
Welcome to the Drone Age?

October 2015

[Andy Miah](#) , [Anna Frew](#) and [James Woudhuysen](#) introduced a discussion on the ethics of drone flight



Commercial drone use has dramatically expanded in recent years, with an increasingly inventive set of uses. Drones have been deployed in fields as diverse as aerial photography and humanitarian relief whilst retailers in Japan have even started to use them to deliver products (Amazon's much-vaunted Prime Air is still in prototype testing). While much attention has been focused on their military functions and use by law enforcement – Indian police have purchased ones which could be used to pepper spray protestors – yet their increasing affordability and commercial ubiquity poses numerous problems for regulators. Dutch feminist campaigners were able to fly abortion pills into Poland to circumvent its restrictions on reproductive healthcare, whilst there are increasing numbers of injuries created by their use: the singer Enrique Inglesias was one high profile casualty, with a drone nearly severing his fingers on stage. There have already been several near-misses with passenger aircraft.



Some background readings

[Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Unmanned Aerial Systems](#) , Big Brother Watch's briefing note on drones

[Drones: time to reach for the skies](#) , by James Woudhuysen, December 2014

[Islamic State conflict: UK 'would repeat Syria drone strike'](#) , BBC News 08-Sept-2015

Venue and Time

eleventh year, the Battle of Ideas festival comprises 350 speakers at 75 debates and satellite discussions confronting society's big issues and unresolved questions. It affords the opportunity for some clear thinking, rational debate and agenda-setting - above all, it's future-orientated, whilst retaining a healthy regard for the past achievements of humanity.

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