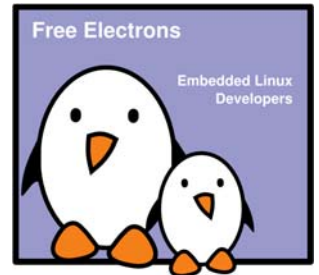


## 04-3 Toolchains

## Embedded Linux system development

### Cross-compiling toolchains

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**Free Electrons**

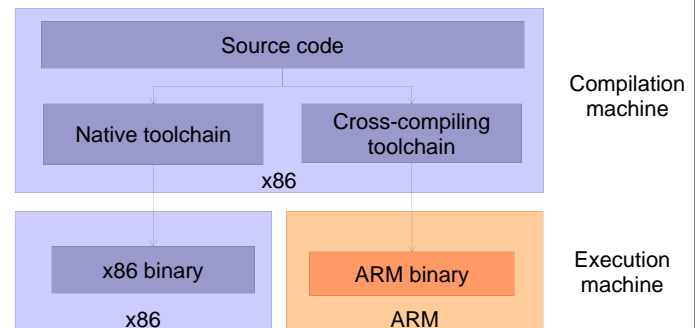


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Latest update: 9/25/2013.  
Document sources, updates and translations:  
<http://free-electrons.com/docs/toolchains>  
Corrections, suggestions, contributions and translations are welcome!

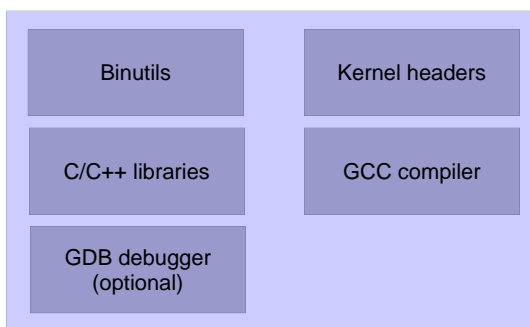
### Definition (1)

- ▶ The usual development tools available on a GNU/Linux workstation is a **native toolchain**
- ▶ This toolchain runs on your workstation and generates code for your workstation, usually x86
- ▶ For embedded system development, it is usually impossible or not interesting to use a native toolchain
  - ▶ The target is too restricted in terms of storage and/or memory
  - ▶ The target is very slow compared to your workstation
  - ▶ You may not want to install all development tools on your target.
- ▶ Therefore, **cross-compiling toolchains** are generally used. They run on your workstation but generate code for your target.

### Definition (2)



### Components

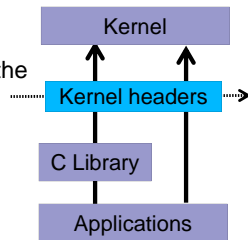


### binutils

- ▶ **Binutils** is a set of tools to generate and manipulate binaries for a given CPU architecture
- ▶ **as**, the assembler, that generates binary code from assembler source code
- ▶ **ld**, the linker
- ▶ **ar, ranlib**, to generate .a archives, used for libraries
- ▶ **objdump, readelf, size, nm, strings**, to inspect binaries. Very useful analysis tools !
- ▶ **strip**, to strip useless parts of binaries in order to reduce their size
- ▶ <http://www.gnu.org/software/binutils/>
- ▶ GPL license

## Kernel headers (1)

- ▶ The C library and compiled programs need to interact with the kernel
  - ▶ Available system calls and their numbers
  - ▶ Constant definitions
  - ▶ Data structures, etc.
- ▶ Therefore, compiling the C library requires kernel headers, and many applications also require them.
- ▶ Available in `<linux/...>` and `<asm/...>` and a few other directories corresponding to the ones visible in `include/` in the kernel sources



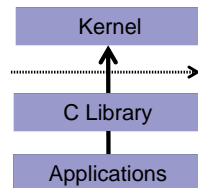
## GCC compiler

- ▶ GNU C Compiler, the famous free software compiler
- ▶ Can compile C, C++, Ada, Fortran, Java, Objective-C, Objective-C++, and
- ▶ Generate code for a large number of CPU architectures, including **ARM**, AVR, Blackfin, CRIS, FRV, M32, MIPS, MN10300, PowerPC, SH, v850, i386, x86\_64, IA64, Xtensa, etc.
- ▶ <http://gcc.gnu.org/>
- ▶ Available under the GPL license, libraries under the LGPL.



## C library

- ▶ The C library is an essential component of a Linux system
- ▶ Interface between the applications and the kernel
- ▶ Provides the well-known standard C API to ease application development
- ▶ Several C libraries are available: **glibc**, **uClibc**, **eglibc**, **dietlibc**, **newlib**, etc.
- ▶ The choice of the C library must be made at the time of the cross-compiling toolchain generation, as the GCC compiler is compiled against a specific C library.



## glibc

- ▶ <http://www.gnu.org/software/libc/>
- ▶ License: LGPL
- ▶ C library from the **GNU** project
- ▶ Designed for performance, standards compliance and portability
- ▶ Found on all **GNU / Linux** host systems
- ▶ Of course, actively maintained
- ▶ Quite big for small embedded systems: approx 2.5 MB on **arm** (version 2.9 - **libc**: 1.5 MB, **libm**: 750 KB)
- ▶ 2.18 is current as of Sept-2013



## uClibc

<http://www.uclibc.org/> from **CodePoet Consulting**

- ▶ License: LGPL
- ▶ Lightweight C library for small embedded systems
- ▶ High configurability: many features can be enabled or disabled through a **menuconfig** interface
- ▶ Works only with Linux/uClinux, works on most embedded architectures
- ▶ No stable ABI, different ABI depending on the library configuration
- ▶ Focus on size rather than performance
- ▶ Small compile time

## uClibc (2)

- ▶ Most of the applications compile with uClibc. This applies to all applications used in embedded systems.
- ▶ Size (**arm**): 4 times smaller than **glibc**!  
**uClibc 0.9.30.1**: approx. 600 KB (**libuClibc**: 460 KB, **libm**: 96KB)  
**glibc 2.9**: approx 2.5 MB
- ▶ Used on a large number of production embedded products, including consumer electronic devices
- ▶ Actively maintained, large developer and user base
- ▶ Now supported by **MontaVista**, **TimeSys** and **Wind River**.
- ▶ **15 May 2012, uClibc 0.9.33.2 Released**

## Honey, I shrunk the programs!

C program	Compiled with shared libraries		Compiled statically	
	glibc	uClibc	glibc	uClibc
Plain "hello world" (stripped)	5.6 K (glibc 2.9)	5.4 K (uClibc 0.9.30.1)	472 K (glibc 2.9)	18 K (uClibc 0.9.30.1)
Busybox (stripped)	245 K (older glibc)	231 K (older uClibc)	843 K (older glibc)	311 K (older uClibc)

Executable size comparison on ARM

## eglibc



« Embedded glibc », under the LGPL

- Variant of the GNU C Library (GLIBC) designed to work well on embedded systems
- Strives to be source and binary compatible with GLIBC
- eglibc's goals include reduced footprint, configurable components, better support for cross-compilation and cross-testing.
- Can be built without support for NIS, locales, IPv6, and many other features.
- Supported by a consortium, with Freescale, MIPS, MontaVista and Wind River as members.
- The Debian distribution is switching to eglibc too:  
<http://blog.aurel32.net/?p=47>
- <http://www.eglibc.org>
- Thu Sep 5 23:25:59 2013 UTC (2 weeks, 5 days ago) by joseph

## Other smaller C libraries

- Several other smaller C libraries have been developed, but none of them have the goal of allowing the compilation of large existing applications
- They need specially written programs and applications
- Choices :
  - Dietlibc, <http://www.fefe.de/dietlibc/>. Approximately 70 KB.
  - Newlib, <http://sources.redhat.com/newlib/>
  - Klibc, <http://www.kernel.org/pub/linux/libs/klibc/>, designed for use in an initramfs or initrd at boot time. 2.0/ 05-Oct-2012 19:08

## Building a toolchain (3)

- Many decisions must be made when building a toolchain
  - Choosing the C library
  - Choosing the version of the different components
  - Choosing the configuration of the toolchain
  - Which ABI should be used ? Toolchains for the ARM architecture for example, can generate binaries using the OABI (Old ABI) or the EABI (Embedded ABI), that are incompatible
  - Should the toolchain support software floating point, or does the hardware support floating point operations ?
  - Should the toolchain support locales, IPv6, or other specific features ?

## Get a precompiled toolchain

- Solution that most people choose, because it is the simplest and most convenient solution
- First, determine what toolchain you need: CPU, endianness, C library, component versions, ABI, soft float or hard float, etc.
- Many toolchains are freely available pre-compiled on the Web
- CodeSourcery, <http://www.mentor.com/embedded-software/codesourcery>, is a reference in that area, but they only provide glibc toolchains.
- See also <http://elinux.org/Toolchains>

## <http://elinux.org/Toolchains>

- 3 Getting a toolchain
  - 3.1 Prebuilt toolchains
    - 3.1.1 CodeSourcery
    - 3.1.2 Linaro (ARM)
    - 3.1.3 DENX ELDK
    - 3.1.4 Scratchbox
    - 3.1.5 Fedora ARM
    - 3.1.6 Embedded Debian cross-tools packages
    - 3.1.7 Free Pascal
  - 3.2 Toolchain building systems
    - 3.2.1 Buildroot
    - 3.2.2 Crossdev (Gentoo)
    - 3.2.3 Crosstool-NG
    - 3.2.4 Crossdev/tsrpm (Timesys)
    - 3.2.5 OSELAS Toolchain()
    - 3.2.6 Bitbake

## Installing and using a precompiled toolchain

- ▶ Follow the installation procedure proposed by the vendor
- ▶ Usually, it is simply a matter of extracting a tarball at the proper place
- ▶ Then, add the path to toolchain binaries in your **PATH**:  
`export PATH=/path/to/toolchain/bin/:$PATH`

## Toolchain building utilities (2)

### ▶ Crosstool

- ▶ The precursor, written by Dan Kegel
- ▶ Set of scripts and patches, glibc-only
- ▶ Not really maintained anymore
- ▶ <http://www.kegel.com/crosstool>

### ▶ Crosstool-ng

- ▶ Rewrite of **Crosstool**, with a **menuconfig**-like configuration system
- ▶ Feature-full: supports **uClibc**, **glibc**, **eglibc**, hard and soft float, many architectures
- ▶ Actively maintained
- ▶ <http://crosstool-ng.org/>

## Toolchain building utilities (3)

Many root filesystem building systems also allow the construction of cross-compiling toolchain

### ▶ Buildroot

- ▶ Makefile-based, **uClibc** only, maintained by the community
- ▶ <http://buildroot.uclibc.org>

### ▶ PTXdist

- ▶ Makefile-based, **uClibc** or **glibc**, maintained mainly by Pengutronix
- ▶ [http://www.pengutronix.de/software/ptxdist/index\\_en.html](http://www.pengutronix.de/software/ptxdist/index_en.html)

### ▶ OpenEmbedded

- ▶ The feature-full, but complex building system
- ▶ <http://www.openembedded.org/>

## yocto Project

- <https://www.yoctoproject.org/>
- The Yocto Project is an open source collaboration project that provides templates, tools and methods to help you create custom Linux-based systems for embedded products regardless of the hardware architecture.
- It's not an embedded Linux distribution
  - it creates a custom one for you
- <https://www.yoctoproject.org/download/texas-instruments-arm-cortex-a8-development-board-beagleboard-2>