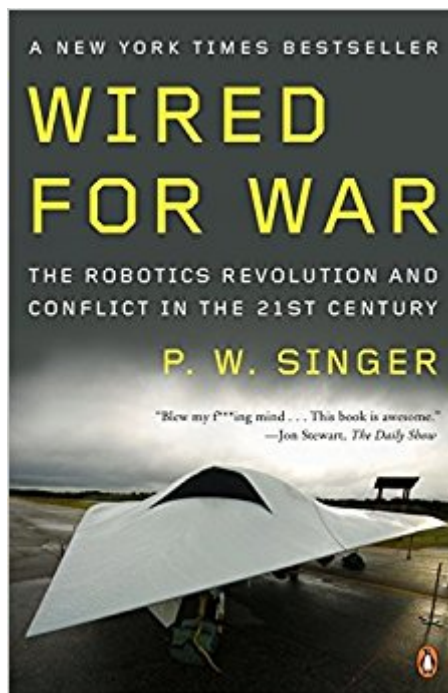




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Wired For War: The Robotics Revolution And Conflict In The 21st Century



Synopsis

P. W. Singer explores the greatest revolution in military affairs since the atom bomb: the dawn of robotic warfare. We are on the cusp of a massive shift in military technology that threatens to make real the stuff of *I, Robot* and *The Terminator*. Blending historical evidence with interviews of an amazing cast of characters, Singer shows how technology is changing not just how wars are fought, but also the politics, economics, laws, and the ethics that surround war itself. Travelling from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan to modern-day "skunk works" in the midst of suburbia, *Wired for War* will tantalise a wide readership, from military buffs to policy wonks to gearheads.

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Customer Reviews

Brookings Institute fellow Singer (*Children at War*) believes that we resist trying to research and understand change in the making of war. Robotics promises to be the most comprehensive instrument of change in war since the introduction of gunpowder. Beginning with a brief and useful survey of robotics, Singer discusses its military applications during WWII, the arming and autonomy of robots at the turn of the century, and the broad influence of robotics on near-future battlefields. How, for example, can rules of engagement for unmanned autonomous machines be created and enforced? Can an artificial intelligence commit a war crime? Arguably more significant is Singer's provocative case that war itself will be redefined as technology creates increasing physical and emotional distance from combat. As robotics diminishes war's risks the technology diminishes as well the higher purposes traditionally used to justify it. Might that reduce humanity's propensity for

war making? Or will robotics make war less humane by making it less human? Singer has more questions than answersâ "but it is difficult to challenge his concluding admonition to question and study the technologies of military roboticsâ "while the chance remains. (Jan. 26) Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

aP.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.a a Robert Kaplan, author of "Imperial Grunts" a"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. Singeras appreciation for the human minds behind these machines is real, but so is his warning that the implications of this revolution are poorly understood.a a Howard Gordon, writer and executive producer of "24, The X-Files," and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" aSinger'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.a a Anthony Lake, 18th U.S. National Security Advisor aWill 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 ayes.a Singeras sprightly survey of robotics technology takes the reader from battlefields and cutting-edge research labs to the dreams of science fictionwriters. In the process, he forces us to grapple with the strategic and ethical implications of the anew new thinga in war.a a Max Boot, author of "The Savage Wars of Peace" and "War Made New," aLively, penetrating, and wise ... A warmly human (even humorous) account of robotics and other military technologies that focuses where it should: on us.a Richard Danzig, 71st Secretary of the Navy aWeaving 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.a aGideon Yago, writer, "MTV News" altas not science fiction, itas not fantasy, itas here now. Read "Wired For War,"a Robert Young Pelton, author of "The Worldas Most Dangerous

Places" aP. 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 like. aa Robert D. Kaplan, author of "Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground"

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aWill 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 ayes. a Singeras 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 anew new thinga in war. aaMax Boot, Senior Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations; author of "The Savage Wars of Peace" and "War Made New"

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come the new technologies that will shape wars of the future. His new book addresses some ominous and little-discussed questions about the military, technology, and machinery." a "Harperas" .. "A vivid picture of the current controversies and dazzling possibilities of war in the digital age." a "Kirkus Reviews" a Genuinely Provocative a "Book Forum" "a]Full of vignettes on the use of robotics, first-person interviews with end- users, what has occurred in the robotics industry in its support of the nation, and what is "coming soon." Some of the new ideas are just downright mind-blowing..." a The Armchair General "An admitted war geek, P.W. Singer obsesses a over the course of 400-plus pages a about the growing role of robots in combat. His tone is oddly jovial considering the unsettling subject matter, but you won't find a more comprehensive look at mechanized death outside science fiction." a "Details Magazine" "If you want the whole story of remote warfare, pick up a copy of *Wired for War*, in which Peter Singer, a fellow of the non-profit Brookings Institution in Washington DC, exhaustively documents the Pentagon's penchant for robotics. Think of it as the next step in the mechanisation of war: swords and arrows, guns, artillery, rockets, bombers, robots." a "The New Scientist"

The title '*Wired for War*' belies the nature of this book. It reads like a string of lightweight Popular Science articles written for 'Gee-Whiz' effect. The problem is that there is no meat here. None. I learned very little and absolutely nothing about the aspects of robotic warfare which interest me. As the U.S. becomes more dependent upon robotic technology the 500-pound Gorilla question in the room is: How do you keep the enemy from disrupting, jamming, spoofing, sabotaging, and destroying your NETWORK without which all these robots are nothing but very expensive boat anchors. Singer never deals with this subject. Instead he tries to make the case that future war will be us against non-state actors (who do not threaten the network). State actors, such as Russia, China, and Iran are quite capable of destroying our surveillance, GPS and communications satellites in short order. Airborne networks can be jammed, shot down, and have limited range and endurance. EMP weapons need not even involve nukes and can be precisely targeted. Singer never deals with this. I must confess I did not find the book very entertaining and pretty much scanned the thing looking for anything interesting. I never found it. I sure as hell hope this guy is not advising our military.

I have to admit that I didn't really enjoy this book as much as I thought I would. For one is that there is no clear focus, it has so many sub-topics that it feels like the book is going all over the place. Some topics were interesting, but others were not so it ended being a pretty uneven book to read,

alternating from getting a high from reading something nice and then going to a big letdown on the next topic. Next is that some sections feel like they were just taken from Company Brochures or Press Releases with their exaggerated claims and then pasted on the book without processing or analyzing the details. After a while it all just gets a bit tiresome to read. Sorry but I just didn't find this book to be a good read overall, hence I can't recommend it to others out there also.

Singer has spent a lot of time with the manufacturers and operators of military robots and shows that the armed forces have undergone a radical shift of attitude towards robotics over the last 5 years. They have moved from rejection, to wholesale acceptance of devices such as the Predator (an ariel robot using remote control and GPS). It's cheaper than a jet fighter, can stay in the air longer, is more accurate, can operate at lower altitude and doesn't risk a pilot's life. It's now official policy, wherever possible, to switch to robotic fighting machines on land, sea and air. He explores this fast changing situation and considers the issue of robot autonomy (robots collecting information and making their own decisions) concluding that humans are being increasingly "pushed out of the loop" for simple operational reasons. Basically they aren't fast enough and get in the way. He reflects on the Singularity, and the widespread expectation of this event in the robotics community, and at the way that no one seems to care. They are very much focused on building better and more capable machines. Overall a very interesting book.

P.W. Singer has produced a one-of-a-kind book that requires the attention of policy-makers, military officials, intellectuals, and concerned citizens alike. In *Wired for War*, Singer explores the most recent developments in robotic and autonomous warfare, and dissects the implications of these changes. You would be forgiven for mistaking Singer's work for an exciting science fiction novel about the possibilities of warfare in the distant future. Sure, the book includes examination of laser-weapons, microwave-ray guns, and the "singularity" that would result from man's eventual inferiority to his creations. Alas, for better or worse, you'll find the book in the non-fiction section of your library (if those haven't been digitized and relegated to the Stone Age already). The text holds its eminent readability while describing, in detail, the latest advancements in military technology. He takes us through centuries of development, pointing out how each new form changed the rules of warfare. Due to its relatively exhaustive review of warfare equipment technology leaps, the book delivers quite a history lesson throughout. We read about how bows and arrows, cannons, and airplanes have changed war's practitioners' strategies, and are asked to ponder the ethical implications of such developments. We're led to believe that at each of these advancements, man is

more and more separated from the act of war. But only in the most recent developments has man literally passed the dirty work onto other "beings," thus dramatically changing the identity of soldiers and warriors. While Singer does a good job providing the backdrop, the real genius in his book lies in its overview of more recent technology. That technology, developed in response to various global threats, has become increasingly robotic as the decades have passed. The author notes that in 1999, there were nine companies doing homeland security work for the feds. By 2006 there were more than 30,000. And more and more of this work was on autonomous machines that required less and less human engagement. As the United States has become involved in wars in the Middle East, its incentives to use such systems has grown. Sending in "unmanned aerial vehicles" to do surveillance and attacks reduces the risks to American lives. As wars have become more and more visible to constituents, any chance to make war less personal seems to be worth pursuing. Thus we end up in a system where we train more people to fly drones than we train fighter pilots. These drone pilots are able to lead their missions from many thousands of miles away, in places like Nevada, where they are able to return to their families after a day at war. Robots, the author contends, have become such an integral part of our military that they have completely transformed it. The ability of small groups to make use of advancements in communications technology, for instance, has led to the "loss of the state's roughly 400-year-old monopoly over which groups could go to war." All of a sudden, rogue terrorists are able to strike fear into entire nations, and countries begin declaring war on non-entities. Robots enable us to transmit information at the speed of light, and offer us limitless capabilities. But they are not perfect. The author cites the apple and tomato test--it is found that little kids are much better at determining which of two is an apple and which is a tomato, while machines struggle mightily. They lack some fundamental human judgment. I generally rate books by their ability to force me to consider my world anew. This book does that. With all of these new technologies come pressing, sometimes intractable, questions. As we are able to use "directed energy" weapons, whereby we can "neutralize" targets with microwave or other waves, we must consider how the weapons fit into our military complex. A drone doesn't have feelings, doesn't get tired, and cannot make a human judgment. How do you attribute accountability when something goes wrong? The author posits these questions, while leaving the answers open. If a robot mistakenly kills a civilian, who is held responsible? The commanding officer? Which one? The one on site or the one controlling it back stateside? The maker of the machine? The policy makers who choose to use this new and still imperfect technology? These questions have yet to be answered. The author quotes Isaac Asimov: "The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom." *Wired for War* is an excellent read for anyone who

is interested in science, technology, politics, war, or the future of our world. Its exposition of the wide array of new war-related technologies and their applications will leave you fascinated by brainy scientists in Boston, concerned about public servants who have to draw up legislation to deal with newfangled technologies, and deeply worried about possibly abuses of such technologies should they end up in the wrong hands. If you liked *The Terminator* or *Minority Report*, you'll enjoy this book. If you were a *War of the Worlds* reader, this book might echo its sentiments. While the author admits to a long-held interest in and fascination with war, the overall tone is one of extremely cautious awe of man's newfound capacities. Although advances in war products and legal frameworks allow him to make profitable analyses, Singer represents humanity's uneasy acceptance of such new methods into our world. Singer aptly quotes another well-known military-oriented pragmatic pacifist, President Dwight D. Eisenhower: "The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists and the hopes of its children." As we march toward a world of ever-more-complicated armaments, and ever-more powerful and interconnected computers, humanity must realize that such advancements have a trade-off. It's up to wise minds to determine where to draw the line, and how to enforce adherence to totally novel conundrums. Considering so-called Moore's law, which suggests that computers' abilities double every couple years, we need to make these adaptations quickly. It is equally important to maintain one's sensibilities and not adopt an alarmist attitude towards the changing defense landscape, even as we may be frightened by the possible.

Much of this book is about today's military uses of tech. But no matter how good the tech is you must put boots on the ground to have an effective fighting system. Otherwise you are only killing people. War is and always been about submission, total submission, period. Compare WWI and WWII with all the wars we have been involved in up to day. The only winners are the makers and builders of war material. The losers are those people on the giving and receiving end of the newest and greatest killing equipment.

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