

WIRED FOR WAR

THE ROBOTICS REVOLUTION AND
CONFLICT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

P. W. SINGER



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SCIENCE FICTION BECOMES BATTLEFIELD REALITY?

An amazing revolution is taking place on the battlefield, starting to change not just how wars are fought, but also the politics, economics, laws, and ethics that surround war itself. This upheaval is already afoot -- remote-controlled drones take out terrorists in Afghanistan, while the number of unmanned systems on the ground in Iraq has gone from zero to 12,000 over the last five years. But it is only the start. Military officers quietly acknowledge that new prototypes will soon make human fighter pilots obsolete, while the Pentagon researches tiny robots the size of flies to carry out reconnaissance work now handled by elite Special Forces troops.

WIRED FOR WAR takes the reader on a journey to meet all the various players in this strange new world of war: odd-ball roboticists working in latter-day "skunk works" in the midst of suburbia; military pilots flying combat mission from their office cubicles outside Las Vegas; the Iraqi insurgents who are their targets; journalists trying to figure out just how to cover robots at war; and human rights activists wrestling with what is right and wrong in a world where our wars are increasingly being handed over to machines.

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ADVANCED REVIEWS

"P.W. Singer has fashioned a definitive text on the future of war around the subject of robots. In no previous book have I gotten such an intrinsic sense of what the military future will be." Robert Kaplan, author of *Imperial Grunts*

"*Wired for War* is a wild ride. Drawing from sources spanning popular culture and hard science, Singer reveals how the relationship between man and robot is changing the nature of warfare. He details technology that has, until now, been the stuff of science fiction: lethal machines that can walk on water or hover outside windows, machines joined in networks or thinking for themselves. Singer's appreciation for the human minds behind these machines is real, but so is his warning that the implications of this revolution are poorly understood." Howard Gordon, writer and executive producer of *24*, *The X-Files*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

"Singer's book is as important (very) as it is readable (highly), as much a fascinating account of new technology as it is a challenging appraisal of the strategic, political and ethical questions that we must now face. This book needs to be widely read --not just within the defense community but by anyone interested in the most fundamental questions of how our and other societies will look at war itself." Anthony Lake, 18th U.S. National Security Advisor

"Will wars someday be fought by Terminator-like machines? In this provocative and entertaining new book, one of our brightest young strategic thinkers suggests the answer may well be "yes." Singer's sprightly survey of robotics technology takes the reader from battlefields and cutting-edge research labs to the dreams of science fiction writers. In the process, he forces us to grapple with the strategic and ethical implications of the "new new thing" in war." Max Boot, author of *The Savage Wars of Peace* and *War Made New*.

"Lively, penetrating, and wise ... A warmly human (even humorous) account of robotics and other military technologies that focuses where it should: on us." Richard Danzig, 71st Secretary of the Navy

"Weaving together immaculate academic research with a fan boy's lexicon of popular culture, *Wired for War* looks at the people and technologies beta-testing tomorrow's wars today. The result is a book both hilarious and hair-raising that poses profound ethical questions about the creation and use of ever more powerful killing machines." Gideon Yago, writer, *MTV News*

"It's not science fiction, it's not fantasy, it's here now. Read *Wired For War*." Robert Young Pelton, author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places*

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If issues like these sound like science fiction, that's because many of the new technologies were actually inspired by some of the great sci-fi of our time – from Terminator and Star Trek to the works of Asimov and Heinlein. In fact, Singer reveals how the people who develop new technologies consciously draw on such science fiction when pitching them to the Pentagon, and he even introduces the sci-fi authors who quietly consult for the military.

But, whatever its origins, our new machines will profoundly alter warfare, from the frontlines to the home front. When planes can be flown into battle from an office 10,000 miles away (or even fly themselves, like the newest models), the experiences of war and the very profile of a warrior change dramatically. Singer draws from historical precedent and the latest Pentagon research to argue that wars will become easier to start, that the traditional moral and psychological barriers to killing will fall, and that the “warrior ethos” – the code of honor and loyalty which unites soldiers – will erode.

Paradoxically, these new unmanned technologies will also seemingly bring war closer to our doorsteps, including even with videos of battles downloaded for entertainment. But Singer also proves that our enemies will not settle for fighting our high-tech proxies on their own turf. He documents, for instance, how Hezbollah deployed unmanned aircraft in the Lebanese war of 2006, and how America may even fall behind in this revolution, as its adversaries gain knockoffs of our own technology, or even develop better tech of their own invention.

While his predictions are unnerving, there's an irresistible gee-whiz quality to what Singer uncovers and the people he meets along the way. It is packed with cutting edge research and hard to get interviews of everyone from four star Army generals and Middle East leaders to reclusive science fiction authors. Yet it also seamlessly weaves in pop culture and illuminating anecdotes to create a book that is both highly readable and accessible. In laying out where our technologies are taking us to next, WIRED FOR WAR is as fascinating as it is frightening.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

P.W. Singer is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; at 33 years old, he's the youngest person ever to hold that position. He's written for or appeared on a wide variety of media, from “60 Minutes” to the New York Times Op-Ed page. He has a doctorate in Government from Harvard, and, in his personal capacity, serves as the coordinator of the defense policy advisory task force for the Obama campaign. In his previous two books, Singer foretold the rise of private military contractors and the advent of child soldiers – predictions which proved to be all too accurate. For further information, please go to www.pwsinger.com.

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