

Newsonomics: Inside the New L.A. Times, a 100-year Vision That Bets on Tech and Top-notch Journalism | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Ken Doctor

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Look past the view of [the 105](#). Beyond it is the unfolding of the 21st century, delayed but now in full force at the Los Angeles Times.

That's my big takeaway from a visit to Patrick Soon-Shiong's new temple to next-stage journalism. Last summer, he moved his just-purchased L.A. Times (whose lease was expiring) to one of the sprawling L.A.'s least glamorous addresses: [2300 E. Imperial Highway, El Segundo](#), CA 90245. (Google's satellite view is revealing.) That move stirred some newsroom complaints early on, though the new address seems to have receded as an issue as Soon-Shiong and editor-in-chief Norm Pearlstine have laid out their fast-paced, if still incremental, visions of a new Times.

The visions are big enough, but they stand out even more dramatically in a newspaper business still cutting its way to the future, looking to mergers and acquisitions as a short-term lifeline in the cash-poor trade. Like The New York Times and The Washington Post, the new L.A. Times wants to tell a contrarian story: Investment in the daily press underlines a deep belief in the power of journalism, optimism that it can make both readers' lives and their democracy run better amid the gobsmacking rate of political and technological change.

"So my concern was editorial, the newsroom. That was my very, very, very first concern," Soon-Shiong told me in a two-hour interview. "I knew that that's where I needed to go as my first and highest priority. My second priority now is the business model, but the business model, sadly — and I don't mean this to sound in any way arrogant — has to be consistent with this next generation, not with the past generation," says the 66-year-old Soon-Shiong. He's put his money behind his ideas, taking a loss of about \$50 million this year as he marches the Times forward.

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