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Video Lab West

By [Kirsten Ballard](#) April 24, 2017



Photo Credit: Andrew Seng

What does the future of news video look like? Is it people consuming news with tablets strapped to their heads? Is it augmented reality? McClatchy took an important step in investing the future of video storytelling by opening Video Lab West in Sacramento.

This 10,000-square-foot digital video facility and incubator space will explore the bounds of virtual and augmented reality with leading technology partners and test how people will consume video on ever-changing platforms.

"It's about getting people to the heart of the story and how to place them there," says Meghan Sims, director of strategic video initiatives. "We're thinking differently about audience, how to make them more of an active participant instead of just reading words on a page."

Google and YouTube will join in the effort as primary technology collaborators on the initiative. Teams from Video Lab West will work with members of the Google News Lab and YouTube to advance innovation in VR and AR production, test new equipment, launch special projects, and host speakers and trainings in the space.

Sims says this partnership is a truly collaborative effort. "Everyone is experimenting and trying to figure out what this space is," she said. "Digital and reality are starting to merge and we're on the forefront of that."

They are starting to dig into metrics never before explored. For example, what way does someone turn their head when watching a 360 video? The future could mean tracking heart rate and brain waves to see how a viewer reacts and feels when watching a film.

Video Lab West is an expansion of The Video Lab, McClatchy's Washington, D.C. location. It has been a year in the making. The facility, strategically located on the train line connecting the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento, will host several content teams at a time—employees from across the company, temporary video fellows and strategic partners. The company and City of Sacramento have agreed to preliminary business terms to lease space in the historic building.

But why Sacramento? That's the million-dollar question, Sims laughs.

"If you came here, there's this exciting entrepreneurial innovation vibe in the city of Sacramento right now. It made sense to come here. Not only is it back to our roots, it's a great place to be right now," she said.

McClatchy wants to be nimble and proactive in the future of video. "Video is a critical component to what we do. We're seeing great growth in audience revenue. I'd say video is a very central component to any media company," Sims said.

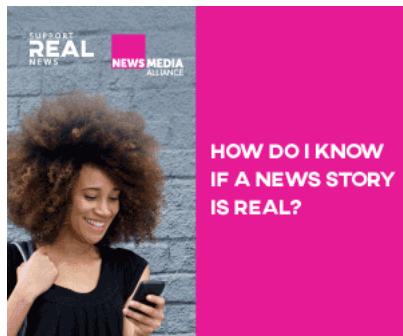
She's excited for the coming months, where she will hire a team and begin to dig into the future of video, not just storytelling but also the methods of distributing video content.

"There is great success when you can take storytellers out of news cycle and focus on how we can tell stories in the future," she said.



Kirsten Ballard

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4401 N. Fairfax Dr.
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