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Subject: Re: Combining New With Old?

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 31 Oct 2019 16:00:49 GMT

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Gotta love it. Kinda steampunk!

Back in the 1970s, when I was a teenager, I had a mentor named Mike McNatt that I met in church. He was an Electrical Engineer and he got me my first job at an OEM for Data General called Global Data Systems. They made measurement systems that logged and processed data using in-house designed z80 microcomputer based data-collection boards connected to Data General Nova IV minicomputers for data processing. It was really cool stuff at the time.

Anyway - too late to make a long story short - he gave me a present for my 16th birthday: An old vacuum tube with an IC chip glued onto the metal plate cap on top. It was pressed onto a walnut base to make a sort of trophy, with a label on the base that said, "Microprocessor controlled tube." It was a funny joke, and I loved it. An odd marriage of old and new.

But what made that even funnier to me was to set the clock forward about twenty years, to a time when we started seeing tube amplifiers with digital front ends, and DACs with tube outputs. I couldn't help but remember the tongue-in-cheek gift I got from my old mentor, Mike.

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