

# English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

## Articles of the week



### Instagram tries using AI to determine if teens are pretending to be adults

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By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Instagram is beginning to test the use of artificial intelligence to determine if kids are lying about their ages on the app, parent company Meta Platforms said on Monday.

Meta has been using AI to determine people's ages for some time, the company said, but photo and video-sharing app will now “proactively” look for teen accounts it suspects belong to teenagers even if they entered an inaccurate birthdate when they signed up.

If it is determined that a user is misrepresenting their age, the account will automatically become a teen account, which has more restrictions than an adult account. Teen accounts are private by default. Private messages are restricted so teens can only receive them from people they follow or are already connected to. “Sensitive content,” such as videos of people fighting or those promoting cosmetic procedures, will be limited, Meta said. Teens will also get notifications if they are on Instagram for more than 60 minutes and a “sleep mode” will be enabled that turns off notifications and sends auto-replies to direct messages from 10 p.m. until 7 a.m.

Meta says it trains its AI to look for signals, such as the type of content the account interacts, profile information and when the account was created, to determine the owner's age.

The heightened measures arrive as social media companies face increased scrutiny over how their platform affects the mental health and well-being of younger users. A growing number of states are also trying to pass age verification laws, although they have faced court challenges.

Meta and other social media companies support putting the onus on app stores to verify ages amid criticism that they don't do enough to make their products safe for children — or verify that no kids under 13 use them.

Instagram will also send notifications to parents “with information about how they can have conversations with their teens on the importance of providing the correct age online,” the company said.

## Don't like a columnist's opinion? Los Angeles Times offers an AI-generated opposing viewpoint



By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

In a colorful commentary for the Los Angeles Times, Matt K. Lewis argued that callousness is a central feature of the second Trump administration, particularly its policies of deportation and bureaucratic cutbacks. “Once you normalize cruelty,” Lewis concluded in the piece, “the hammer eventually swings for everyone. Even the ones who thought they were swinging it.”

Lewis' word wasn't the last, however. As they have with opinion pieces the past several weeks, Times online readers had the option to click on a button labeled "Insights," which judged the column politically as "center-left." Then it offers an AI-generated synopsis — a CliffsNotes version of the column — and a similarly-produced opposing viewpoint.

One dissenting argument reads: "Restricting birthright citizenship and refugee admissions is framed as correcting alleged exploitation of immigration loopholes, with proponents arguing these steps protect American workers and resources."

The feature symbolizes changes to opinion coverage ordered over the past six months by Times owner Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, who's said he wants the famously liberal opinion pages to reflect different points of view. Critics accuse him of trying to curry favor with President Donald Trump.

### **Publisher says he doesn't want an "echo chamber"**

Soon-Shiong, a medical innovator who bought the Times in 2018, blocked his newspaper from endorsing Democrat Kamala Harris for president last fall and said he wanted to overhaul its editorial board, which is responsible for researching and writing Times editorials.

"If you just have the one side, it's just going to be an echo chamber," Soon-Shiong told Fox News last fall. He said broadening the outlook is "going to be risky and it's going to be difficult. I'm going to take a lot of heat, which I already am, but I come from the position that it's really important that all voices be heard."

Three of the six people who researched and wrote Times editorials, including editorials editor Mariel Garza, resigned in protest after the Harris non-endorsement. The other three have since left with the last holdout, Carla Hall, exiting after writing a last column that ran March 30 about homeless people she met while covering the issue. Soon-Shiong's decision caused a similar unrest with subscribers as happened when Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos decided the newspaper would not back a presidential candidate.

The Times used to run unsigned editorials — reflecting a newspaper's institutional opinion — six days a week. The paper lists only two editorial board members, Soon-Shiong and executive editor Terry Tang. They're usually too busy to write editorials. Soon-Shiong has said he will appoint new board members, but it's unclear when.

He also said he was seeking more conservative or moderate columnists to appear in the paper. Lewis, a self-described Reagan Republican who just began as a columnist, believes he's part of that effort. Soon-Shiong has also brought up CNN commentator Scott Jennings, a Republican consultant who has already contributed columns for a few years.

Los Angeles Times spokeswoman Hillary Manning was asked recently about editorial policy, but reportedly lost her job in a round of layoffs before she could answer. There has been no reply to other attempts at seeking comment from Times management, including how readers are responding to "Insights."

There were some initial questions about whether a "bias meter" as described by Soon-Shiong would apply to news articles as well as opinion pieces. But the publisher told Times reporter James Rainey in December it would only be included on commentary, as it has remained since "Insights" was introduced to readers on March 3.

### **A gimmick that insults the intelligence of readers?**

In practice, the idea feels like a gimmick, Garza, the former editorials editor, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"I think it could be offensive both to readers ... and the writers themselves who object to being categorized in simple and not necessarily helpful terms," she said. "The idea of having a bias meter just in and of itself is kind of an insult to intelligence and I've always thought that the readers of the opinion page were really smart."

The online feature created problems instantly when it was applied to columnist Gustavo Arellano's piece about the little-noticed 100th anniversary of a Ku Klux Klan rally that drew more than 20,000 people to a park in Anaheim, California.

One of the AI-generated "Insights" said that "local historical accounts occasionally frame the 1920s Klan as a product of 'white Protestant culture' responding to societal changes rather than an explicitly hate-driven movement." Another said that "critics argue that focusing on past Klan influence distracts from Anaheim's identity as a diverse city."

Some at the Times believe an ensuing backlash — Times defends Klan! — was inaccurate and overblown. Still, the perspectives were removed.

Often, "Insights" have the flat, bloodless tone of early AI. After contributor David Helvarg's column about potential cuts to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, the opposing viewpoint noted that Trump supporters "say it aligns with broader efforts to shrink government and eliminate programs deemed nonessential."

A better way to improve opinion offerings is to hire more journalists and put them to work, said Paul Thornton, former letters editor for the Times' opinion section.

Media columnist Margaret Sullivan argued in The Guardian that Soon-Shiong talks about promoting viewpoint diversity but really wants to push the newspaper toward Trump. "His bias meter should — quickly — go the way of hot type, the manual typewriter and the dodo," Sullivan wrote.

Soon-Shiong, in his interview with Rainey, dismissed claims that he was scared of Trump or trying to appease him. People need to respect different opinions, he said. "It's really important for us (to) heal the nation," he said. "We've got to stop being so polarized."

### **A writer amused by the label attached to him**

One writer who doesn't mind "Insights" is Lewis — with one caveat.

"I like it," he said. "I didn't know what to expect but I was pretty pleasantly surprised. It does provide additional context for the reader. It provides counterpoints, but I think they're very fair counterpoints."

Lewis, who once worked for Tucker Carlson's "Daily Caller," was amused to see "Insights" judge his most recent column as "center-left." He figured it was because he was critical of Trump. Instead, Lewis said it points to the relative meaninglessness of such labels.

"I guess I'm a center-left columnist," he said. "At least for a week."

David Bauder writes about the intersection of media and entertainment for the AP. Follow him at <http://x.com/dbauder> and <https://bsky.app/profile/dbauder.bsky.social>

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