

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2.10: Circuits

Madam, what good is a baby? -- *Michael Faraday, when asked by Queen Victoria what the electrical devices in his lab were good for*

A few years ago, my wife and I bought a house with Character, Character being a survival mechanism that houses have evolved in order to convince humans to agree to much larger mortgage payments than they'd originally envisioned. Anyway, one of the features that gives our house Character is that it possesses, built into the wall of the family room, a set of three pachinko machines. These are Japanese gambling devices sort of like vertical pinball machines. (The legal papers we got from the sellers hastened to tell us that they were “for amusement purposes only.”) Unfortunately, only one of the three machines was working when we moved in, and it soon died on us. Having become a pachinko addict, I decided to fix it, but that was easier said than done. The inside is a veritable Rube Goldberg mechanism of levers, hooks, springs, and chutes. My hormonal pride, combined with my Ph.D. in physics, made me certain of success, and rendered my eventual utter failure all the more demoralizing.



Contemplating my defeat, I realized how few complex mechanical devices I used from day to day. Apart from our cars and my saxophone, every technological tool in our modern life-support system was electronic rather than mechanical.

[2.10.1: Current and Voltage](#)

[2.10.2: Parallel and Series Circuits](#)

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