

USEFUL FICTION

NAVIGATING THE AI ERA: STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR DSCA



DEFENSE

SEPT. 25, 2025

SECURITY

0900 — 1250

COOPERATION

AGENCY

VIRTUAL



○ WHAT IS “USEFUL FICTION”?

Useful Fiction, or FICINT (“Fictional Intelligence”), combines nonfiction analysis with narrative storytelling to explore complex future trends, technology, and policy issues while reaching broader audiences with greater impact. This approach has been adopted by organizations ranging from SOCOM and NATO to Fortune 500 companies.

○ WHO IS USEFUL FICTION LLC?

Useful Fiction, LLC (useful-fiction.com) works at the intersection of strategic narrative, foresight, and change management, helping organizations to identify and better tell their key “stories.”

Over the years, its events and projects have brought together the work of former leaders of US military services; strategists and tech forecasters for Fortune 500 companies; best-selling writers of projects like *World War Z*, *Ghost Fleet*, and *American War*; the producers of such Hollywood projects as *Game of Thrones*, *Call of Duty*, *The Walking Dead*, and *Homeland*; and artists who have illustrated for *Wired* and *The New York Times Magazine*.

○ OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Strategic Narrative

The goal is not just compelling and creative storytelling, but to drive change

Tell Your Story

Customer goals, experiences, and audiences determine the best narrative

The Rules of the Real

To be “useful,” the narrative must convey both facts and the human dimension



OUR TEAM



AUGUST COLE is Founder & Managing Partner at Useful Fiction and an author exploring the future of conflict through fiction and other forms of FICINT storytelling. With Peter W. Singer, he is the co-author of the best-seller *Ghost Fleet: A Novel of the Next World War* and *Burn In: A Novel of the Real Robotic Revolution*. His talks, short stories, and workshops have taken him from speaking at the Nobel Institute in Oslo to presenting at SXSW Interactive to tackling the “Dirty Name” obstacle at Fort Benning.



PETER W. SINGER is Strategist at New America, a Professor of Practice at Arizona State University, and Founder & Managing Partner at Useful Fiction. A *New York Times* Bestselling author, he has been named by the Smithsonian as one of the nation’s 100 leading innovators and by Defense News as one of the 100 most influential people in defense issues. No author, living or dead, has more books on the professional US military reading lists.



ANGELA MOORMAN is an events and project management professional with over ten years of experience orchestrating impactful programs and initiatives for non-profit and higher education organizations. In addition to her operations work with Useful Fiction, she serves as Project Manager for the Executive Office at New America.

0900–0915	BRIAN WATFORD Assistant Director for Administration and Acting Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer ELISA-RUTH “PHOENIX” NELSON ADM TM, Supervisor Human Resources PETER W. SINGER & AUGUST COLE Best-Selling Authors of <i>Ghost Fleet</i> and <i>Burn-In</i>; Managing Partners at Useful Fiction	Opening Remarks & Workshop Objectives
0915–0930	LISA JOLLAY DSCA, Chief Information Officer	DSCA and its Future Vision of AI
0930–1000	PETER W. SINGER Best-Selling Author of <i>Ghost Fleet</i> and <i>Burn-In</i>; Managing Partner at Useful Fiction	The AI Revolution: The Big Questions and Big Impact
1000–1030	LT. GEN. JOHN N.T. “JACK” SHANAHAN (RET.) Adjunct Senior Fellow, CNAS Technology and National Security Program; Inaugural Director, Joint Artificial Intelligence Center	DoD AI Policy
1030–1045	BREAK	





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1045-1115	KEN LIU Award-Winning Sci-Fi Writer and AI Expert	Training You and Your AI
1115-1145	JENNIFER STRONG Host of <i>"The Future of Everything"</i> and <i>"Shift"</i> Podcasts	Defense Industry Futures
1145-1200	BREAK	
1200-1230	LAUREN BEDULA Managing Director, Beacon Global Strategies; Director on the Business Executives for National Security (BENS) Board of Directors	Defense Industry Futures
1230-1250	AUGUST COLE Best-Selling Author of <i>Ghost Fleet</i> and <i>Burn-In</i> ; Managing Partner at Useful Fiction	The Future of AI and Defense: Operations and Ethics



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FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS



LAUREN BEDULA is a Managing Director at Beacon Global Strategies and leads the firm's National Security Technology Practice, focused on strengthening partnerships between the high-tech sector and national security communities. She currently serves as a Director on the Business Executives for National Security (BENS) Board of Directors, and as Vice Chair of the Women's Foreign Policy Group Board of Directors. She serves as a Senior Fellow at the National Security Institute at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School and serves on the Stimson Center's Alfred Lee Loomis Innovation Council.



KEN LIU is an American author of speculative fiction. A winner of the Nebula, Hugo, and World Fantasy awards, he wrote the *Dandelion Dynasty*, a silkpunk epic fantasy series, as well as short story collections *The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories* and *The Hidden Girl and Other Stories*. His latest book is *All that We See or Seem*, a techno-thriller starring an AI-whispering hacker who saves the world. Prior to becoming a full-time writer, Liu worked as a software engineer, corporate lawyer, and litigation consultant. Liu frequently speaks on a variety of topics, including futurism, machine-augmented creativity, history of technology, bookmaking, and the mathematics of origami.



NAVIGATING THE AI ERA: STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR DSCA



LT. GEN. JOHN N.T. "JACK" SHANAHAN (RET.)

concluded a distinguished 36-year military career in 2020. He served as the inaugural Director of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Artificial Center (JAIC), where he led efforts to integrate AI across the defense enterprise. He commanded at the squadron, group, wing, Agency, and Numbered Air Force levels, and served as the founding Director of the Algorithmic Warfare Cross-Functional Team (Project Maven). Jack serves on numerous committees, boards, and advisory groups, and advises on the use of AI for national security.



JENNIFER STRONG's coverage of AI and emerging tech has been recognized by awards juries more than thirty times. Business Insider called her work something "every AI and machine-learning enthusiast should know" and the BBC praised Strong's "storytelling gift that combines current affairs with an international approach and personal insight." She's the creator of tech programs for *The Wall Street Journal*, *MIT Technology Review*, & the investigative newsroom ProPublica. Her narrative works have been reviewed by *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, and others. Strong's current projects include a radio documentary for NPR stations called *The Race to Superintelligence* and the weekly podcast *SHIFT with Jennifer Strong* that's distributed by public media's PRX. She's produced a business show for NPR and reported on national security topics for the BBC, PRI, and others.

