

# **RSAC**Conference2020

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**HUMAN**  
ELEMENT

SESSION ID: PS-R01

## "I'm Still Standing," Says Each Cyber-Resilient Device



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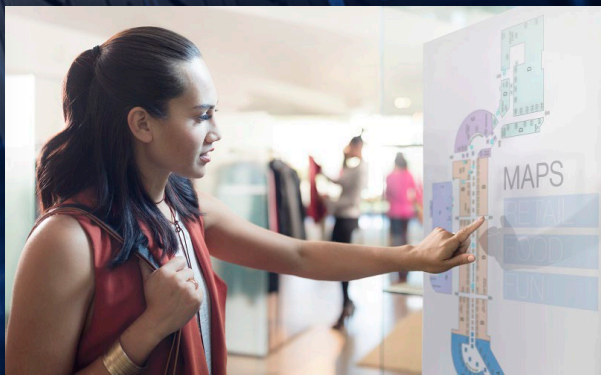
Firmware Engineer  
Intel Corporation

#RSAC



# the pc is the human touchpoint

Powering every person's greatest  
contribution to the data-centric enterprise



# How is the security landscape shifting?

90% of INCIDENTS

Result from exploits in software<sup>1</sup>

Every 4.2 seconds

New malware in the first quarter of 2017<sup>2</sup>

Cost of a breach

Digital records stolen, brand damage, etc.

62% IT budget on Security

And 41% on risk analysis<sup>4</sup>

Attacks on the rise



General  
Data  
Protection  
Regulation



Security  
Standards Council



FISMA  
COMPLIANCE

NIST

increasing regulation

worldwide security  
spending<sup>4</sup>

2017: ~\$102 Billion

2018: ~\$114  
Billion

2019: ~\$124 Billion  
15% CAGR

Increased spending

1) McAfee Labs Threat Report, June 2018

2) GData, Malware Trends 2017, 2017

3) Gartner Press Release, August 15, 2018

4) 2019 CIO Tech Poll, IDG/CIO



Disclaimer: Intel does not control or audit third-party data. You should consult other sources to evaluate accuracy.



# Agenda

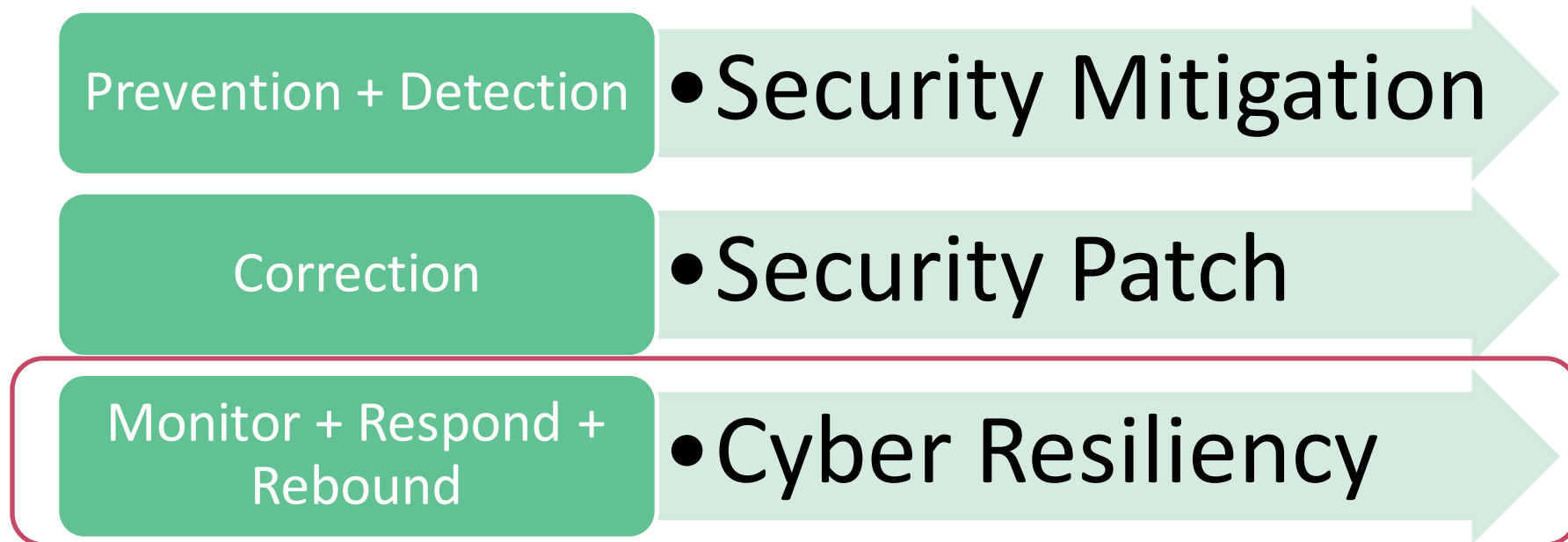
- Cyber Resiliency Overview
- Problem Statement
- Enterprise Requirements
- Strategy and Challenges
- Resiliency Principles
- Deep dive of solution architecture for firmware resiliency
- Industry standards



When you go back you should be able to identify the need for resiliency and understand the current industry work

# What is Cyber Resilience?

- NIST<sup>1</sup> defines Cyber Resilience as the ability to anticipate, withstand, recover from, and adapt to adverse conditions, stresses, attacks, or compromises on systems that include cyber resources



# Problem Statement

In 2012<sup>1</sup> Shamoon malware wiped out the hard drives of 35,000 Aramco computers. A three quarters of their Servers went unusable and several 10000s of their employees unable to login to their system and resume work for several months.

Just in the first quarter of 2017, new malware emerged every 4.2 seconds<sup>2</sup> Critical infrastructure e.g. hospitals were forced to stop production. This trend continues till date.



What we would like to do :

1. Get back to work immediately after a corruption, failure or an attack
2. Ensure our devices are ready and responsive when we need them
3. Have the ability to automatically install of urgent security updates



1) <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/24/business/global/cyberattack-on-saudi-oil-firm-disquiets-us.html>

2) GData, Malware Trends 2017

# Enterprise requirements



## IT operations

Secure access to endpoints  
**Ensures system recovery**



## IT Security

62% of IT budget for security<sup>1</sup>  
**Remove firmware blindspots**



## Digital transformation

IT spend shifting to cloud <sup>2</sup>  
**Zero Trust environment**



## User experience

No clout on PC  
**Productivity and performance<sup>3</sup>**

Enterprise requirements is shifting the security focus to resilience and recovery

1) CIO, "2019 CIO Tech Poll: Economic Outlook Research," June 2019

2) Gartner, "Market Insight: Cloud Shift — 2018 to 2022." Sep 2018

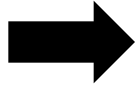
3) IDC "The Future of Productivity: How Today's Next-Gen PCs Empower Workers and Why Performance Still Matters." Tom Mainelli, April 2019

# Firmware Resiliency Strategy and Challenges

## Strategy :



**Understand** your  
platforms



**Measure** your  
platforms



**Compliance**



**Accelerate Response**

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## Challenges :

Limited Telemetry  
information

Lack of readiness of  
local and remote  
attestation

Limited compliant  
devices in ecosystem  
Finite Hardware  
resources

Ecosystem and  
infrastructure  
readiness to deploy  
updates easily



# Hardware based security foundation

Software

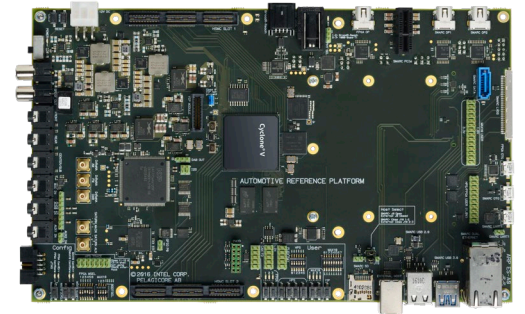
Creative and open by design  
A more visible surface for tampering

Firmware

Talks to software, but hides things  
Makes tampering more difficult

Hardware

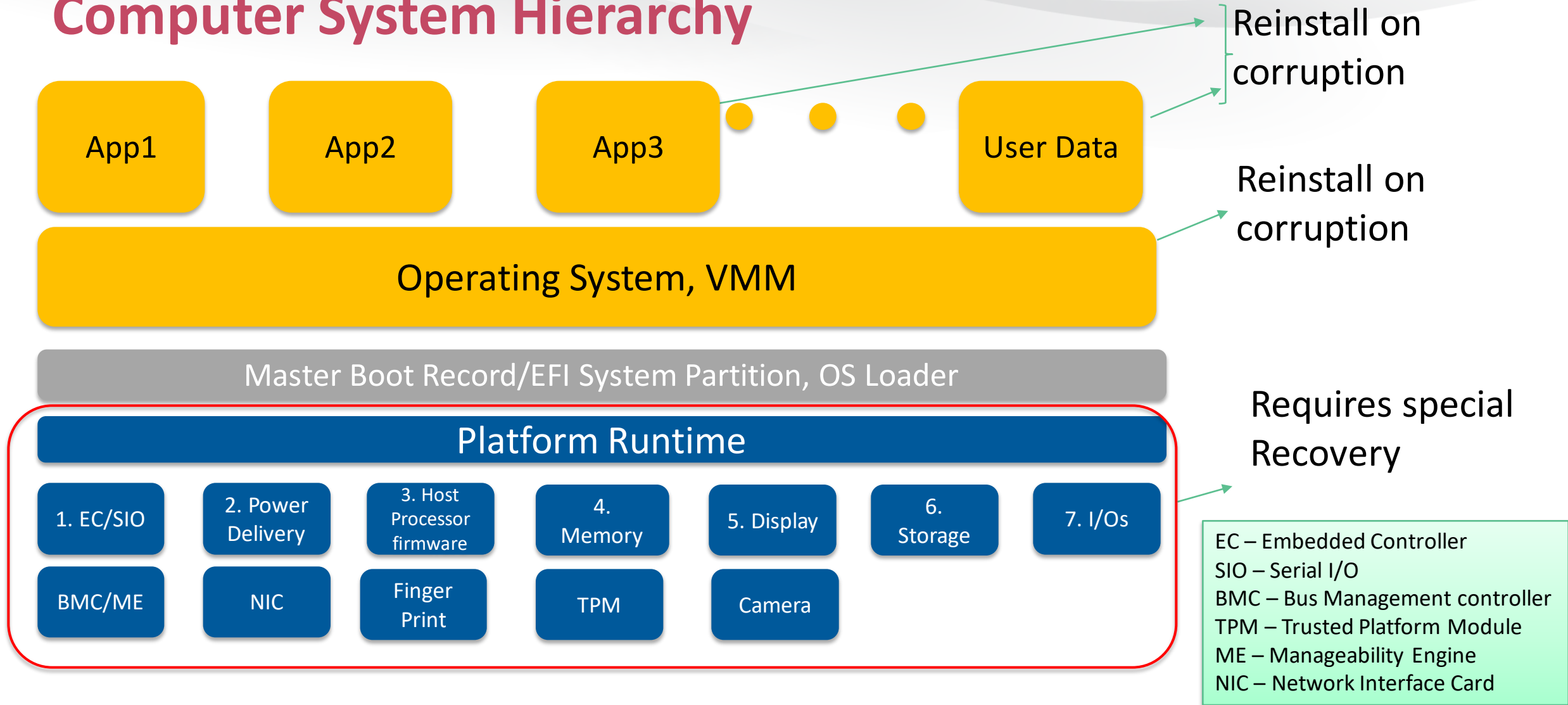
Vaulted by design  
Farther from sight and reach



Hardware and firmware resilience help build a secure foundation

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# Computer System Hierarchy



We focus our discussion on Firmware Resiliency

# Key Principles of Firmware Resiliency (NIST SP800-193)

## Protection

Ensure device remains in a state of integrity and is protected from corruption or attack

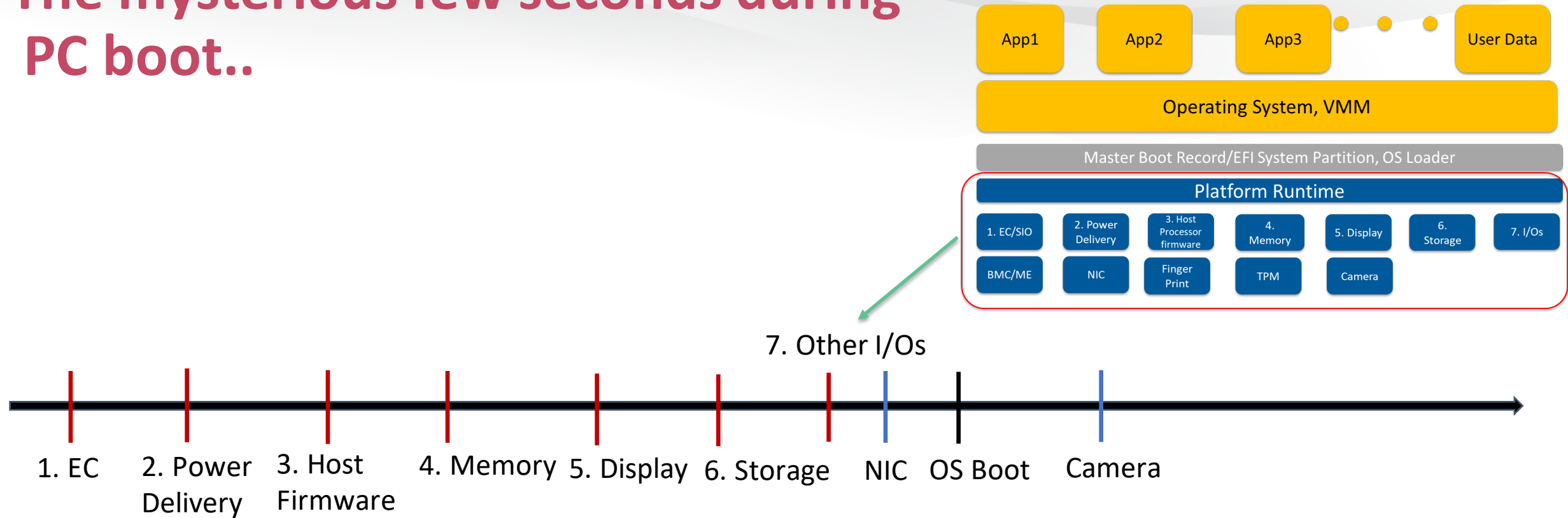
## Detection

Detecting when device has been corrupted or attacked or otherwise changed from an authorized state

## Recovery

Restore the device to a state of integrity in the event of attack, or when forced to recover

# The mysterious few seconds during PC boot..



Note: Boot flow is for example only, IA architecture based

EC – Embedded Controller  
NIC – Network Interface Card

Goal: Recover Boot Critical Devices first  
Hand-off all other Recovery to OS based mechanisms



# Key Ingredients in Device Firmware Resiliency

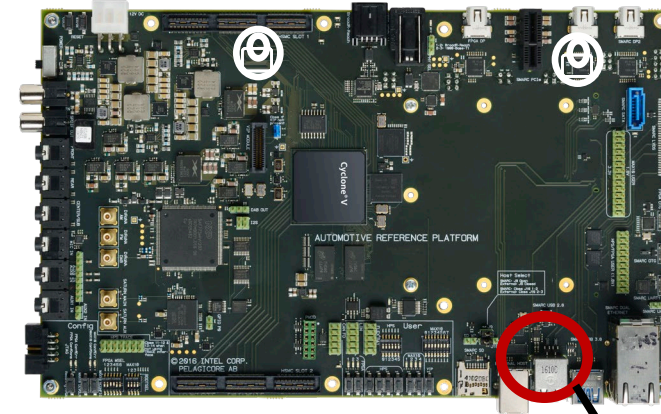
Protection

Detection

Recovery

Primary  
Device  
firmware

Recovery  
firmware



Host Processor firmware

Disclaimer: No product or component can be absolutely secure.

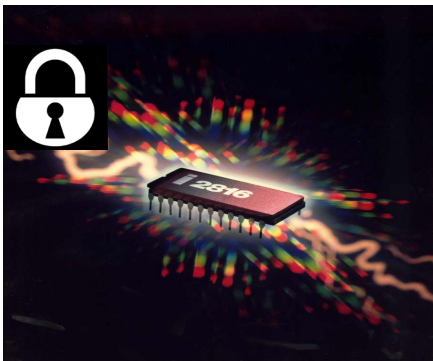


Active Players and Resources together build the  
Device Resiliency

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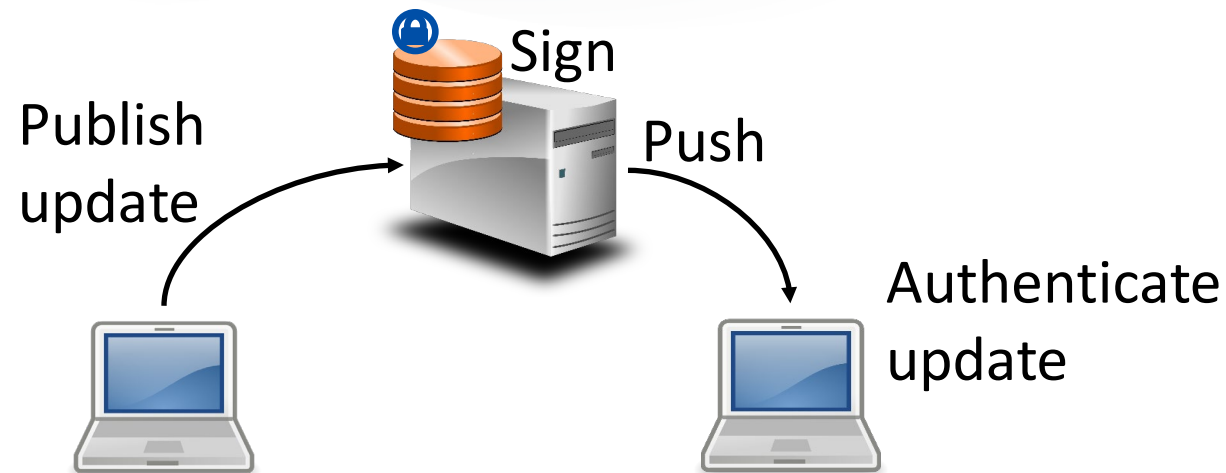
# Protecting Device firmware

## 1. Read/Write Protection



- Physical Write Protect mechanisms
- Access controls defined at storage controller level

## 2. Update Protection



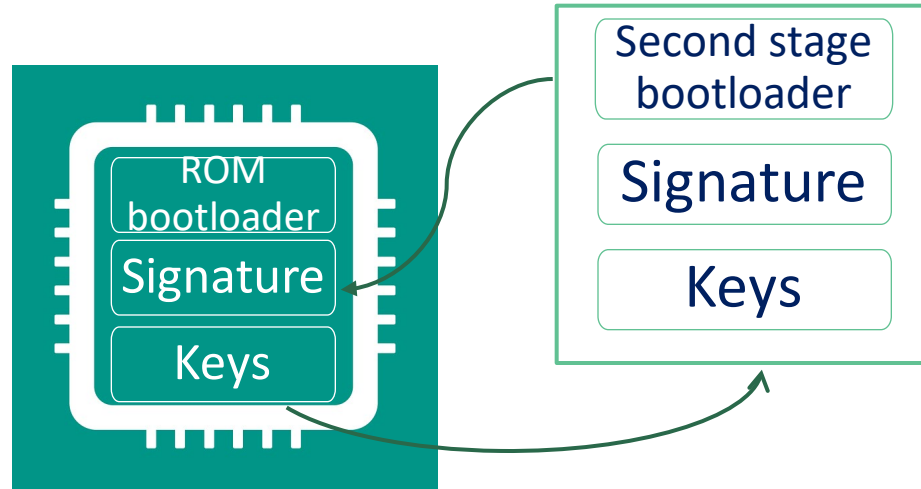
- HW/SW vendor
- Signed updates hosted in Secure Server
- Local device authentication through key store in protected region

Disclaimer: No product or component can be absolutely secure.

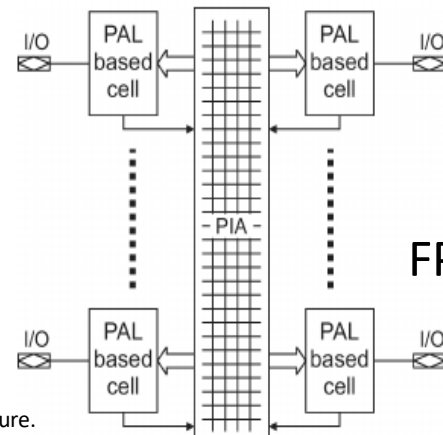


Both Read\Write and Update Protection are necessary for  
Device firmware Protection

# Detecting anomalies ahead



## 1. Hardware rooted authentication mechanisms



FPGA/CPLD Bus monitoring

## 2. Hardware based Detection



## 3. Watchdog Timer monitoring

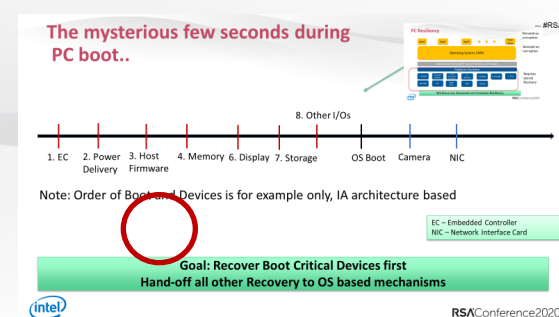
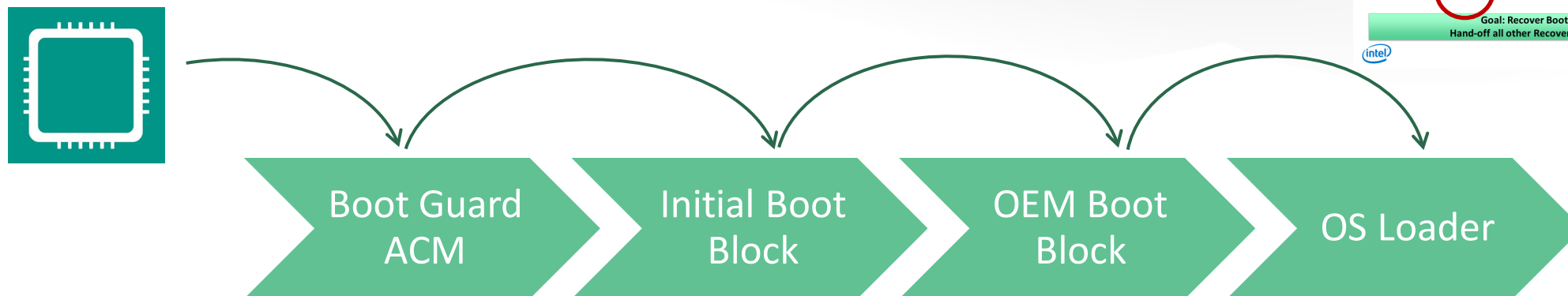
- Trusted runtime monitoring
- Device and system level monitoring

FPGA – Field Programmable Gate Array  
 PAL – Programmable Array Logic  
 CPLD – Complex Programmable Logic Device

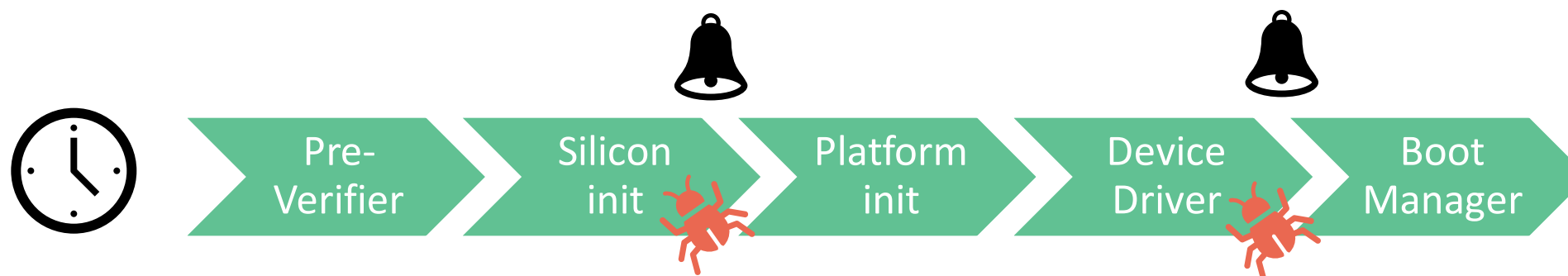
Disclaimer: No product or component can be absolutely secure.



# Detection in System Boot flow context



## Detection at Boot time – UEFI Secure Boot



## Detection at runtime

Disclaimer: No product or component can be absolutely secure.

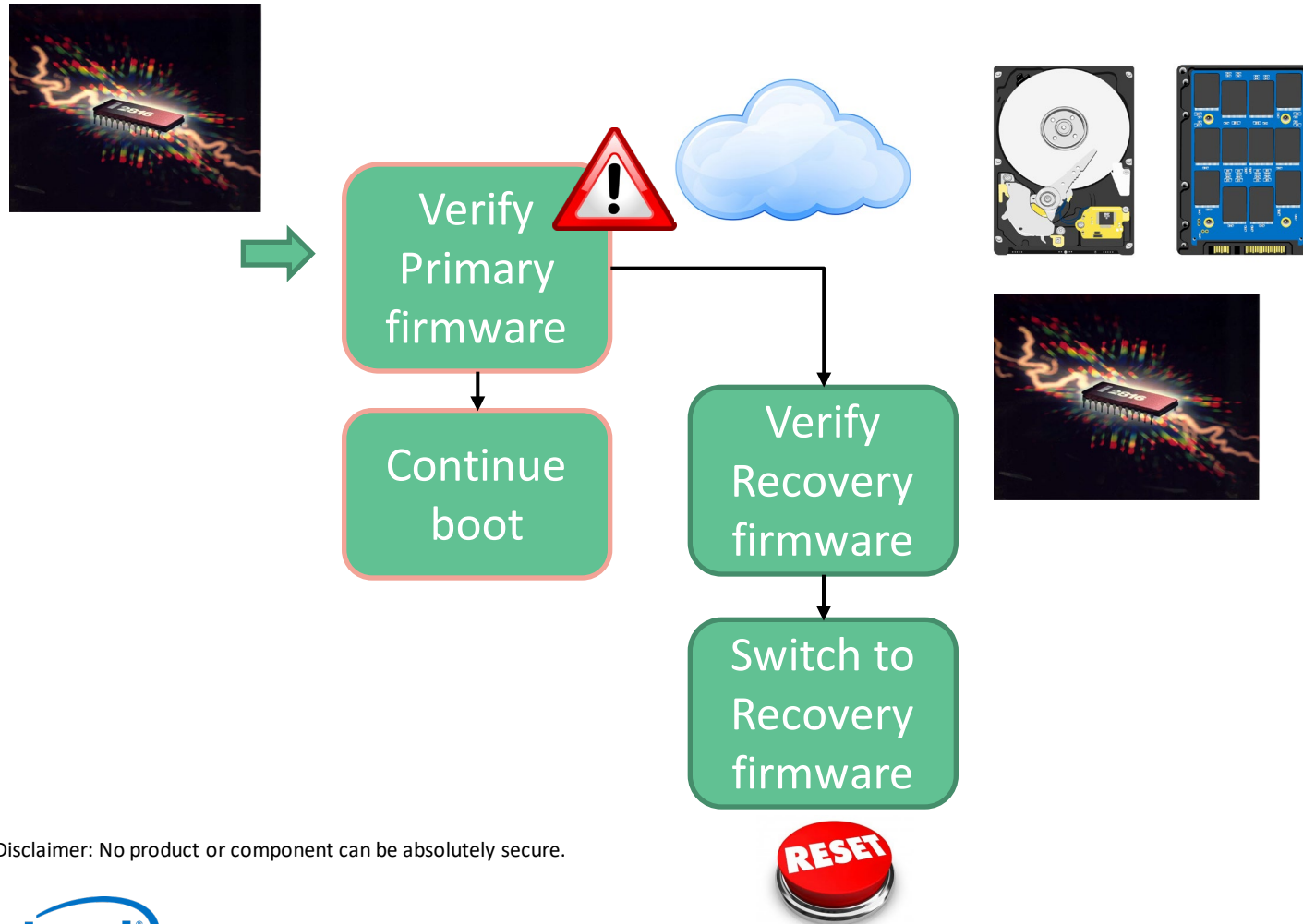
Both Boot time and Runtime Detection are essential for Resiliency



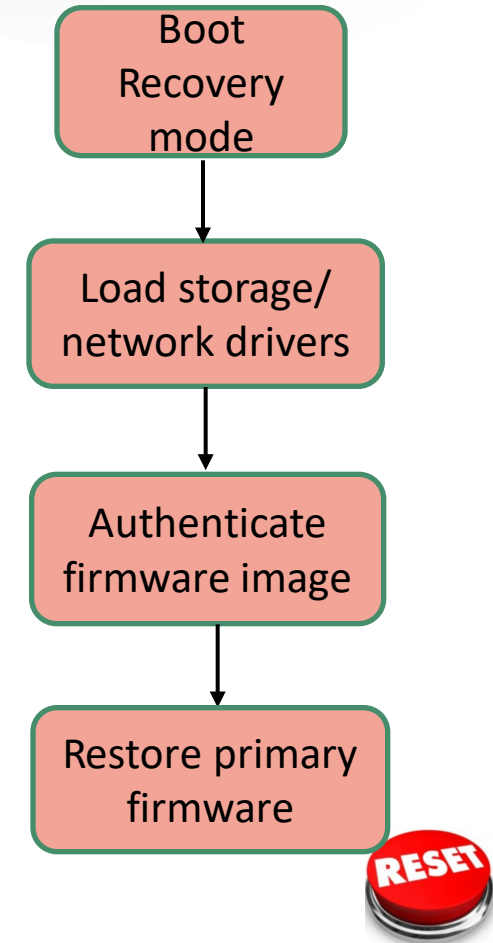


# How to Recover

## Stage 1: Primary Boot flow



## Stage 2: Recovery flow

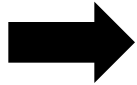


Disclaimer: No product or component can be absolutely secure.

# Industry Standards



**Understand** your  
platforms



**Measure** your  
platforms



**Compliance**



**Accelerate Response**

- DMTF System Management BIOS (SMBIOS)

- NIST 800-155 "BIOS Integrity Measurement Guideline"

- NIST SP800-193 "Platform Firmware Resiliency Guidelines"

- NIST SP800-147 "BIOS Protection Guidelines"



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Version: 3.0.0

System Management BIOS (SMBIOS) Reference Specification

**NIST**

National Institute of  
Standards and Technology  
U.S. Department of Commerce

Special Publication  
(Draft)

## BIOS Integrity Measurement Guidelines (Draft)

Recommendations of the National  
Institute of Standards and Technology

NIST Special Publication 800-193

## Platform Firmware Resiliency Guidelines

Andrew Regenscheid



**NIST**  
National Institute of  
Standards and Technology  
U.S. Department of Commerce

Special Publication 800-147

## BIOS Protection Guidelines

Recommendations of the National Institute  
of Standards and Technology



# Summary and Call to Action

- Device resiliency is important to prepare for future cyber attacks
- Understand which devices in your platform are resilient from failures and attacks and what are the gaps
- Take advantage of resilience features to create your own innovative cyber risk management solutions
- Stand out from the crowd by applying robust protect, detect and recover techniques to build a good Resiliency solution

# References

- DMTF System Management BIOS :  
<https://www.dmtf.org/standards/smbios>
- NIST Specifications: <https://www.nist.gov/>



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