

Targeting millions

How to productize
LinuxBIOS



Targeting millions – Why?

- Two major firmware vendors: Award/Phoenix and AMI
- Intel is pushing EFI. Where's our position in the game?
- Like Linux in the early 90ies, LinuxBIOS is considered a hacker's toy.

Our Situation today

- LinuxBIOS is used in single clusters, appliances, and in embedded systems
- numbers of systems out there:
Estimated 1 mio (soon 10 mio)
- Two hardware vendors are actively supporting LinuxBIOS: AMD and Tyan(?)
- Brightest star: OLPC

Some numbers

- LinuxBIOS supports 50+ mainboards
- Mainstream board vendors offer more than 250 boards.
- Efforts for porting LinuxBIOS to a new CPU architecture: up to months
- Efforts for porting LinuxBIOS to a new chipset: weeks
- Effort for porting LinuxBIOS to a new mainboard: days

Strengths of LinuxBIOS

- Free and Open Source: No royalties
- Motivated community
- No dependency on a single vendor (IBV)
- Very modular design
- Slim and fast, no overhead
- Configurable and extensible

Shortcomings

- LinuxBIOS supports only about 1 out of 5 mainboards. Maybe less.
- No base of end users (Whats a BIOS anyways)
- Board vendors do not recognize their opportunities yet.
- Where do you buy a LinuxBIOS motherboard?

Shortcomings II

- Slow learning curve.
- 2500 revisions and no end. No release cycles
- Lots of documentation, but people don't find it.

Others in the pond

- GPL seems to scare many vendors, still (while others require it)
- Are we more vulnerable to patent issues than others?
- Intel does not seem to like us?

Now then... Some ideas

- Automation, automation, automation...
- No per-board ACPI
- No per-board code? (though one)
- Downloadable, tested images for all supported mainboards
- Target group specific documentation AND advertizing.
- SDK, including all tools (lxbios, ...)
- Integrate buildrom

What else?

- Your ideas

