborough City Hospital north of London in November 2012. From spoof Twitter accounts to feverish speculation about names, the Internet went into a frenzy Tuesday over the unborn child of Prince William and his wife Catherine as the first royal baby of the online age.

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News of the former Kate Middleton's pregnancy—announced by the royal family on Twitter—met with an explosion of posts on social networks, from joyous congratulations to those pleading for the media coverage to end already.

It is perhaps of little comfort to Catherine, in hospital for a second day on Tuesday with severe [morning sickness](#), that within minutes of the announcement her baby already had a slew of [spoof](#) accounts "live-tweeting from the royal womb".

"CURRENT STATUS: DARK IN HERE, WILL UPDATE," tweeted @RoyalFoetus, which has 6,000 followers.

The rival @RoyalFetus, which has 9,000 followers, added: "I may not have bones yet, but I'm already more important than everyone reading this. #royalbaby #sorry".

The hashtag #royalbaby instantly rocketed to the top of [Twitter's](#) "trending topics" list on the announcement.

Interest was so great that the official website of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, as the couple are officially known, crashed due to high demand.

Meanwhile, online topics of royal baby-related conversation have ranged from likely names and godparents to the probability that the new third-in-line to the British throne will inherit the famous ginger locks of its uncle, Prince Harry.

Bookmakers predict that the couple will name the baby after a close relative, with William's late mother Diana among the early front-runners if it is a girl and John, George and Charles among the favourite boys' names.

But mischievous web-users have made their own helpful suggestions about what William and Catherine should call the baby.

One gleefully suggested "Austerity" to reflect the public mood in Britain as it struggles to climb out of recession, while others plumped for a down-to-earth name bringing the monarchy closer to the people, such as "Kevin".

Online chatter has also turned to reports that Catherine could be expecting twins—potentially spelling constitutional double-trouble for the royal family.

"So if Kate has twins and a C-section," wrote one tweeter, echoing the thoughts of many, "does the doctor get to choose who will be the next in line for the throne?"

"What if there are twins and they're born by C section at the same time?" wrote another. "A pair of heirs?"

Others have been revelling in the array of computerised images, hastily put together by newspapers and websites, showing what the child may look like.

Some of the more sinister versions transpose William's thinning hairline onto pictures of the hypothetical toddler.

One thing is clear—with Catherine believed to be less than 12 weeks pregnant and much more of this to come—those already tiring of #royalbaby-talk may wish to flee the Internet for a few months.

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