

1+1 ≠ 2: Digital Friction, Uncertainty, and the Limits of Technological Determinism.

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Abstract: Incorporating emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) into military logistics presents notable advancements alongside significant challenges, collectively addressed as “digital friction.” Leaning on the classic military phenomenon, the author will adapt its war-decisive impact to the conditions of 21st-century military medicine, in particular. To address these issues, enablers must develop “sub-digital contingencies,” which entail the improvisational utilisation of readily available technologies in case of specialised system failures. Through examining pertinent case studies, this paper underscores the necessity for military personnel to attain proficiency in advanced digital tools and sub-digital fallback methods. Adopting this dual-path strategy ensures operational resilience and continuity amidst technological disruptions, advocating for a balanced approach that leverages innovation while maintaining preparedness for unforeseen challenges.

Bottom-line-up-front: Western military innovations must avoid falling into the trap of a digitised fallacy, as the nature of organised violence remains fundamentally analogue at its core.

Problem statement: How can the military strike a balance between embracing digital innovation and maintaining adaptability through analogue methods in fields such as military medicine, and what implications does this balance have for military training and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)?

So what?: This issue is deeply intertwined with a generational shift in Western societies, where the current cohort of mid-level military leaders serves as the critical link between the analogue and digital eras of warfare.