Los Alamos National Laboratory LA-UR-20-26020

# Embracing Open Firmware in HPC for Faster and More Secure Provisioning





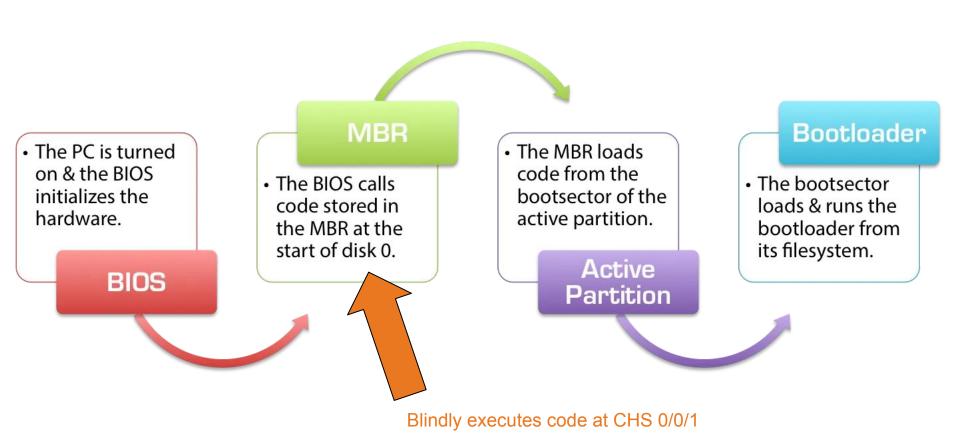


**Devon T. Bautista** 

USRC Showcase 12 August 2020



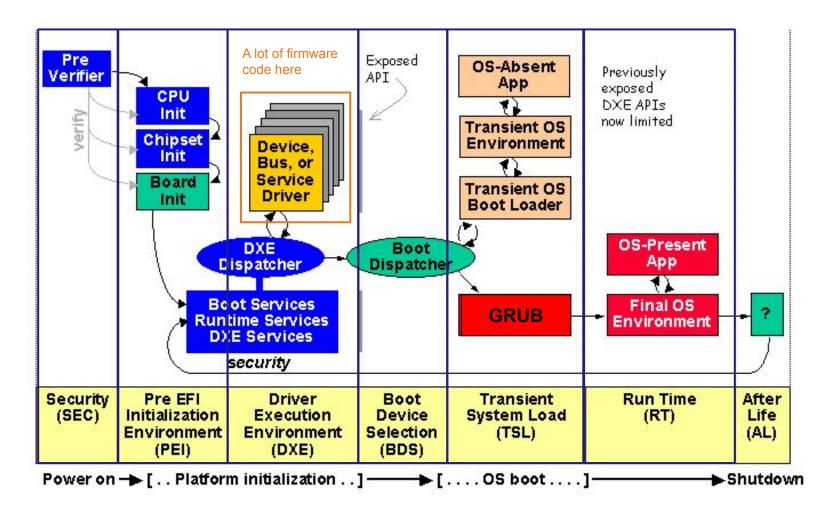
## **BIOS: The Old Way of Booting**



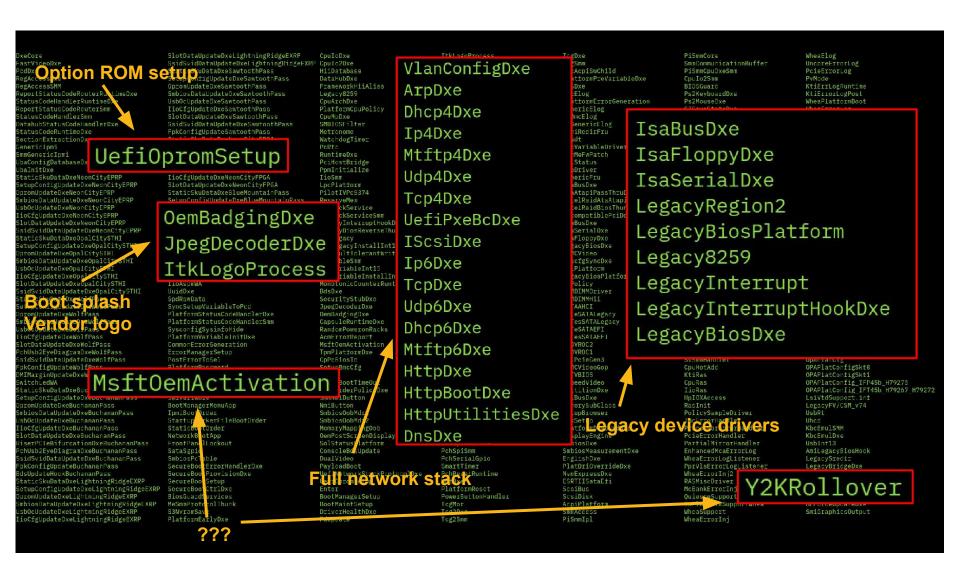
From: https://neosmart.net/wiki/mbr-boot-process/



### **UEFI: The Current Way of Booting**



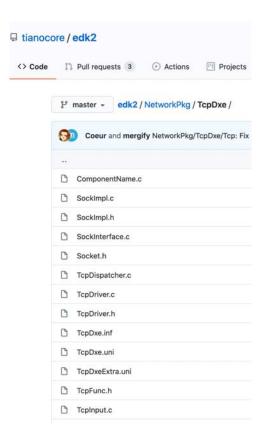






From: https://trmm.net/LinuxBoot 34c3

#### **Network Drivers**





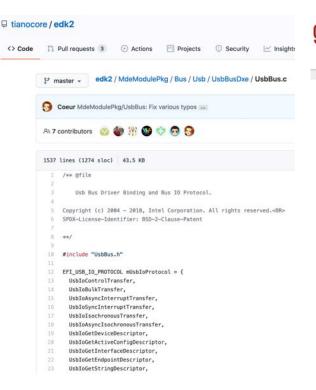
```
/ net / ipv4 / tcp.c
      // SPDX-License-Identifier: GPL-2.0-or-later
                       An implementation of the TCP/II
                       operating system. INET is impl
                       interface as the means of commu
                       Implementation of the Transmiss
       * Authors:
                       Ross Biro
                       Fred N. van Kempen, <waltje@uWa
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18
19
                       Jorge Cwik, <jorge@laser.satlir
       * Fixes:
                       Alan Cox
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                       Herp Rosmanith
42
                       Alan Cox
                                                No lone
```

Intel's EDKII Firmware

GRUB Bootloader

Linux

#### **USB Drivers**



```
cit index : grub.git
  summary refs log tree commit diff
  path: root/grub-core/bus/usb/usb.c
  blob: 8da5e4c7491b55df25c01e420700f7d76b583051 (plain)
         /* usb.c - Generic USB interfaces. *.
          * GRUB -- GRand Unified Bootloader
           * Copyright (C) 2008 Free Software Foundation, Inc.
             GRUB is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify it under the terms of the GNU General Public License as published by
              the Free Software Foundation, either version 3 of the License, or
              (at your option) any later version.
              GRUB is distributed in the hope that it will be useful,
             but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of
MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the
              GNU General Public License for more details.
              You should have received a copy of the GNU General Public License
             along with GRUB. If not, see <a href="http://www.gnu.org/licenses/">http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>.</a>
         #include <grub/dl.h>
         #include <grub/mm.h>
         #include <grub/usb.h>
         #include <grub/misc.h>
         #include <grub/list.h>
#include <grub/term.h>
         GRUB_MOD_LICENSE ("GPLv3+");
         static struct grub_usb_attach_desc *attach_hooks;
         /* Context for grub_usb_controller_iterate. */
         struct grub_usb_controller_iterate_ctx
           grub_usb_controller_iterate_hook_t hook;
void *hook_data;
           grub_usb_controller_dev_t p;
         /* Helper for grub_usb_controller_iterate. */
         grub_usb_controller_iterate_iter (grub_usb_controller_t dev, void *data)
           struct grub_usb_controller_iterate_ctx *ctx = data;
```

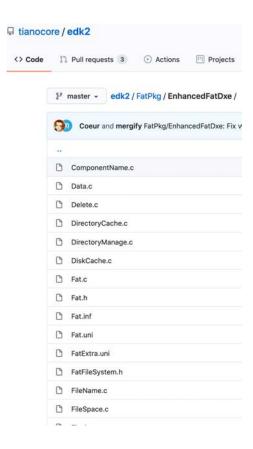
```
/ drivers / usb / core / usb.c
      // SPDX-License-Identifier: GPL-2.0
      * drivers/usb/core/usb.c
       * (C) Copyright Linus Torvalds 1999
      * (C) Copyright Johannes Erdfelt 1999-2001
       * (C) Copyright Andreas Gal 1999
       * (C) Copyright Gregory P. Smith 1999
       * (C) Copyright Deti Fliegl 1999 (new USB architecture)
       * (C) Copyright Randy Dunlap 2000
       * (C) Copyright David Brownell 2000-2004
       * (C) Copyright Yggdrasil Computing, Inc. 2000
             (usb_device_id matching changes by Adam J. Richter)
       * (C) Copyright Greg Kroah-Hartman 2002-2003
      * Released under the GPLv2 only.
18
       * NOTE! This is not actually a driver at all, rather this is
       * just a collection of helper routines that implement the
       * generic USB things that the real drivers can use..
      * Think of this as a "USB library" rather than anything else.
      * It should be considered a slave, with no callbacks. Callbacks
       * are evil.
      #include ux/module.h>
     #include ux/moduleparam.h>
      #include ux/string.h>
      #include ux/bitops.h>
      #include ux/slab.h>
      #include ux/interrupt.h> /* for in_interrupt() */
      #include ux/kmod.h>
     #include ux/init.h>
      #include linux/spinlock.h>
      #include linux/errno.h>
      #include ux/usb.h>
      #include ux/usb/hcd.h>
      #include nux/mutex.h>
      #include ux/workqueue.h>
     #include ux/debugfs.h>
42
     #include ux/usb/of.h>
44 #include <asm/io h>
```

Intel's EDKII Firmware

GRUB Bootloader

Linux

### **Filesystem Drivers**



Intel's EDKII Firmware

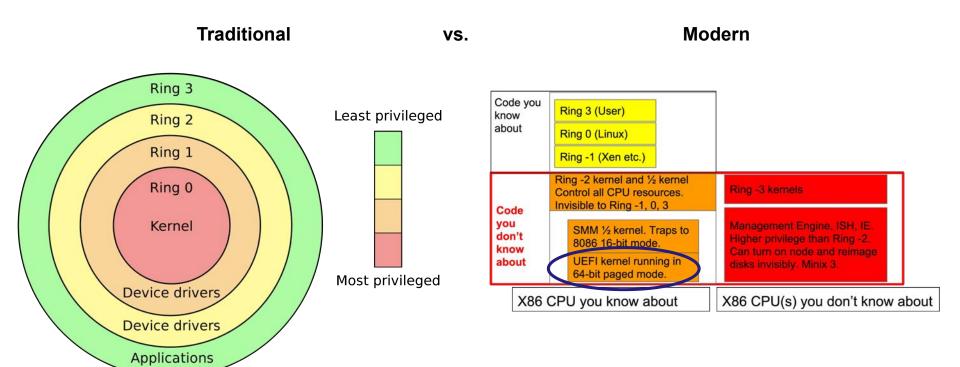
```
index : grub.git
summary refs log tree commit diff
path: root/grub-core/fs/fat.c
blob: 7f775a17038b83d52482389c39a4a2f3f07db263 (plain)
       /* fat.c - FAT filesystem */
           GRUB -- GRand Unified Bootloader
           Copyright (C) 2000,2001,2002,2003,2004,2005,2
           GRUB is free software: you can redistribute i
           it under the terms of the GNU General Public
           the Free Software Foundation, either version
           (at your option) any later version.
   10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
           GRUB is distributed in the hope that it will
           but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the im
           MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR E
           GNU General Public License for more details.
           You should have received a copy of the GNU Ge
           along with GRUB. If not, see <a href="http://www.gnu">http://www.gnu</a>
   20
       #include <grub/fs.h>
       #include <grub/disk.h>
       #include <grub/file.h>
       #include <grub/types.h>
       #include <grub/misc.h>
       #include <grub/mm.h>
       #include <grub/err.h>
       #include <grub/dl.h>
       #include <grub/charset.h>
       #include <grub/datetime.h>
       #ifndef MODE EXFAT
       #include <grub/fat.h>
   33
       #include <grub/exfat.h>
   34
       #endif
   35
       #include <grub/fshelp.h>
   36
       #include <grub/il8n.h>
   37
       GRUB_MOD_LICENSE ("GPLv3+");
   39
       enum
   41
           GRUB FAT ATTR READ ONLY = 0x01,
           GRUB FAT ATTR HIDDEN = 0x02,
```

GRUB Bootloader

```
/ fs / fat / fat.h
     /* SPDX-License-Identifier: GPL-2.0 */
     #ifndef FAT H
     #define FAT H
     #include ux/buffer_head.h>
     #include nux/nls.h>
     #include ux/hash.h>
     #include ux/ratelimit.h>
     #include linux/msdos_fs.h>
10
11
12
      * vfat shortname flags
13
     #define VFAT SFN DISPLAY LOWER 0x0001 /* conver
     #define VFAT SFN DISPLAY WIN95 0x0002 /* emulat
     #define VFAT_SFN_DISPLAY_WINNT
                                     0x0004 /* emulat
      #define VFAT SFN CREATE WIN95
     #define VFAT SFN CREATE WINNT
                                     0x0200 /* emulat
19
20
     #define FAT_ERRORS_CONT
                                            /* ignore
21
     #define FAT ERRORS PANIC
                                            /* panic
22
     #define FAT ERRORS RO
                                            /* remoun
23
24
     #define FAT NFS STALE RW
                                            /* NFS RW
     #define FAT NFS NOSTALE RO
                                            /* NFS RO
26
27
     struct fat_mount_options {
28
             kuid t fs uid;
29
             kgid_t fs_gid;
30
             unsigned short fs fmask;
31
             unsigned short fs dmask;
32
             unsigned short codepage;
                                        /* Codepage f
33
             int time_offset;
                                        /* Offset of
34
                                        /* Charset us
             char *iocharset:
35
             unsigned short shortname; /* flags for
36
             unsigned char name check;
                                        /* r = relaxe
37
             unsigned char errors:
                                        /* On error:
38
             unsigned char nfs;
                                       /* NFS support
39
             unsigned short allow_utime; /* permission
40
             unsigned quiet:1,
                                        /* set = fake
41
                                        /* set = only
                      showexec:1,
42
                      sys_immutable:1, /* set = syst
43
                      dotsOK:1,
                                        /* set = hidd
```

Linux

## **Privilege Rings**



From: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protection-ring">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protection-ring</a> From: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protection-ring">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protection-ring</a>



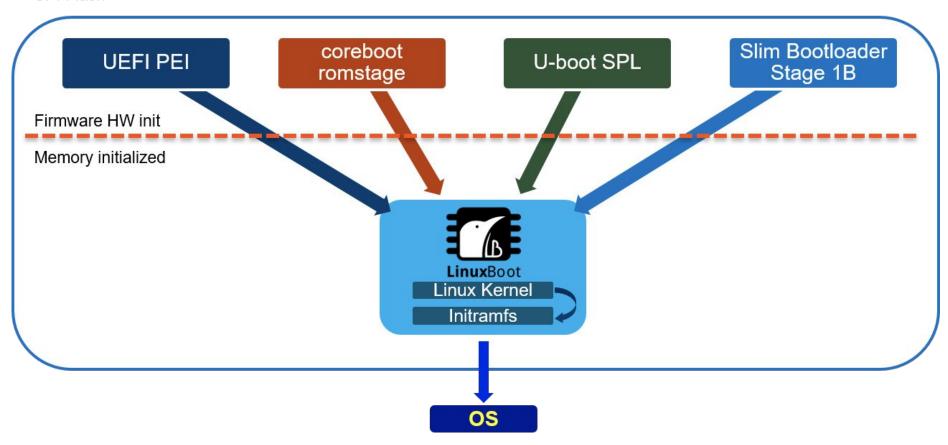
#### **Problems**

- Redundant drivers with different implementations
  - Increases attack surface
  - Too many unneeded or redundant drivers loading slows down boot
- Insufficiently audited code with the most privileged system access
  - Proprietary, closed-source
  - Reviewed by relatively small number of developers within company
- Reliant on vendor for updates and repairs



#### "Let Linux Do It"

SPI Flash





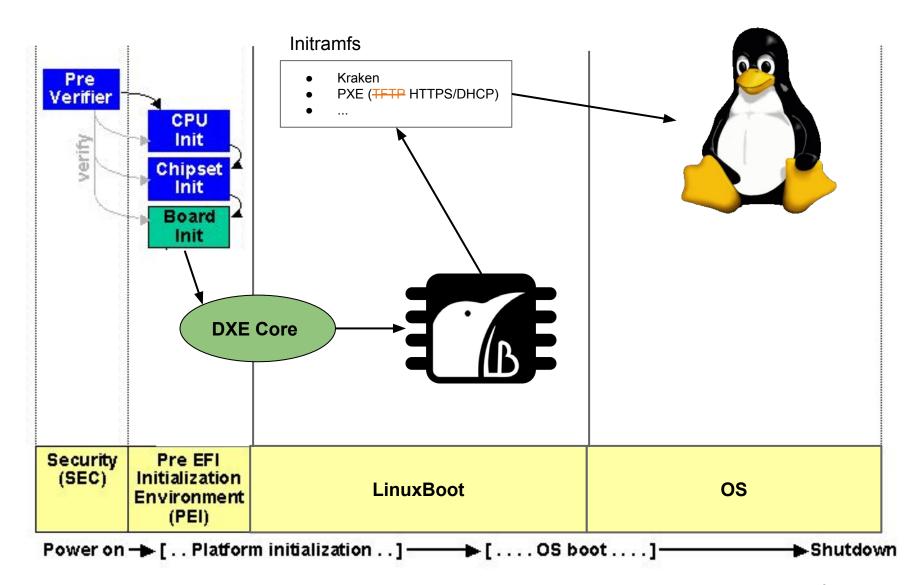
From: https://www.linuxboot.org/

#### **Benefits of Linux in Firmware**



- Improves boot reliability
  - Replaces lightly-tested firmware drivers with hardened Linux drivers
- Improves boot time (up to 20 times faster in some cases)
  - Removes unnecessary/insecure code
- Allows customization of the initrd runtime to support site-specific needs (both device drivers as well as custom executables)
  - Use Case: Custom provisioning tools in the boot process
  - e.g. Replace TFTP with HTTPS for PXE booting
- Proven approach for almost 20 years in military, consumer electronics, and supercomputing systems – wherever reliability and performance are paramount



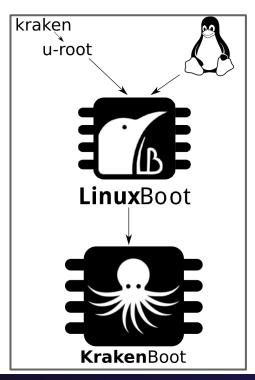




## USRC's Research Into Provisioning with Open Firmware

#### Done

- Emulate a modified firmware image running a Linux kernel and custom initramfs
- Provision a VirtualBox cluster using kraken in a custom initramfs
  - Not a firmware image, but through VirtualBox





LA-UR-20-26019

#### **Doing**

 Create a working example of provisioning using emulatable firmware images

• Provision on *real* hardware in firmware

## **Problems Solved**

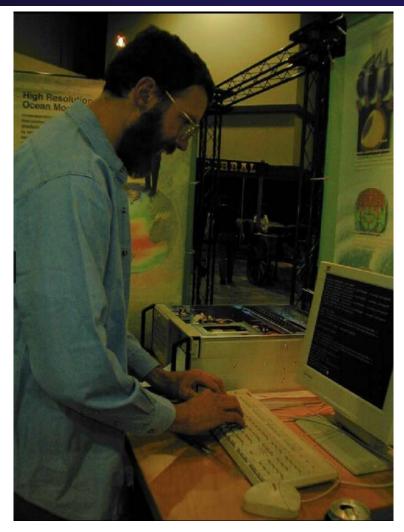
Firmware Until Now	Firmware Now and Beyond
Contains an OS	Let Linux do it
Opaque, understood by few	Open, well-understood by many
Proprietary ecosystem	Auditable, debuggable
Product-specific	Portable, reusable
Vendor-specific tooling	Open source tools
Locked down	Customizable



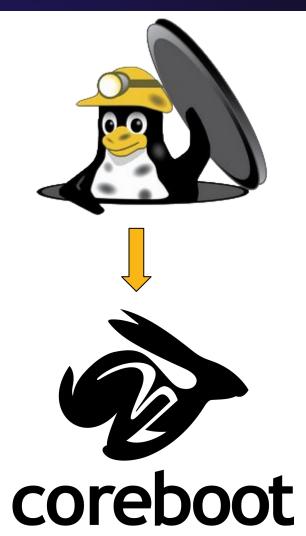
"The vendors will never support this."



## **Open Firmware: Not a New Idea**



Ron Minnich, creator of Coreboot (formerly LinuxBIOS), at LANL in 1999





#### **Facebook**



#### LinuxBoot in provisioning

- LinuxBoot can simplify provisioning a lot
  - Tested DHCP/TFTP implementations
  - Better protocols: HTTPS instead of TFTP
  - Consistent firmwares everywhere
  - · We know and control what that we run







### Google





https://osfc.io/



#### Intel



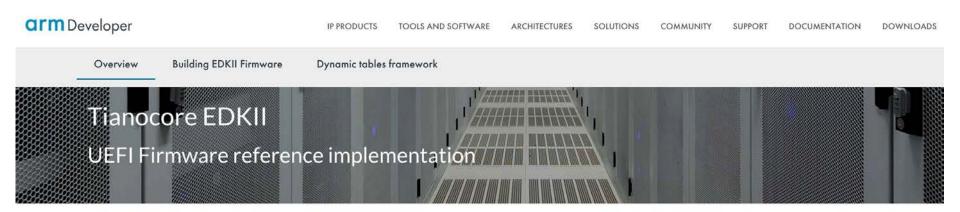


See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3NFbUC3hkA

and: https://edk2-docs.gitbook.io/edk-ii-minimum-platform-specification



#### **ARM**



#### Overview

#### Arm is an active contributor to the EDKII project hosted by the Tianocore community.

The EDKII project is an open source project that provides a modern, feature-rich, cross-platform firmware development environment for the UEFI and PI specifications developed and maintained by the UEFI Forum.

Arm contributions make sure the EDKII project constantly keeps an up to date implementation of a UEFI compliant firmware on Arm systems.

Arm contributes to both the EDKII main repository, maintaining some core packages like DynamicTablesPkg and StandaloneMMPkg, and the EDKII platforms repository, hosting support for various Arm reference platforms as well as other 3rd party Arm-based platforms maintained by either Linaro or partners.





#### **Questions?**

#### **Acknowledgements**

J. Lowell Wofford Cory Lueninghoener



Over 70 years at the forefront of supercomputing