EPIC 2015's wild future

Show your students EPIC 2015 from the Museum of Media History Website. It says "the press as you know it has ceased to exist," then spins out a future based on web giants Google and Amazon. In the video, they combine into "Googlezon" and chase *The New York Times* off the web. Their secret? Personal information collected from everywhere and digital filters provide content and advertising tailored to each individual.

Student assignments:

Flashlight: Have students visit Google News. Is EPIC's prediction of Google News correct? What else did the video get right? Does the 2013 purchase of the Washington Post by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos mean future news will be what people recommend and not what news people decide?

Spotlight: Show the class best-selling author Eli Pariser's TED Talk on "Filter Bubbles." Pariser describes how search engines make information choices for us based on our past consumption. Think about the author's metaphor about digital sunglasses. Lead a class discussion: Should people be able to design their own sunglasses to filter the news? Or are the automated sunglasses better?

Searchlight: *The Guardian* revealed the existence of PRISM, a secret U.S. government program that can mine massive amounts of personal data to use in security investigations. Google, Microsoft and other companies said they only gave data when required and denied direct access to their computers. *The Washington Post* revealed the National Security Administration had exceeded its authority or broken its own privacy rules thousands of times per year. Assign students to research the case and do a timeline of its milestones. Discuss in class: How did students decide what was major?

Extra Credit: Students should try Upworthy and StumbleUpon, two sites designed to help people find noteworthy content, and post comments somewhere on line saying what they liked and didn't like about them. Write a short blog post on this question: Does either build serendipity into news consumption?