## The UEFI Threat: Or How I Can "Permanently" **Brick Your** Computer



Paul Asadoorian - Shmoocon 2023

# What are your requirements for purchasing a new computer?



#### Your computer comes with software (firmware) pre-installed

## Unlike most other software (bootloader, kernel, operating system, or application software):

- 1 It is not easy to modify or update
- 2 It has the highest levels of privilege on your system

**3- Most users don't even know its there let alone interact/customize it** 

## UEFI operates with the most privileges on your computer\*.



\*Except for Intel CSME/ME...

## Firmware is just software that is difficult to program.

Like most other software it has security vulnerabilities and configuration issues



But you probably won't...





#### https://eclypsium.com/2022/10/20/firmware-attacks-an-endpoint-timeline/

## I don't believe you. Isn't this a manufacturer/OEM problem?



#### Which manufacturer and which firmware/software?



éclypsium





https://opensecuritytraining.info/IntroBIOS\_files/Day2\_03\_Advanced%20x86%20-%20BIOS%20and%20SMM%20Internals%20-%20SPI%20FI ash%20Protection%20Mechanisms.pdf



#### Protecting System Firmware Storage



Protecting the contents of the SPI flash is tricky business as there are multiple mechanisms to control writes:

- 1. All of the settings and registers could (and do) change depending on which chipset in in your computer
- 2. "SMM BIOS Write Protection" (SMM\_BWP) writes can only allowed in SMM
- **3.** Flash Descriptor region defines how the SPI flash is laid out and some access controls
- 4. Settings are controlled by the OEM (i.e. you typically can't go trying to change these settings yourself as you will brick you own system or they will just have no affect)



#### SPI Flash Protections

These are four (more popular) ways to protect the SPI flash, depending on your hardware/chipset:

- **1. The Flash Descriptor**
- **2. Global Write Protections**
- 3. BIOS Range Write Protection
- 4. Flash Configuration Lockdown



MUST BE PROTECTED

```
$ sudo ./chipsec_util.py spi dump fd.bin <- Dumping contents of SPI flash to file</pre>
##
                                                          ##
## CHIPSEC: Platform Hardware Security Assessment Framework ##
##
                                                          ##
*****
[CHIPSEC] Version : 1.10.0
[CHIPSEC] Arguments: spi dump fd.bin
                                                           #1 - The Flash Descriptor
***** Chipsec Linux Kernel module is licensed under GPL 2.0
[CHIPSEC] API mode: using CHIPSEC kernel module API
[CHIPSEC] OS : Linux 5.4.0-125-generic #141-Ubuntu SMP Wed Aug 10 13:42:03 UTC 2022 x86 64
[CHIPSEC] Python : 3.8.10 (64-bit)
                                                 /chipsec/helper/linux/chipsec.ko)
[CHIPSEC] Helper : LinuxHelper
[CHIPSEC] Platform: Bay Trail Soc
[CHIPSEC] CPUID: 30679
[CHIPSEC] VID: 8086
[CHIPSEC] DID: 0F00
[CHIPSEC] RID: 11
[CHIPSEC] Executing command 'spi' with args ['dump', 'fd.bin']
[CHIPSEC] Dumping entire SPI flash memory to 'fd.bin'
[CHIPSEC] it may take a few minutes (use DEBUG or VERBOSE logger options to see progress)
[CHIPSEC] BIOS region: base = 0x00300000, limit = 0x007FFFFF
[CHIPSEC] Dumping 0x00800000 bytes (to the end of BIOS region)
[spi] reading 0x800000 bytes from SPI at FLA = 0x0 (in 131072 0x40-byte chunks + 0x0-byte remainder)
[CHIPSEC] Completed SPI flash dump to 'fd.bin'
[CHIPSEC] (spi) time elapsed 106.251
```

<pre>\$ sudo ./chipsec_uti</pre>	l.py spidesc	fd.bin	
Flash Regions			#1
Region	FLREGx	Base	Limit
0 Flash Descriptor 1 BIOS 2 Intel ME	00000000   07FF0300   02FF0001	00000000   00300000   00001000	00000000   007FF000   002FF000
+ 0x0060 Master Sect	:ion: 		
+ 0x0060 FLMSTRI : + 0x0064 FLMSTR2 :	0xFFFF0000 0xFFFF0000		
Master Read/Write Ac	ccess to Flash	Regions	
Region	CPU	ME	
0 Flash Descriptor 1 BI <del>OS</del>	RW	RW	
2 Intel ME	RW	RW	

eclypsium <sup>.</sup> —	<pre>\$ sudo ./chipsec_main.py -m common.bios_wp <snip> [with]</snip></pre>	
	<pre>[x] [ ==================================</pre>	
	[x] [ = = = = 0 + 0.000 + 0.	
	[00] BIOSWE = 0 << BIOS Write Enable	
	[01] BLE = 0 << BIOS Lock Enable	
	[02] SRC - 2 C Sri Read configuration #2 - BIOS Write	te
	[04] TSS 0 (( Top Swap Statue Protections	
	[05] SMM BWP = 0 << SMM BIOS Write Protection IIOtectionS	
	$\begin{bmatrix} 06 \end{bmatrix} BBS = 0 << Boot BIOS Strap$ $\begin{bmatrix} 07 \end{bmatrix} BID = 1 << BIOS Interface Lock Down$	
	[-] BIOS region write protection is disabled!	
	[*] BIOS Region: Base = 0x00300000, Limit = 0x00FFFFFF	
	SPI Protected Ranges	
	PRx (offset)   Value   Base   Limit   WP?   RP?	
	PR1 (88)   00000000   00000000   00000000   0   0 #3 - BIOS (and other)	
	PR2 (8C)   00000000   00000000   0   0 Pango Write Protection	
	PR3 (90)   00000000   00000000   00000000   0   0   0   1   0   0	i
	PR4 (94)   00000000   00000000   0   0   0	
	[!] None of the SPI protected ranges write-protect BIOS region	
	[1] PTOS should enable all enables [10] based write methodian mechanisms	
	[1] Or configure SPI protected ranges to protect the entire BIOS region	
© 2022 Eclypsium	[-] FAILED: BIOS is NOT protected completely	16

\$ sudo ./chipsec main.py -m common.spi lock [\*] Running module: chipsec.modules.common.spi lock [x] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [x] [ Module: SPI Flash Controller Configuration Locks [x] \_\_\_\_\_ [\*] HSFS = 0x3F00E800 << Hardware Sequencing Flash Status Register (SPIBAR + 0x4) [00] FDONE = 0 << Flash Cycle Done [01] FCERR = 0 << Flash Cycle Error [02] AEL = 0 << Access Error Log = 0 << SPI cycle in progress [05] SCIP [11] WRSDIS = 1 << Write status disable [12] PR34LKD = 0 << PRR3 PRR4 Lock-Down [13] FDOPSS = 1 << Flash Descriptor Override Pin-Strap Status = 1 << Flash Descriptor Valid [14] FDV [15] FLOCKDN = 1 << Flash Configuration Lock-Down = 0 << Flash cycle go[16] FGO [17] FCYCLE = 0 << Flash Cycle Type [21] WET = 0 << Write Enable Type Lockdown [24] FDBC = 3F << Flash Data Byte Count [31] FSMIE = 0 << Flash SPI SMI# Enable [+] SPI write status disable set. [+] SPI Flash Controller configuration is locked

[+] PASSED: SPI Flash Controller locked correctly.

### #4 - Flash Configuration

## And now, some research...



<- Me when I discovered some of the research that had already been done



#### **Largest Dataset**

Across 138,000+ firmware packages there exists about 198,000 CVEs

#### CWE-119: Improper Restriction of Operations within the Bounds of a Memory Buffer is the most popular CWE

This includes all firmware that we collect and analyze, not just UEFI...

#### UEFI





#### 2017 Research (Previously Unreleased)

The team analyzed 32,000+ firmware images and found:

~3,417 update images corresponding to ~502 models from 9 manufacturers appear to be lacking basic firmware protections

MSI & Gigabyte account for majority (2,578 images ~ 345 models)

It's trivial to install firmware implants or brick such systems (specific to SPI descriptor access checks)

Manufacturer	Vulnerable firmware images	Vulnerable models
Acer	0 - 2	0 - 2
ASRock	73	~53 models (all older than Skylake)
ASUS	629	~61 models (all older than Ivy Bridge)
Dell	51	~11 models (Vostro and Inspiron older than 2014)
Gigabyte	1117 (345 Skylake+)	~247 models including Skylake (6 Gen Intel Core) or newer
НР	11	~6
Intel	0	0
Lenovo	75	~26 (ThinkServer TS150-550, ThinkCentre/IdeaCentre)
MSI	1461 (495 Skylake+)	~98 models including Skylake (6 Gen Intel Core) or newer
Total	3417 (16.1%)	~502 models

2017 Research (Previously Unreleased)



#### More Updated research

- We analyzed **15,083** LIVE unique devices running **781** different firmware versions across **335** different hardware models.
- Security checks were performed on the devices at runtime and not by checking the static firmware image

#### In almost all of them we found a firmware-related vulnerability

Many vulnerabilities are remediated with a firmware update, proving that firmware updates are not being applied



#### Updated Research

We analyzed 900+ full firmware images (SPI dumps)





#### Digging a little deeper...

Vendor	# Models	# fw versions	# unique devices	Top vulns! (there are many more per vendor)
Dell	79	215	6643	<ul> <li>BMC default password: 1846</li> <li>spi_desc: 1719</li> <li>Outdated DBX: 1220</li> <li>Debug interfaces enabled: 1207</li> <li>CVE-2020-0549, CVE-2020-0548, CVE-2020-0545: &gt;1000</li> <li>Outdated microcode related vulns: &gt; 800</li> <li>etc</li> </ul>
Lenovo	77	274	3480	<ul> <li>Outdated DBX: &gt;3000</li> <li>Outdated microcode related vulns: &gt;2000</li> <li>CVE-2020-24512 and CVE-2020-24511 &gt; 2500</li> <li>IntelSA00391: &gt; 2500</li> <li>IntelSA00295: &gt; 2100</li> <li>etc</li> </ul>



#### Numbers #2

Vendor	# Models	# fw versions	# unique devices	Top vulns!
HP	26	30	34	<ul> <li>CVE-2020-0528: 15</li> <li>CVE-2019-11135: 14</li> <li>CVE-2019-0154: 14</li> <li>etc</li> </ul>
Supermicr o	45	143	4394	<ul> <li>Outdated microcode related vulns: &gt; 1900</li> <li>TPM_CVE_2017_15361: 643</li> <li>Pantsdown: &gt; 500</li> <li>spi_desc: 130</li> <li>bios_wp: 72,</li> <li>spi_lock: 51,</li> <li>etc</li> </ul>



#### Numbers #3

Vendor	# Models	# fw versions	# unique devices	Top vulns!
Apple	19	30	50	To be filled with data of the json like the others
Asus	11	12	13	To be filled
Microsoft	10	28	96	To be filled
Intel	4	10	13	To be filled
and another one	and another one	another one	another one	another ones



#### Vendors

These are just the most significative samples. Full lists of vendors and vulnerabilities found are much larger.

Full list of vendors analyzed with at least a sample device and vulnerable:

- Lenovo
- Dell
- HP
- Apple
- Supermicro
- Microsoft
- Intel
- Acer
- Quanta
- MSI
- Fujitsu

- LG
- Abaco systems
- HPE
- IBM
- Inspur
- Toshiba
- Asus
- Samsung
- Maxsun
- Gigabyte
- MouseComputer

Can provide full analysis file if you wish (?)



#### Checking My Own Stuff

Purchased July 2020 and again in July 2021, same BIOS versions on each and no update from OEM! :~/chipsec\$ sudo dmidecode -t bios

# dmidecode 3.2 Getting SMBIOS data from sysfs. SMBIOS 3.0.0 present.

Handle 0x0000, DMI type 0, 24 bytes BIOS Information Vendor: American Megatrends Inc. Version: 5.6.5 Release Date: 12/26/2018

[x]	[ Module: SPI Fla	ash Region Access Control
[*]	FRAP = 0x0000FFI	-F << SPI Flash Regions Access Permissions Register (SPIBAR + 0x50)
	[00] BRRA	= FF << BIOS Region Read Access
8	[08] BRWA	= FF << BIOS Region Write Access
	[16] BMRAG	= 0 << BIOS Master Read Access Grant
	[24] BMWAG	= 0 << BIOS Master Write Access Grant
[*]	Software access	to SPI flash regions: read = 0xFF, write = 0xFF
[-]		

eclypsium.	Title — AMI BIOS	Version 7B98v1E	Release Date 2022-11-08
Checking My Own Stuff # dmidecode 3.2 Getting SMBIOS data from sysfs. SMBIOS 2.8 present.	()	Description: - Windows 11 Supported. - Update CPU Micro code. - Change the default setting of Secure Boot. - Improve Intel DG2 VGA Card compatibility.	
Handle Øx0000, DMI type 0, 26 bytes BIOS Information Vendor: American Megatrends Inc. Version: 1.D0 Release Date: 01/19/2021	Title AMI BIOS	Version 7B98v1D	Release Date 2021-02-08
Purchased July 2021, still in manufacturing mode!	(!)	rmance.	
] Running module: chipsec.modules.common.me_mfg_mode			
][ ====================================			
FAILED: ME is in Manufacturing Mode     © 2022 Eclypsium     Eclypsium Confidential and	i Proprietary		29

[\*



#### Bad Combination...

[*]	BC =	0x00	000	2888	<< [	310	s co	ontr	ol	(b:d	f 00	: 3	1.5 -	+ (	ØxDC)	
	[00]	BIOS	SWE				= 0	<<	BIO	s Wr	ite Er	nal	ble			
	[01]	BLE					= 0	<<	BIO	S Loo	k Ena	ab:	le			
	[02]	SRC					= 2	<<	SPI	Read	d Con <sup>.</sup>	fi	gurat	tic	on	
e.	[04]	TSS					= 0	<<	Тор	Swar	o Sta	tu	s			
	[05]	SMM_	BW	Р			= 0	<<	SMM	BIOS	5 Wri <sup>.</sup>	te	Prot	teo	tion	
	[06]	BBS					= 0	<<	Воо	t BIG	os st:	ra	D			
	[07]	BILD	)				= 1	<<	BIO	S Int	terfa	ce	Lock	< [	Down	
[-1																
[*]	BIOS	Regi	ion	: Bas	se =	0x	0030	0000	00,	Limi	t = 0;	ĸØ(	ØFFFF	FF	Ì	
SPI	Prote	ected	l R	anges	5											
PRx	(off:	set)	12	Value	e.	1	Base	e		Lim	it	1	WP?	Ŧ	RP?	
PRØ	(84)		1	00000	0000	1	0000	0000	00	0000	00000	1	0	T	0	
PR1	(88)		11	00000	0000		0000	0000	00	0000	00000	Ť	0	Ť	0	
PR2	(8C)		1	00000	0000		0000	0000	00	0000	00000	1	0	Ĩ	0	
PR3	(90)		10	00000	0000	1	0000	0000	00	0000	00000	1	0	T	0	
PR4	(94)		1.1	00000	0000		0000	0000	00	0000	00000	Ĩ	0	Ĩ.	0	
[-1																
1-1	and the second	-51101	110	enab	le a	a11						d 1	write		protecti	LOI

#### Dr configure SPI protected ranges to protect the entire BlOS region.

#### SPI Flash Region Access Permissions

BIOS Region Write Access Grant (00): FREGØ\_FLASHD: Ø FREG1\_BIOS : 0 FREG2 ME : 0 FREG3 GBE : 0 FREG4\_PD : 0 FREG5 : 0 BIOS Region Read Access Grant (00): FREG0\_FLASHD: 0 FREG1\_BIOS : 0 FREG2 ME : 0 FREG3\_GBE : 0 FREG4\_PD : 0 FREG5 : 0 BIOS Region Write Access (FF): FREG0\_FLASHD: 1 FREG1\_BIOS : 1 FREG2 ME FREG3\_GBE FREG4 PD FREG5 BIOS Region Read Access (FF): FREG0\_FLASHD: 1 FREG1 BIOS : 1 FREG2\_ME FREG3\_GBE : 1 FREG4 PD FREG5 [\*] Software has write access to Platform Data region in SPI flash (it's platform specific) WARNING: Software has write access to GBe region in SPI flash I FAILED SPI Flash Region

## Let's talk about "bad things"



#### Flash Descriptor Region

#### Contains the "map" for the other regions

Also controls a set of permissions for writing to the regions, including itself.

If left writable, you can make your own rules!

Also corrupting or overwriting it would be bricking-level bad.



#### **BIOS Region**

Typically has permissions and rules to prevent overwriting or tampering, but has to remain writable in select sub-regions.

Variables stored in NVRAM can have different attributes to control access/writing (Runtime, Authenticated, etc...).

Modifying or deleting variables is sometimes all it takes to "brick" a system (depending on the attributes)



#### Intel ME/CSME

Not only for management, controls system critical functionality.

Modification is possible as each individual firmware module is signed. Some pair this down to remove functionality (I do not recommended)

Modifying or deleting will most likely "brick" the system, or at the very least cause unexpected behavior (like turning off after 30 minutes)



#### Intel GBe Region

Stores configuration information for Ethernet adapters (e.g. your MAC address).

If you wipe it out, your Ethernet adapter may not work properly or at all.

Curious if this will also impact AMT, as you could disrupt all ability to connect remotely to a machine.

Recovery would involve the OEM (or a backup if you have one or can get one from the vendor).



#### EC Region

Stores EC-firmware (Embedded Controller) for things like your keyboard and sound/monitor controls.

I have not found a ton of security research on this region (If you are interested in more: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-1Y466r</u> <u>Dal</u>)

Curious if this will also impact AMT, as you could disrupt all ability to connect remotely to a machine.

Recovery would involve the OEM (or a backup if you have one).





0

#### 5 Platform Data

4 EC Region

**3** Intel GBe

2 Intel CSME

1 BIOS Region

0 Flash Descriptor

Stores configuration for the "platform", which could be anything else that is used by the OEM.

Implementation specific, and I was not able to find much information, let alone security research, about it.

#### "Bad Things"

- Using **Chipsec**, either built-in functionality or just reversing a read to a write (e.g. Erase what's at the reset vector 4096 bytes, last 4096 reset)
- (https://github.com/chipsec/chipsec)
- flashrom Take an image and re-write it
- **RWEverything** (Read & Write Everything) Also used by attackers!
- Some systems have a recovery image, some store this on a separate SPI Flash

Warning: If you have a laptop/notebook/netbook, please do NOT try flashrom because interactions with the EC on these machines might crash your machine during flashing. flashrom tries to detect if a machine is a laptop, but not all laptops follow the standard, so this is not 100% reliable.[1]

https://wiki.archlinux.org/title/Flashing\_BIOS\_from\_Linux

## Why Can't We Just Lock Everything Down?



### GIGABYTE" /SRock /SLSS HEREWERE









#### OEMs Make Mistakes...



#### Intel confirms leaked Alder Lake BIOS Source Code is authentic

By Lawrence Abrams

🛗 October 9, 2022 🕐 08:53 PM 🔲 1



DR Tech 3 MIN READ DR TECHNOLOGY

#### Latest Firmware Flaws in Qualcomm Snapdragon Need Attention

The issue concerns the boot layer of ARM chips, which are driving a low-power mobile ecosystem that includes 5G smartphones and base stations.



## Meme unavailable due to supply chain issues. Thank you for understanding.

## Finding Vulnerabilities and Potential Solutions

t fuundman cos	urity force	provide received a second	ity force
:~\$ Twupangr sec	urityTorce	Host Security ID: HSI:1! (v1.7.9	))
Host Security ID: HSI:0! (v1.7.9	)		
		HSI-1	
HSI-1		CSME manufacturing mode:	Locked
✓ CSME override:	Locked	<pre>CSME override:</pre>	Locked
✔ CSME v0:12.0.70.1652:	Valid	CSME V0:12.0.81.1753:	Valid
✓ Intel DCI debugger:	Disabled	Intel DCI debugger:	Disabled
✓ SPI write:	Disabled	SPI BIOS region:	Locked
<pre>/ UEEI platform key:</pre>	Valid	V SPI IOCK:	Enabled
CSME manufacturing mode:	Unlocked	TDM empty DCDs	Valid
	the Locked	TPM v2 0	Found
× SPI BIOS region:	Unlocked	✓ UFFI platform key:	Valid
X SPI lock:	Disabled	v otri pideroini key.	
¥ TPM v2.0:	Not found	HSI-2	
		✓ Intel BootGuard:	Enabled
HSI-2		Intel BootGuard ACM protected:	Valid
✓ Intel BootGuard:	Enabled	✓ Intel BootGuard OTP fuse:	Valid
✓ Intel DCI debugger:	Locked	Intel BootGuard verified boot:	Valid
X TOMMU:	Not found	✓ Intel DCI debugger:	Locked
¥ Intel BootGuard ACM protected:	Toyalid	✓ TPM PCR0 reconstruction:	Valid
X Intel BootGuard ACM Protected.	Town Tad	X IOMMU:	
× Incer Boolduard OFP Tuse:	Invaria.		
* Intel BootGuard Verified boot:	invaild	HSI-3	
		✓ Intel BootGuard error policy:	Valid
HSI-3	1990 (G. 1990)	✓ Pre-boot DMA protection:	Enabled
✗ Intel BootGuard error policy:	Invalid	X Intel CET Enabled:	
✗ Intel CET Enabled:	Not supported	X Suspend-to-idle:	
✗ Pre-boot DMA protection:	Invalid	* Suspend-to-ram:	
X Suspend-to-idle:	Disabled	HST-4	
X Suspend-to-ram:	Enabled	✓ Intel SMAP	Enabled
a suspend to rum.		<b>X</b> Encrypted RAM	Not supported
1167 4		w Encrypted tout.	
HS1-4		Runtime Suffix -!	
<pre>Intel SMAP:</pre>	Enabled	✓ Linux kernel:	Untainted
★ Encrypted RAM:	Not supported	✓ Linux kernel lockdown:	Enabled
		✓ fwupd plugins:	Untainted
Runtime Suffix -!		★ Linux swap:	

This system has HSI runtime issues.

fwupd plugins:
 Linux kernel:
 Linux kernel lockdown:
 Linux swap:
 UEFI secure boot:

Tainted Disabled Unencrypted Disabled

Upload these anonymous results to the Linux Vendor Firmware Service to help other users? [y|N]:

» https://github.com/fwupd/fwupd/wiki/Host-security-ID-runtime-issues



#### **Update Your Firmware**



#### If you don't, could someone "blow up" your computer?

PMFault: Faulting and Bricking Server CPUs through Management Interfaces, Or: A Modern Example of Halt and Catch Fire (January 13, 2023, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2301.05538.pdf)

"we show how remotely exploitable software weaknesses in the BMC (or other processors with PMBus access) can be used to access the PMBus and then perform hardware-based fault injection attacks"

"...we experimentally show that overvolting outside the specified range has the potential of **permanently damaging Intel Xeon CPUs, rendering the server inoperable**."

#### The Future...

Upload your SPI flash image, backend analyzes it, you get a report

Scan the firmware update for "weird things" - should not break the platform, make it insecure, or brick the system (OEMs tend to care most about the latter)

Others then get to evaluate some aspects of supply chain and firmware security pre-purchase

Some previous attempts, none still available today (to my knowledge)

#### Huge Thanks!

My Co-workers: Alex Bazhaniuk, Yuriy Bulygin, John Loucaides, Federico "Fede" Perez, Mickey Shkatov, Jesse Michael, Vladyslav Babkin, Nate Warfield and more!

About Me: Podcast host for Paul's Security Weekly (<u>https://securityweekly.com</u>), Principal Security Evangelist for Eclypsium, and Eclypsium Podcast host (new!)



#### Content Leading Up To This Talk

Firmware Enumeration with Open Source Tools (Video/Webinar)

BHIS | Firmware Enumeration Using Open Source Tools | Paul Asadoorian | 1-Hour (Video/Webinar)

<u>Firmware Security Realizations – Part 1 – Secure Boot And Dbx</u> (Blog post)

Firmware Security Realizations – Part 2 – Start Your Management Engine (Blog Post)

<u>Firmware Security Realizations – Part 3 – Spi Write Protections</u> (Blog Post)

<u>UEFI & SMM Vulnerabilities - Jesse Michael - PSW #764</u> (Video/Podcast)

Not-So-Secure Boot - Jesse Michael, Mickey Shkatov - PSW #751 (Video/Podcast)