

Bezos says Washington Post to 'lean into future'

January 28 2016, by Rob Lever



Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos speaks during the inauguration of the Washington Post Headquarters on January 28, 2016 in Washington, DC

Jeff Bezos, the multibillionaire Amazon founder who bought The Washington Post in 2013, said Thursday the newspaper must look to the future with new technology without losing its "soul" or journalistic traditions.

Bezos, speaking at the dedication of the new Post headquarters in the US capital in what was his first major public appearance as owner, said the future of the respected daily will depend on a strong [technology](#) team as well as its dedication to journalism.

One of the world's richest individuals with a fortune estimated at more than \$50 billion, Bezos is under scrutiny in the media world as he seeks to guide the newspaper through a transition to digital.

"I am a huge fan of leaning into the future," said Bezos, who snapped up the struggling newspaper in 2013 for \$250 million in personal funds and has been investing in both the newsroom and in technology.

"It's a little risky to let nostalgia transition into glamorizing the past," he warned.

At the same time, Bezos said the Post should not lose sight of its great tradition and its historic role in American journalism.

He has previously stated he wanted to make the Post "the new paper of record," in a direct challenge to The New York Times.

"It's important to recognize that you don't want everything to change," he said at a ceremony which included US Secretary of State John Kerry and recently freed Tehran correspondent Jason Rezaian.



The headquarters for The Washington Post newspaper is seen in Washington, DC, on December 24, 2015, after the newspaper recently moved several blocks from their 1972-era headquarters

"Important institutions like the Post have an essence, they have a heart, they have a core, what (executive editor) Marty (Baron) called soul. If you wanted that to change you would be crazy.

"That's part of what makes it so special."

Bezos, who created the online giant Amazon and later the space exploration firm Blue Origin, said the newspaper now has a vastly revamped technology team.

Under Bezos, the Post has ramped up its technology to allow its website to perform better, with improved analytics which gauge how readers are

responding and deliver relevant advertising.

It has also made its articles more widely available through social network news services operated by Facebook and Google, and boosted its own social media efforts.

Post publisher Frederick Ryan said the Post was now "a media and technology company" and that Bezos "has given us runway to experiment with new ways to engage with readers and the resources to expand our newsroom and our engineering team."

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