

PROFESSIONAL READING LIST

The Defense Acquisition Professional Reading List is intended to enrich the knowledge and understanding of the civilian, military, contractor, and industrial workforce who participate in the entire defense acquisition enterprise. These book reviews/recommendations are designed to complement the education and training that are vital to developing the essential competencies and skills required of the Defense Acquisition Workforce. Each issue of the *Defense Acquisition Research Journal (ARJ)* will contain one or more reviews of suggested books, with more available on the *ARJ* website.

We encourage *ARJ* readers to submit reviews of books they believe should be required reading for the defense acquisition professional. The reviews should be 400 words or fewer, describe the book and its major ideas, and explain its relevance to defense acquisition. Please send your reviews to the Managing Editor, *Defense Acquisition Research Journal*:
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Featured Book

Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-first Century

Author(s):

P.W. Singer

Publisher:

The Penguin Press

Copyright Date:

2009

ISBN:

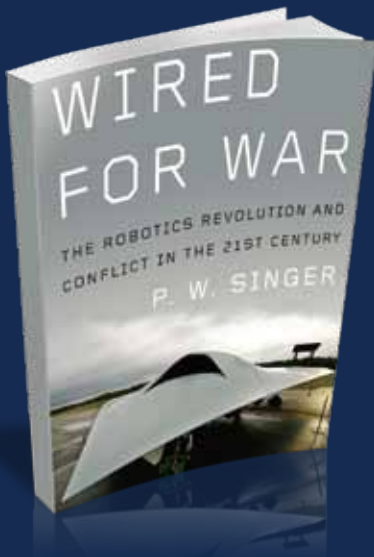
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Hardcover, 438 pages

Reviewed by:

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Review:

In his 2009 book *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-first Century*, P.W. Singer answers a plethora of technological questions generated by the complexities of digital warfare—questions to which answers have become increasingly vital for the acquisition professional as well as the warfighter on the battlefield. Citing films such as “The Matrix” and “A.I.” in comparison, Singer illustrates the very real use of robotics in modern warfare, and to what extent such technologies might be used to meet an existing or perceived threat. Leveraging his knowledge and background as both a robotics enthusiast and a researcher of private military firms, Singer describes how the robotics industry and the government are squaring-off on the battlefield and beyond. From war tactics and lasers, to super-bots and artificial limb construction, Singer takes his readers on a guided tour of the artificial intelligence industry and neatly points out the pros and cons of how society interacts with machines.

Readers familiar with the art and tactics of warfare know that “a dense set of rules defines what is right or wrong in battle. These rules find their origin in everything from the Bible to the Geneva Conventions” (Singer, p. 382). What would happen, however, if these rules were changed and redefined? Singer suggests that while technology has its advantages, uncertainty remains about how to contain such rules and laws of combat should something go awry; and while governments around the globe are aware of possible problems associated with artificial technology, they are still in the beginning stages of defining what these problems might be and how to combat them.

Acquisition professionals will find this book helpful not only because of what it has to offer [in the view of this reader, significant insight into the world of technological warfare], but also because of what it does not. In fact, they may find themselves reconsidering the decisions they make—decisions that once seemed so simple may now harbor new and unseen consequences that could potentially put the warfighters they are trying to support and protect on the battlefield in greater danger. As Singer concludes from his research, a vast amount of grey areas in developing and navigating the complexities of digital warfare are challenging, and will continue to challenge, the defense acquisition professional. Singer presses his readers to keep this in mind when weighing any decisions that have the potential for not only a war with people, but a war with machines.