The Unbelievable Zombie Comeback of Analog Computing

Computers used to be all analog, but digital technology has taken over. Now analog is back with a vengeance.

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BERKELEY, California. In a zombie crisis, what's the first organ a human attacker is going to go for? Not the brain, but the heart. Without it, the brain dies, and the zombie dies. Zombies are not, in fact, dead but undead, so they can't be killed, but they can be disabled by destroying their hearts. Zombies are also, in fact, not human but machine, and the heart is a computer.

Cut through Hollywood's gore, and it's a fascinating conversation.

Bringing life to analog computers is much more advanced than it sounds. Ever since the dawn of the digital age, analog computers have been dead. But they are now coming back to life.

Engineers imagine the most startling of the things they will build from zombie chips: Brains that think like human brains, hearts that beat like human hearts, and even, perhaps, a kind of immortality.

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Chips that perform in the realm of quantum-like phenomena have been around for years, but they are still very, very, very far from being practical. Meanwhile, a new generation of analog chips is ready for prime time.

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