Supporting Information

Living polymerization of arylisocyanide initiated by phenylethynyl palladium(II) complex

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Instruments.

The ¹H, ¹³C and ³¹P NMR spectra were recorded using a Bruker 400 and 600 MHz {H} spectrometer. Size exclusion chromatography (SEC) was performed on Waters 1515 pump and 2414 differential refractive index (RI) detector (set at 40 °C) using a series of linear Styragel HR1, HR2 and HR4 columns. Molecular weight and polydispersity data are reported relative to polystyrene standards. The eluent was tetrahydrofuran (THF) at a flow rate of 0.3 mL/min. FT-IR spectra were recorded on Perkin-Elmer Spectrum BX FT-IR system using KBr pellets. UV-vis spectra were performed on a UNIC 4802 UV/VIS double beam spectrophotometer in 1.0 cm length quartz cell. Melting points were obtained with a Mel-Temp apparatus and are uncorrected. X-ray diffraction data of single crystals were collected on a Siemens Smart 1000 CCD diffractometer. The determination of unit cell parameters and data collections were performed with Mo-Ka radiation (l = 0.71073 Å). Unit cell dimensions were obtained with leastsquares refinements and all structures were solved by direct methods using SHELXS-97. The other nonhydrogen atoms were located in successive difference Fourier syntheses. The final refinement was performed using full-matrix least-squares methods with anisotropic thermal parameters for nonhydrogen atoms on F2. The hydrogen atoms were added theoretically and riding on the concerned atoms.

Materials

All solvents were purified by the standard procedures before use. THF was further dried over sodium

benzophenone ketyl, distilled onto LiAlH₄ under nitrogen, and distilled under high vacuum just before use. 4-Ethynyltoluene, 4-ethynylanisole, 1-ethynylbenzene, 4-(methoxycarbonyl)phenylacetylene, ethynyltrimethylsilane, *trans*-dichlorobis(triethylphosphine)palladium(II) and copper(I) chloride were purchased from Aladdin and Sigma-Aldrich, and were used as received without further purification. Isocyanide monomer **2a**, **2b**, **2c**, **2d**, **2e**, and **2f** were prepared according to the literatures and the structures were confirmed by ¹H NMR.¹

Synthetic procedure for 1a-d



Synthesis of 1a. This Pd complex was prepared according to the reported procedure.² 4-Ethynyltoluene (50.0 mg, 0.43 mmol) was treated with *trans*-dichlorobis(triethylphosphine)palladium (178.0 mg, 0.43 mmol) in the presence of copper(I) chloride (2.5 mg, 0.025 mmol) as catalyst in 30 mL of diethylamine and dichloromethane (v/v = 1/1). The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h. After the solvent was removed by evaporation under reduced pressure, the residue was purified by chromatography with petrol ether-ethyl acetate (10/1, v/v) as eluent. The crude product was recrystallized from petrol ether and methanol to afford **1a** as a white solid (127 mg, 60% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 7.16 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, aromatic), 7.03 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, aromatic), 2.31 (s, 3H, CH₃–Ph), 2.00–1.95 (m, 12H, PCH₂CH₃), 1.24–1.16 (m, 18H, PCH₂CH₃). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 135.45, 130.58, 128.86, 124.89, 106.42, 93.59, 21.35, 15.46, 8.40. ³¹P NMR (121.5 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 17.85. FT-IR (KBr, cm⁻¹): 2959 (*v*_{C-H}, aromatic), 2932 (*v*_{C-H}, aromatic), 2872 (*v*_{C-H}, aromatic), 2112 (*v*_{C=C}), 1746 (*v*_{C=C}, aromatic), 1693 (*v*_{C=C}, aromatic). Compounds 1b, $^{3} 1c$, 4 and 1d were synthesized according to the similar procedure from the reaction of 4-ethynylanisole, 1-ethynylbenzene, and 4-(methoxycarbonyl)phenylacetylene with *trans*-dichlorobis(triethylphosphine)palladium in dichloromethane and diethylamine, respectively.

H₃CO
$$\rightarrow$$
 PEt_3
H₃CO \rightarrow $Pd-Cl Pd-Cl Pd-C$

1b: ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): *δ*7.19 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, aromatic), 6.78 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, aromatic), 3.78 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 2.02–1.94 (m, 12H, P*CH*₂CH₃), 1.25–1.17 (m, 18H, PCH₂CH₃). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): *δ*157.81, 131.93, 120.46, 113.79, 105.97, 92.21, 55.38, 15.52, 8.45. ³¹P NMR (121.5 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): *δ*17.80. FT-IR (KBr, cm⁻¹): 3060 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2932 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2873 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2112 ($v_{C=C}$), 1600 ($v_{C=C}$, aromatic), 1570 ($v_{C=C}$, aromatic).

1c: ¹H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): *δ*7.27–7.25 (m, 2H, aromatic), 7.24–7.21 (m, 2H, aromatic), 7.16–7.14 (m, 1H, aromatic), 2.00–1.95 (m, 12H, PCH₂CH₃), 1.23–1.18 (m, 18H, PCH₂CH₃). ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): *δ* 130.79, 128.18, 127.95, 125.73, 106.63, 95.16, 15.54, 8.47. ³¹P NMR (121.5 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): *δ* 17.95. FT-IR (KBr, cm⁻¹): 2959 (*v*_{C-H}, aromatic), 2933 (*v*_{C-H}, aromatic), 2873 (*v*_{C-H}, aromatic), 2113 (*v*_{C=C}), 1750 (*v*_{C=C}, aromatic), 1650 (*v*_{C=C}, aromatic).



1d: M.P.: 49.6–50.3 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 7.90 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H, aromatic),
7.28 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H, aromatic), 3.89 (s, 3H, COOCH₃), 1.99–1.96 (m, 12H, PCH₂CH₃), 1.25–1.17 (m,

18H, PCH₂*CH*₃). ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 166.97, 132.60, 130.49, 129.45, 126.83, 106.66, 101.73, 52.07, 15.40, 8.38. ³¹P NMR (121.5 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 18.30. FT-IR (KBr, cm⁻¹): 2970 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2930 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2870 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2110 ($v_{C=C}$), 1720 ($v_{C=O}$). HRMS *m/z* calcd for C₂₂H₃₇ClO₂P₂Pd [M]⁺: 536.0992; Found: C₂₂H₃₇ClO₂P₂Pd, 536.0990. Anal. Calcd (%) for C₂₂H₃₇ClO₂P₂Pd (536.10): C, 49.17; H, 6.94; Found: C, 49.00; H, 7.19.

Typical Polymerization Procedure of 1a–d with 2a (poly-a2a₁₀₀): A 10 mL oven-dried flask was charged with monomer **2a** (50.0 mg, 0.17 mmol), THF (0.87 mL) and a stir bar. To this stirring solution was added a solution of **1a** in THF (0.017 M, 0.10 mL) *via* a microsyringe at ambient temperature. The concentrations of monomer **2a** and initiator **1a** were 0.20 and 0.002 M, respectively ([**2a**]₀/[**1a**]₀ = 100). The reaction flask was then immersed into an oil bath at 55 °C and stirred for 10 h. After cooled to room temperature, the polymerization solution was precipitated into a large amount of methanol, collected by centrifugation, and dried in vacuum at room temperature overnight to give poly-**a2a**₁₀₀ (45.0 mg, 91% yield). SEC: $M_n = 3.1 \times 10^4$, $M_w/M_n = 1.10$. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 7.48–7.24 (br, aromatic), 4.58–3.42 (br, OCH₂), 1.75–0.73 (br, CH₂ and CH₃). ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ 165.11, 162.70, 150.50, 129.79, 127.38, 117.19, 65.03, 32.03, 29.74, 29.58, 29.46, 28.76, 26.13, 22.78, 14.19. FT-IR (KBr, cm⁻¹): 2952 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2919 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2852 (v_{C-H} , aromatic), 2190 ($v_{C=C}$), 1720 ($v_{C=0}$), 1599 ($v_{C=N}$).

Typical Procedure Used to Grow Poly(phenyl isocyanide)s of Various Molecular Weights from Palladium Complex 1a–d. Various amounts of palladium complex 1a in THF ($[1a]_0 = 0.002$ M) were added *via* a microsyringe to a series solutions of isocyanide monomer 2a (50.0 mg, 0.17mmol) in THF. The concentration of 2a was 0.20 M. The initial feed ratios of 2a to 1a were 25, 40, 55, 70, 85, and 100, respectively. Each of the reaction mixtures were then stirred for 10 h at 55 °C and quenched by the addition of a large amount of methanol, collected by centrifugation, washed with methanol, and dried under vacuum to afford the expected polymers. The M_n and M_w/M_n of these polymers were characterized by SEC (Fig. 1a in maintext).

Typical Kinetic Study of the Polymerization of 2a with 1a-d. A mixture of **2a** (100.0 mg, 0.35 mmol) and a standard polystyrene (M_n = 2630, 50.0 mg for **1a**, and **1c**, 40.0 mg for **1b**, and **1d**) were placed in a dry ampule, and dry THF (1.36 mL) was added by a syringe. To this was added a solution of **1a** in THF (15 μ M, 0.39 mL) *via* a microsyringe at ambient temperature. The concentrations of **1a** and **2a** were 0.0033 and 0.2 M, respectively. The mixture was then heated to 55 °C ([**2a**]₀ = 0.2 M, [**2a**]₀/[**1a**]₀ = 60). The conversion of **2a** was followed by measuring the SEC of the reaction mixture at appropriate time intervals. The peak area of the unreacted **2a** relative to that of the internal standard (PSt) was used for the determination of the conversion of **2a** on the basis of the linear calibration curve. The M_n and M_w/M_n were estimated by SEC and reported as equivalent to standard polystyrene.

References

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Run	Monomer	$[2]_0 / [\mathbf{1b}]_0 {}^b$	Solvent	Т	Polymer	$M_{\rm n}{}^c$	$M_{\rm w}/M_{\rm n}^{c}$	Yield ^d
1	2b	50	THF	55 °C	poly- b2b 50	Oligomers		
2	2c	25	Toluene	90 °C	poly -b2c ₂₅	5.6×10 ³	1.22	90%
3	2c	30	Toluene	90 °C	poly -b2c ₃₀	6.8×10 ³	1.22	91%
4	2c	60	Toluene	90 °C	poly -b2c ₆₀	1.4×10^{4}	1.27	87%
5	2d	50	THF	55 °C	poly- b2d ₅₀	1.7×10^{4}	1.18	97%
6	2d	100	THF	55 °C	poly- $b2d_{100}$	3.4×10^{4}	1.22	95%
7	2e	50	THF	55 °C	poly- b2e 50	1.3×10^{4}	1.16	97%
8	2e	100	THF	55 °C	poly- b2e ₁₀₀	2.7×10^{4}	1.15	93%

Table S1. Polymerization Results of 2b–e with 1b as Initiator $([2]_0 = 0.2 \text{ M})^a$

^{*a*}The polymers were synthesized according to Scheme 1 in main text. ^{*b*}The initial feed ratio of monomer to initiator. ^{*c*}The M_n and M_w/M_n were determined by SEC and reported as equivalent to standard polystyrene. ^{*d*}Isolated yield.



Fig. S1 Single crystal structure of Pd(II) complex 1c. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg): C1–C2, 1.210(5); C1–Pd, 1.947(4); C11–Pd, 2.3512(8); P1–Pd,

2.3136(10); P2–Pd, 2.3055(10); C1–Pd–P2, 90.58(12); C1–Pd–P2, 90.48(12); P2–Pd–P1, 176.92(5); C1–Pd–Cl1, 177.71(17); P2–Pd–Cl1, 89.10(4); P1–Pd–Cl1, 89.95(4).



Fig. S2 FT-IR spectrum of poly-a2a₁₀₀ measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S3 ¹H NMR spectrum of poly- $a2a_{100}$ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (400 MHz).



Fig. S4 ¹³C NMR spectrum of poly- $a2a_{100}$ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (150 MHz).



Fig. S5 ³¹P NMR spectrum of poly- $a2a_{100}$ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S6 UV-vis spectrum of poly- $a2a_{100}$ measured in CHCl₃ at 25 °C.



Fig. S7 SEC chromatograms of poly- $a2a_{75}(t)$ and poly- $a2a_{100}(t)$ prepared from 2a with 1a as initiator in toluene at 55°C.



Fig. S8 SEC chromatograms of poly- $a2a_{50}(c)$ and poly- $a2a_{80}(c)$ prepared from 2a with 1a as initiator in CHCl₃ at 55 °C.



Fig. S9 SEC chromatograms of poly- $a2a_{50}(d)$ and poly- $a2a_{80}(d)$ prepared from 2a with 1a as initiator in DMF at 55 °C.



Fig. S10 SEC chromatograms of poly- $a2a_{50}(a)$ and poly- $a2a_{80}(h)$ prepared from 2a with 1a as initiator in acetone and hexane at 55 °C.



Fig. S11 SEC chromatograms of poly- $b2a_m$ prepared from 2a with 1b as initiator in THF at 55 °C with different initial feed ratios.



Fig. S12 Plot of M_n and M_w/M_n values of poly-b2a_m as a function of the initial feed ratios of 2a to 1b. M_n and M_w/M_n were determined by SEC with polystyrene standard (SEC conditions: eluent = THF, temperature = 40 °C).



Fig. S13 SEC chromatograms of poly- $c2a_m$ prepared from 2a with 1c as initiator in THF at 55 °C with different initial feed ratios.



Fig. S14 Plot of M_n and M_w/M_n values of poly-c2a_m as a function of the initial feed ratios of 2a to 1c. M_n and M_w/M_n were determined by SEC with polystyrene standard (SEC conditions: eluent = THF, temperature = 40 °C).



Fig. S15 SEC chromatograms of poly- $d2a_m$ prepared from 2a with 1d as initiator in THF at 55 °C with different initial feed ratios.



Fig. S16 Plot of M_n and M_w/M_n values of poly-d2a_m as a function of the initial feed ratios of 2a to 1d. M_n and M_w/M_n were determined by SEC with polystyrene standard (SEC conditions: eluent = THF, temperature = 40 °C).



Fig. S17 Time-dependent SEC chromatograms for 1b-initiated polymerization of 2a in THF at 55 °C with PSt ($M_n = 2630$, $M_w/M_n = 1.06$) as internal standard ($[2a]_0 = 0.2$ M, $[2a]_0/[1b]_0 = 60$).



Fig. S18 Plot of M_n and M_w/M_n values as a function of conversion of 2a with 1b as initiator in THF at 55 °C ([2a]₀ = 0.2 M, [2a]₀/[1b]₀ = 60).



Fig. S19 Time-dependent SEC chromatograms for 1c-initiated polymerization of 2a in THF at 55 °C with PSt ($M_n = 2630$, $M_w/M_n = 1.06$) as internal standard ($[2a]_0 = 0.2$ M, $[2a]_0/[1c]_0 = 60$).



Fig. S20 Plot of M_n and M_w/M_n values as a function of conversion of 2a with 1c as initiator in THF at 55 °C ([2a]₀ = 0.2 M, [2a]₀/[1c]₀ = 60).



Fig. S21 Time-dependent SEC chromatograms for 1d-initiated polymerization of 2a in THF at 55 °C with PSt ($M_n = 2630$, $M_w/M_n = 1.06$) as internal standard ([2a]₀ = 0.2 M, [2a]₀/[1d]₀ = 60).



Fig. S22 Plot of M_n and M_w/M_n values as a function of conversion of 2a with 1d as initiator in THF at 55 °C ([2a]₀ = 0.2 M, [2a]₀/[1d]₀ = 60).



Fig. S23 SEC chromatograms of poly- $b2c_{25}$, poly- $b2c_{30}$, and poly- $b2c_{60}$ prepared from 2c with 1b as initiator in toluene at 90 °C.



Fig. S24 SEC chromatograms of poly- $b2d_{50}$ and poly- $b2d_{100}$ prepared from 2d with 1b as initiator in THF at 55 °C.



Fig. S25 SEC chromatograms of poly- $b2e_{50}$ and poly- $b2e_{100}$ prepared from 2e with 1b as initiator in THF at 55 °C.



Fig. S26 CD and UV-vis spectra of poly-b2e₅₀ measured in THF at room temperature.



Fig. S27 ¹H NMR spectrum of 1a measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (400 MHz).



Fig. S28 ¹³C NMR spectrum of 1a measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (100 MHz).



Fig. S29 ³¹P NMR spectrum of 1a measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S30 FT-IR spectrum of 1a measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S31 ¹H NMR spectrum of 1b measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (400 MHz).



Fig. S32 ¹³C NMR spectrum of 1b measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (100 MHz).



Fig. S33 ³¹P NMR spectrum of 1b measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S34 FT-IR spectrum of 1b measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S35 ¹H NMR spectrum of 1c measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (600 MHz).



Fig. S36 ¹³C NMR spectrum of 1c measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (150 MHz).



Fig. S37 ³¹P NMR spectrum of 1c measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S38 FT-IR spectrum of 1c measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S39 ¹H NMR spectrum of 1d measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (400 MHz).



Fig. S40 ¹³C NMR spectrum of 1d measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (150 MHz).



Fig. S41 ³¹P NMR spectrum of 1b measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S42 FT-IR spectrum of 1d measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S43 ¹H NMR spectrum of 2c measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (400 MHz).



Fig. S44 ¹H NMR spectrum of poly-**b2c**₆₀ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 $^{\circ}$ C (600 MHz).



Fig. S45 FT-IR spectrum of poly-b2c₆₀ measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S46 UV-vis spectrum of poly-b2c₆₀ measured in CHCl₃ at 25 °C.



Fig. S47 ³¹P NMR spectrum of poly- $b2c_{60}$ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S48 ¹H NMR spectrum of poly-b2d₅₀ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (600 MHz).



Fig. S49 FT-IR spectrum of poly-b2d₅₀ measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S50 UV-vis spectrum of poly-b2d₅₀ measured in CHCl₃ at 25 °C.



Fig. S51 ³¹P NMR spectrum of poly-**b2d**₅₀ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).



Fig. S52 ¹H NMR spectrum of poly-b2e₅₀ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (600 MHz).



Fig. S53 FT-IR spectrum of poly-b2e₅₀ measured at 25 °C using KBr pellets.



Fig. S54 UV-vis spectrum of poly-b2e₅₀ measured in CHCl₃ at 25 °C.



Fig. S55 ³¹P NMR spectrum of poly-**b2e**₅₀ measured in CDCl₃ at 25 °C (121.5 MHz).