

Computers and War



Social Implications of Computers

War is All About Technology

- *Castles*
- *Catapults*
- *Boats*
- *Horses*
- *Arrows*
- *Swords*
- *Guns*
- ...



Computers in War (a few examples)

- *1940: Alan Turing et al. decrypt Enigma messages.*
- *1970s-80s: Nuclear attack warning systems*
 - *several false alarms; no World War III because human beings had to authorize retaliatory attacks.*
- *1983: Strategic Defense Initiative (“Star Wars”)*
 - *would allow autonomous computer-controlled satellites to fire anti-missile weapons without human intervention.*
 - *led to formation of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility*
- *1994: GPS*

Autonomous Weapons

- *DARPA is a major sponsor of robotics research.*
- *“Smart bombs”*
- *Drone aircraft*
- *The main importance of autonomous weaponry is **political**, rather than military:*
 - *Traditionally, governments are restrained from waging war because citizens don’t want their children to die abroad.*
 - *Autonomous weapons allow war without soldiers.*

The United States at War

- *Defensive wars:*
 - 1812
 - *World War II (arguably)*
- *Internal war:*
 - *Civil War*
- *Imperialist/Interventionist/Policing wars (you decide):*
 - *Northwest Indian War, Seminole Wars, Mexican-American War, Second Opium War, Paraguay Expedition, Cheyenne War, Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War, Boxer Rebellion, Occupation of Nicaragua, Occupation of Haiti, World War I, Korean War, Bay of Pigs Invasion, Vietnam War, Invasion of Grenada, Bombing of Libya, Invasion of Panama, Gulf War, Bombing of Afghanistan, Kosovo War, Iraq War, ...*