

# [Drone technology: uses and ethics](https://assignbuster.com/drone-technology-uses-and-ethics/)

In the last several years, humanityhas seen great advancements in technology. From the creation of smartphones toall-electric cars, technology is advancing at a faster pace with each passingday. One such technological advancement, in this time period, is in the area ofunmanned aerial vehicles(UAV), commonly referred to as drones. When UAVs werefirst introduced, the public did not know how to respond to the new technology. Some individuals were strongly in favor of them while others were strongly againstany use of this new drone technology. For these reasons, drone technology isnow one of, if not the most, controversial inventions to come out of theso-called rapid technological boom. The fact of the matter is that now thatdrone technology has been introduced into society, any attempts to get rid ofthem completely will be useless. Therefore, the controversy should not bedirected towards drones in general, but rather the regulation, monitoring andpolitics behind this new technology. The truth of the matter is that dronetechnology, primarily in warfare, should be developed due to the fact that theyare cost-effective, and offer protection with very limited risk to the lives ofAmerican soldiers.

So, what exactly is a drone? Thedictionary definition of a drone is “ a pilotless radio-controlled aircraft”(Dictionary. com). In most cases, drones are controlled by a human that isremotely stationed, while in other rarer situations, drones are completelyautonomous, meaning they are pre-programmed to perform any desired task. Drones, primarily come in two forms; military and commercial use drones. Nonetheless, both drone types have and continue to raise a lot of controversialdebates. For example, since 1995 and 2004, drone technology has beenincorporated into the military and since then an estimated “ 4, 700 deaths haveoccurred as a result of drone attacks, primarily in countries such as Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan” (Drones- ProCon. org). From this population ofdrone-related deaths roughly “ 970 were casualties” (The Washington Post). Ithas been calculated that the civilian death rate of drone-related deaths hasthe potential of being smaller than manned machines since drones allow for moreaccuracy during airstrikes. In terms of commercial use drone technology, theyare currently, primarily, used for filming, but there have been reports ofdrone-related criminal activities as well. Such cases involve spying via dronesand even theft of drones. The truth is that there are innumerable aspects toconsider when debating drone technology; this is further complicated by thefact that the technology is advancing rapidly and regulations are unable tokeep up. Despite this fact, the interest in drone technology is now global. Themost advanced countries with this technology include The United States ofAmerica, China, and Russia. China-based companies such as DJI are the largestproducers of commercial use drone technology, while Russia and the UnitedStates are both competing to create drones for military use. In America, theuse of drones in warfare is so controversial that a confirmation from thePresident is required before any and all air strikes. This power, in the wronghands, can, very easily, be abused (The Bureau of Investigative Journalism). With recent data collection from wars overseas, the range of drone-relateddeaths has increased and now is up to an estimated 9, 200 (The Bureau ofInvestigative Journalism). With no doubt, this number is sure to increase asdrones will soon become a necessity in warfare and thus America must push forthe development and deregulation so as to stay ahead of those who wish to causeharm and chaos.

Drone technologyshould be developed as well as deregulated since the benefits far outway the costs. To this day, drones continue to be cost effective as well as efficient in decimating terrorist networks across the world. Last but not least, drones should be developed since America can not risk falling behind other countries in terms of unmanned aerial vehicles. Whether or not society is in favor of drone technology, the simple fact is that they are here to stay. Currently, more than “ 87 countries own some type of surveillance or attack drone, changing the way nations conduct war.” Drone technology is the “ second arms race and America cannot risk falling behind” (Washington spectator). In addition, the cost of drone technology is far less than that of developing manned machinery. For example, America’s F-35  fighter program cost the United States $9. 7 billion dollars in 2012 alone. On top of this, the estimated cost of using a single manned aircraft ranges from $18, 000- $169, 000 per hour (Drones- ProCon. org). Meanwhile, in comparison, unmanned machinery does not have to account for the safety of a human since they can be controlled remotely. The currently available data indicates that “ America’s entire drone program constitutes only about 1% of the entire annual military budget”. Last but not least, drone technology hasdecimated terroristnetworks in enemy territory. The drone airstrike on November of 2013 which killed Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud illustrates this last point best (Washington spectator). The fact that drone strikes have and continue to disrupt malicious plots targeted towards Americans and American allies cannot be ignored and as a matter of fact, it provides more reasoning to continue drone development. Yet, despite all the good that drone development has brought, there are still some that are very anti-drone technology.

For those in opposition to dronetechnology, three main arguments are used to support their claims. They firstargue that the use of drones to attack enemy territory is a violation ofinternational law. To support this claim, anti-drone supporters quote theInternational Law. Under this law,“ targeted individual must pose an imminentthreat that only lethal force can prevent, simply being suspected of someconnection to a “ militant” organization is not legally sufficient tomake someone a permissible target for killing”(Shaw, International Law). Alongwith this argument, adversaries of drone technology, continue to argue that asAmerica launches more and more drone strikes, an emotional disconnect occurswhich takes away the horrors of war and killing. This fact can be justified inthat all wars come with pain, and throughout history, this pain has, to someextent, led to peace, therefore, what difference does it make as to whetherpeople distance themselves from the pain and horrors of war? Last but notleast, those against drones claim that since drone technology is so new andlacks sufficient government oversight, citizens will not be able to hold theirleaders accountable. As previously mentioned, drone strikes have killed a lotof civilians, approximately 9, 200 from January 2004, yet to whom can we blamefor these deaths(The Bureau of Investigative Journalism)? The short andtruthful answer is that not one single person can be held responsible since theindividual who controls or programs the drone to kill is under the support andprotection of the American Government. If drone technology continues to be usedin the military, there is a great possibility for those in positions of powerto abuse drone technology, kill thousands of “ suspected” people and still bearno responsibility for their actions.

All in all, drone technology, in today’s world, is a widely argued and profusely talked about topic. Yet, is this not the truth in most matters of today? Drones, in particular, can be viewed on a wide spectrum; ranging from being a fun, recreational, leisure activity to being a deadly military weapon. Because drone technology is rapidly embedding the society  With drones being so new and just now becoming apparent in the society we live in,  it can be difficult to determine between right and wrong when deciding laws and regulations to keep people safe. Some argue in favor of drones use, while others despise any ideas put forth regarding them. Yet, in the end, it is all about safety and human life. The question remains so should drone technology be less regulated and used to keep Americans and their allies safe, or should they be regulated so as to keep the pains and horrors associated with war?

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