

Drone wars

Business



Robots flying around delivering packages and taking pictures of everything their digital eyes can record, sounds like some sort science fiction right? No, the year is 2015.

Since as early as the mid 1800's drones have been used for military purposes, where unmanned air balloons filled with explosives to attack cities. The unmanned vehicle or drone has had the same benefit which is to take a soldier out of harms way. Fast-forward 160 years and just like the Internet, cell phones, and computers, the drone is now available commercially. These unmanned flying machines are nowhere near as big as those used by the military but they do boast some extraordinary capabilities. The benefits of buying one of these drones are up to the individual.

Whether it is just for the fun of flying it, or taking breathtaking aerial videos drones can be fun for both young and old. The drones can be accessed by anyone with prices starting at a meager \$45 and extending well into the thousands. In addition to the artistic aspects of filming overhead shots 300 feet in the air, drones can perform commercial duties as well. 3-D mapping of areas, search and rescue, and even carrying small payloads to secluded areas are all new commercial possibilities for these drones. Oppositions to drones have come as quickly as their induction into society. Currently in the United States, drone use is prohibited in all national parks, sports stadiums, and national monuments.

These are in effort to stop any plotting of terrorist attacks or stop the public from being watched by an unmanned drone. One story has surfaced on a popular drone website that includes the use of an actual helicopter to push

down a quadcopter drone. Brian Needle's quadcopter was not lost into the rushing rapids of Great Falls National Park due to its stability during flight. The pilot of the drone was then charge a \$70 fine and let. This shows the current conflict between law enforcement and residential drone user. Even the pilot, Brian Needles, thought there was a problem with the situation, " I don't think that using a police helicopter was at all necessary.

" (Smith). Of course like every new technology law enforcement, military, and security agencies have looked into the use of drones. Larger cities such as New York, D. C., and Boston are training and applying law enforcement tactics to the drones.

Surveillance is the main application for the drones, allowing an overhead view of crowds during normal rush hour or special events such as marathons or concerts. This would reduce the number of police officers needed to monitor a group of people and allow them to respond to emergency calls elsewhere. In Mesa County Colorado, one police force has resorted to drones for " crime scene reconstructions in which they take aerial photos that can be transformed into a three dimensional model,"(Ferner). The Mesa police department has taken drone capabilities further by not only using it for surveillance but also for crime scene construction. Intelligence agencies like the FBI and CIA are using drones for similar purposes.

However, some security experts have stated that these agencies would utilize the drones equipped with cellular and radio blocking equipment to turn a specific radius into a dead zone. This dead zone would then be used to stop any cell phone calls or radio signals for security reasons. Though there

are many problems with the current state of drone use in the United States, the main source of them being safety and proper etiquette of flying a drone, it does not downplay the enjoyment of flying them. Drones in the future may be used for a wide variety of commercial uses, such as 3-D mapping and search and rescue. Their mobility and video capabilities have started to make them a problem with privacy in residential areas. Furthermore, drones are being used to combat this evasion of privacy by mounting devices that will make flying a drone impossible.

With all of this adaptation of a new technology where law enforcement and consumers are battling over the legalities of drone use, only one question can be asked. Who will win this drone war?