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JC Harris · 3 days ago

Both talking heads talk about how the 'newness' of the field makes it tough to figure out morality. Which is TOTAL jive. It's very simple, just another variation on the 'waterboarding' idea.

If you can save 1,000 people by waterboarding some guy is it worth it?
If you can save 1,000 people by having an autonomous robot identify and kill 'terrorists'?

It's -exactly- the same ethical deal. You sacrifice an individual's rights for the sake of 'the greater good'.

It's a tension that goes back to Ben Franklin vs. John Adams. Rubbish then. Rubbish now.

ALWAYS be skeptical when people talk about 'oh, the tech is so new... WHO could've predicted it?' LOTS of people, that's who. From fracking to nuclear to CDOs to -whatever-... smart people -always- foresee it. Unfortunately, there is usually so much moolah at stake that they are ignored.

15 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Fake Name ➔ JC Harris · 3 days ago

The line is a lot more difficult.
If I build a warhead that can choose not to detonate if it gets close and decides it was aimed at the wrong target, is that an autonomous weapon?
We have to decide what the problem is. That requires a precise definition.

If the problem is that an autonomous weapon chooses its target, how do we define that choice? Does infrared homing count?

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dave frasier ➔ Fake Name · 2 days ago

They could be like land mines.
Long lived, independent.
Ready to attack, even after years of waiting.
Solar powered. Laser weapons.

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EicKsg4 ➔ Fake Name · 3 days ago

Autonomy is the ability to make up its own mind until its delivery.
An infra red homing device is autonomous if the homing-algorithm is comparing the variables at the antenna in comparison to its target in case of non delivery.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Fake Name ➔ EicKsg4 · 3 days ago

antenna?
comparison to its own?

Is the ability to change course during flight to follow a moving target an "ability to make up its own mind"?

Computers don't have minds. That's just a figure of speech.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

EicKsg4 ➔ Fake Name · 3 days ago

"Is the ability to change course during flight to follow a moving target an "ability to make up its own mind"?
"

Yes, if that ability doesn't restrict its movement to hit a target.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Fake Name → EicKsg4 · 3 days ago

If a system uses sensors to increase its accuracy, change course to make sure it hits its target, or abort and not detonate if it misses or misidentified the target, should it be banned?

I'm trying to think this out myself, not trying to point to a flaw in logic. I'm looking for a distinction.

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Luc S → JC Harris · 3 days ago

Easy to say

Until you become the terrorist in the eyes of the machine

3 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Johnny Vae → Luc S · 3 days ago

The "eye" is already looking, and it tends to find people based on skin color and name. Machines won't be so racist, unless they're programmed to be.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Bob Potter → Johnny Vae · 2 days ago

They will be programmed to be racist, if past history means anything.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

adoctor729 → Bob Potter · 2 days ago

They would most likely operate off of statistics. Of course statistics can certainly be skewed by one collecting the information and the display of it.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Luc S → Johnny Vae · 3 days ago

But people are still making decisions. Machines aren't killing without guidance.

That was the whole point.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

NickBinRl → JC Harris · 3 days ago

"...smart people -always- foresee it. "

Add to that: people not transfixed with the illusion of convenience, pseudo-progress, returns on their investments, etc.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Dave Cuthbert → JC Harris · 5 hours ago

Analogy is the weakest form of argumentation. No more please.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Alex111 → JC Harris · 11 hours ago

So you are saying that torture is ethically on the same level as killing a terrorist autonomously? Wow, that's not even in the same universe. What rights are being legally and ethically violated when a person is killed autonomously versus up close and personal?

The risk in autonomous killing through use of autonomous robots/drones is the killing of innocents, not the risk of spiraling down into some ethical quandary like endorsing torture (like what the CIA did, not to mention they tortured at least one innocent man to death accidentally).

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

EicKsg4 → JC Harris · 3 days ago

The autonomy starts with a thought that 'I don't want to take the pain of cleaning my own mess'. Once the idea grabs the brain, its until the time thinker becomes the mess for the idea and vice versa.

Enough evidence from the history.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Skeptical Dragon → JC Harris · 3 days ago

Most of the rules that govern international warfare is limited in scope. I think there is a difference between just wars/warfare and unjust wars/warfare. I think it is time to codify more of that into articulable international and national laws. There also needs to be better investigation and enforcement of all international law regarding war.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

funbobby51 → JC Harris · 2 days ago

autonomous weapons have been in use for thousands of years in warfare.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

funbobby51 → JC Harris · 2 days ago

History teaches that wars begin when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Abbi Baily · 3 days ago

Allowing autonomous robots to kill will enable the humans responsible to distance themselves emotionally from the results. It will make it too easy for someone to claim, "I didn't program it to do that. It must have malfunctioned." The more distance we put between ourselves and our victims, the easier it is to escape guilt or to rationalize that we aren't really responsible.
From a psychological standpoint, autonomous weapons are a bad idea.

27 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Angry Mute → Abbi Baily · 3 days ago

I was going to post something very similar. Drones have already allowed their operators to emotionally distance themselves from their actions. It's a bad trend. As much as I sympathize with soldiers suffering PTSD I think it would be worse if people had no emotional reaction to killing.

6 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Brian B → Angry Mute · 3 days ago

In 2011, Air Force psychologists completed a mental-health survey of 600 combat drone operators. Forty-two percent of drone crews reported moderate to high stress, and 20 percent reported emotional exhaustion or burnout. The study's authors attributed their dire results, in part, to "existential conflict." A later study found that drone operators suffered from the same levels of depression, anxiety, PTSD, alcohol abuse, and suicidal ideation as traditional combat aircrews.

Great article over at GQ.

9 ∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Austin Ouellette → Brian B • 2 days ago

I was in the Army for 8 years and although I don't have PTSD I do know a few who do.

The problem isn't so much that soldiers are affected by dropping bombs on people.

The real problem comes when soldiers STOP being affected by dropping bombs on people.

If humans just quit going to war we wouldn't have to worry about either issue.

1 ∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Randall Poopenmeyer → Austin Ouellette • a day ago

Ah, that makes sense. Like they are content with their warzone, but they can't get out of that mindset when they come home?

∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Alex111 → Randall Poopenmeyer • 11 hours ago

Its a mistaken assumption that PTSD is a result of killing. Many, if not the majority of soldiers that suffer from PTSD have never been in a firefight or have seen a shot fired. PTSD is just as common for non-combat arms soldiers as it is for combat arms soldiers. War is stressful for all participants, even those not directly in combat or routinely exposed to danger. PTSD is often a reaction to those long term high levels of stress, in addition to being sometimes a reaction to shorter term traumatic incidents.

∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

ben balz → Angry Mute • 3 days ago

There's exactly the same "human dignity" being killed by an unfeeling autonomous robot as there is being killed in an erroneous war -- zero. Meaningless death can't be rationalized by efficient uses of technology nor by jingoism, propganda or flag-waving.

2 ∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Carson Curtis → ben balz • 2 days ago

Yeah, that professor from Harvard Law School is spouting pseudo-intellectual rubbish. If you haven't seen

the carnage of war firsthand, then you can take my word for it- there's no dignity there. The civilian killed by collateral damage, the soldier killed by a bullet or a bomb, the kid maimed and disfigured, orphaned by an airstrike. I'm sure they really felt dignified because there were no robots around.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Pops Parker → Angry Mute · 3 days ago

If anything can go wrong in war it usually will; this seems a certainty.
That any deal made with the devil for new military hardware for preserving our freedoms,
one day will fall in the hands of an Iran or North Korea, then we must invent yet more sinister stuff.
The atomic bomb was made to win wars by killing men, women and children, but only the mad think to use it.

2 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Ches Bay → Pops Parker · 2 days ago

Except for the first time.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

TAXCPA → Pops Parker · 3 days ago

its a perfectly good weapon type that should be utilized when appropriate

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Dean Hinnen → Angry Mute · 3 days ago

The left throws a temper tantrum every time a US serviceman is killed in action. Drones and robots are the inevitable result of this aversion to casualties. You can't have it both ways. Either we need boots on the ground, or we need to have zero KIAs. One or the other.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Rick P → Dean Hinnen · 3 days ago

Having never been willing to be a pair of your "boots on the ground", I have never been willing to advocate others being those boots on the ground.

How about you, Dean, have you ever been one of those pairs of boots on the ground?

3 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Dean Hinnen → Rick P · 2 days ago

The sacrifices my family has made in military service are too numerous to list here, from World War I to Vietnam. One was wounded and lost the use of his arm, much like Bob Dole. One spent over a year in a Nazi POW camp and was literally at death's door, due to starvation and disease, when the camp was finally liberated. When it was time for me to go, we had just withdrawn from Vietnam and there was no imminent threat on the horizon. My entire family, including the combat veterans therein, argued that as a family we had already made enough sacrifices and urged me to go to college rather than join the military.

Don't even try to use this to claim that I shouldn't expect others to risk their lives. Barack Obama comes from a family of civilians, not combat veterans. The only time he ever wore a uniform was when he was working the drive through window, asking people, "Do you want fries with that?" And Obama has just sent combat troops to Syria.

That is the nature of being a community. Some of us make sacrifices so that others won't have to, and I will always honor those sacrifices. If we do things your way, either we must all spend a few years in the ugliest war on the planet -- including the cheerleading squad, the marching band and the glee club -- or we must all stay home, let the rest of the world face evil without us, and wait for the evil to come to our door.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Rick P → Dean Hinnen · 2 days ago

I didn't ask about your family member's willingness to send people off to to war, I didn't ask about the President's combat experience, I asked about you.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Randall Poopenmeyer → Dean Hinnen · a day ago

Lol, Vietnam, your family didn't sacrifice sheet in that little battle.
And again, no one asked about your family. They asked about you.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Randall Poopenmeyer → Dean Hinnen · a day ago

What? That isn't true. We throw a tantrum every time the US blows up an innocent civilian or a hospital. The S isn't a stranger to those mistakes.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

StupidIsAsStupidDoes → Angry Mute • 3 days ago

Agreed. The article includes how autonomous robots "can be designed without emotion — such as anger, fear, frustration — which causes human beings, unfortunately, to err."
Even if possible, I would not "program" human soldiers to be without emotion; so I am against autonomous robot soldiers.
In addition to your comments, emotions are critical to lowering chances for starting a war, and increasing chances for ending one.

1 ∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Wade Wilson → Angry Mute • 3 days ago

Your "beliefs" on this are flat out wrong. As @BrianB states the data shows drone operators suffer from at least the same levels of emotional stress and PTSD as infantry units.

In many ways the mission of a drone operator is more humanizing. They may watch a target for days or weeks, witnessing them do normal things like play with their kids or work in the garden. And then one day the order comes and it's time to take the life you've been watching over.

1 ∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Randall Poopenmeyer → Wade Wilson • a day ago

Nothing about dropping drones on people is humanizing.
I refer you to the hospital we blew up.
Or the scores of innocent people whose loved ones we killed.
Oops.

∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Alex111 → Randall Poopenmeyer • 11 hours ago

I wonder if the Taliban insurgents who decided to take over the city in the middle of the night and who walked in and out of that hospital fully armed have any responsibility for creating that situation?

∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Alex111 → Angry Mute • 11 hours ago

You are both wrong, drone operators actually do experience a tremendous amount of stress induced from killing.

∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share ›

Randall Poopenmeyer → Angry Mute · a day ago

I agree, as horrible as PTSD is, it is a needed disease to keep us in check. If we didn't have that, then who would feel the guilt for their actions? PTSD tells us that what happened, what we saw or did was wrong and should never happen again.

∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

> **Alex111** → Randall Poopenmeyer · 11 hours ago
>
> You don't need PTSD to do that.
>
> ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Informer → Abbi Baily · 2 days ago

We already have that distancing anyway. People who declare wars can easily distance themselves from it emotionally and can claim, we thought we were going in for the right reasons. Not too long ago the court ordered the arrest of some ministers feeding the homeless. The police could distance themselves by saying they were just following orders. The town council did not have to be there when the act was executed. If the technology is ever available, it is inevitable. I personally think we have a more urgent worry about genetics, where we are creating "super", custom built humans who could potentially end up doing some bad things. When bad things can happen, ultimately humans will do them.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Art Aficionado → Abbi Baily · 2 days ago

Keeping robots under *meaningful human control* seems like a reasonable compromise.

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

> **Abbi Baily** → Art Aficionado · 2 days ago
>
> Maybe. But you know people will cheat. Surreptitiously reprogram their opposition's robots, pretend it was a "mistake" to wipe out that hospital, etc.
> I don't know why I'm bothering to protest, these things will be built, and deployed. It seems inevitable.
>
> ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

> > **Randall Poopenmeyer** → Abbi Baily · a day ago
> >
> > Heh, the Americans who "accidentally" bombed the hospital aren't even getting any criminal charges. It is already happening!

1 ∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Abbi Baily → Randall Poopenmeyer · a day ago
Does anyone really think it was an accident?
∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Alex111 → Abbi Baily · 11 hours ago
Absolutely. Speculation that it was not an accident is illogical and not based on a shred of evidence. Doctors Without Borders already admitted that insurgents were moving in and out of the hospital fully armed, and then air crew did not conduct the proper briefing prior to their flight which would of pointed out no-fire zones.

No one in the military or government would want to deal with the international fallout even if they were willing to kill innocents, so the wild speculation that Americans would willing blast a hospital is not only wild, it is completely illogical.

Also, have you ever been to Afghanistan? Almost all of the buildings there outside of Kabul and a couple of main thoroughfares in the main cities look like one or two story mud huts with a little walls around them. This hospital looked exactly like that, and it did not have a giant H or something marked on its roof. It can be very difficult there to identify specific buildings and their functions.
∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

Abbi Baily → Alex111 · 11 hours ago
I am sure no one wanted to deal with the Abu Ghraib fallout either - that didn't stop it from happening.
∧ | ∨ · Reply · Share ›

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