

# 2023-03-28

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## Q & A

### Basic Concepts @ OP-TEE.0327.md

Question: [09:12] What is OP-TEE?

Answer:

OP-TEE (Open Portable Trusted Execution Environment) is an open-source project that aims to provide a secure and trusted execution environment for software applications on devices. OP-TEE is primarily designed for Arm TrustZone technology, which is used in various processors to create a secure area (trusted execution environment) separate from the normal operating system. This separation helps protect sensitive data and code from unauthorized access or tampering.

OP-TEE is made up of several components, including:

1. Secure kernel: This is the core component of OP-TEE that runs in the secure world and manages trusted applications (TAs) and their execution.
2. Trusted applications: These are the secure applications that run within the secure world, providing security services to

normal applications.

3. Client API: This is the interface that normal applications use to communicate with trusted applications.
4. TEE Internal Core API: This is the interface used by trusted applications to access TEE services provided by the secure kernel.

OP-TEE is widely used in industries like mobile devices, IoT, automotive, and more, where security is of paramount importance. The project is maintained by Linaro, a collaborative organization that focuses on improving open-source software for Arm-based platforms.

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Question: [09:13] What is the prefix OP of OP-TEE?

Answer:

The prefix “OP” in OP-TEE stands for “Open Portable.” It signifies that the project is an open-source implementation of a Trusted Execution Environment (TEE) that can be portably used across various platforms, mainly built around Arm TrustZone technology. The name highlights the goals of providing both transparency and flexibility to developers and users who want to create secure applications and services on a wide range of devices.

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Question: [09:13] Are there alternative technologies of OP-TEE?

Answer:

Yes, there are alternative technologies to OP-TEE that provide trusted execution environments or similar security features. Some of them include:

1. Intel SGX (Software Guard Extensions): Intel SGX is a set of security-related instruction codes that are built into some Intel CPUs. It allows developers to create secure enclaves, which are isolated memory regions that protect sensitive data and code from unauthorized access, even from the host operating system or a hypervisor.
2. AMD SEV (Secure Encrypted Virtualization): AMD SEV is a hardware feature found in some AMD processors that encrypts the memory of virtual machines to protect data from unauthorized access. It aims to provide a secure execution environment for applications running in virtualized environments.
3. ARM TrustZone-M: TrustZone-M is a security extension for ARM Cortex-M processors, targeting microcontroller devices used in IoT, industrial control, and other embedded systems. While OP-TEE targets TrustZone technology in application processors, TrustZone-M is tailored for microcontrollers.
4. Google Titan M: Titan M is a custom security chip developed by Google to provide a secure environment for storing sensitive data and performing cryptographic operations on its Pixel smartphones. It is designed to protect the integrity of the bootloader, verify the operating system, and secure user data.
5. Apple Secure Enclave: The Secure Enclave is a coprocessor found in Apple devices, such as iPhones and iPads, that provides a secure environment for cryptographic operations and storage of sensitive data like encryption keys, biometric information, and device passcodes.

These technologies may have different implementations, features, and target applications, but they all aim to enhance security by providing isolated execution environments and protecting sensitive data from unauthorized access.

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Question: [09:14] Does OP-TEE a software or a hardware solution?

Answer:

OP-TEE is primarily a software solution that leverages underlying hardware capabilities, specifically Arm TrustZone technology, to provide a secure and trusted execution environment for software applications on devices.

OP-TEE includes a secure kernel, trusted applications, and APIs that enable secure communication between the normal and secure worlds. While OP-TEE is a software implementation, it relies on the hardware-based security features provided by Arm TrustZone to create a separate, secure area for sensitive data and code execution.

In summary, OP-TEE is a software solution that takes advantage of hardware-based security technologies to achieve its goals of providing a secure environment for running trusted applications.

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Question: [09:15] Is OP-TEE a firmware?

Answer:

OP-TEE can be considered a firmware component, as it is a low-level software that interacts directly with the hardware and provides security services to the system. It serves as the trusted execution environment for devices using Arm TrustZone technology.

Firmware is a type of software that is typically stored in non-volatile memory and provides basic functionality or services to a device's hardware. In the case of OP-TEE, it provides the secure kernel, trusted applications, and APIs for managing and interacting with the secure environment.

OP-TEE is often integrated into the boot process of a device, alongside other firmware components like the bootloader, and it initializes the secure environment before the main operating system starts. This ensures that the secure services and trusted applications provided by OP-TEE are available to the system throughout its operation.

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Question: [09:15] Are there successful cases of OP-TEE?

Answer:

Yes, there have been successful use cases of OP-TEE across various industries and applications that require a secure and trusted execution environment. Some of these include:

1. Mobile devices: OP-TEE is used in mobile devices like smartphones and tablets to provide a secure environment for handling sensitive data, such as biometric information, cryptographic keys, and DRM (Digital Rights Management) protection.
2. IoT devices: Internet of Things (IoT) devices, such as smart home appliances, wearables, and industrial sensors, benefit from the security provided by OP-TEE. It enables these devices to handle sensitive data securely, execute cryptographic operations, and maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the data being transmitted.
3. Automotive systems: OP-TEE can be used in automotive systems to secure in-vehicle communication, protect sensitive data, and enable secure over-the-air updates.
4. Payment systems: OP-TEE can provide a secure environment for payment applications, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of financial transactions and sensitive user data.
5. Healthcare devices: Medical devices and healthcare systems can utilize OP-TEE to securely store and process patient data, protecting it from unauthorized access and tampering.

While specific implementations may vary, these examples demonstrate the versatility and effectiveness of OP-TEE in providing a secure and trusted environment for a wide range of applications. The open-source nature of OP-TEE also makes it possible for developers and organizations to customize and adapt the software to fit their unique security requirements.

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Question: [09:16] What are different between ARM OP-TEE and Intel SMM? Please also summarize in a table.

Answer:

ARM OP-TEE and Intel SMM are different security technologies that provide secure and isolated execution environments for sensitive operations. Here's a comparison of the two:

1. ARM OP-TEE: - Primarily designed for ARM-based platforms using TrustZone technology. - Open-source implementation, maintained by Linaro. - Provides a secure kernel, trusted applications, and APIs for communication between the normal and secure worlds. - Focuses on creating a Trusted Execution Environment (TEE) for secure application execution. - Targets a variety of industries, including mobile devices, IoT, automotive systems, and more.
2. Intel SMM (System Management Mode): - Designed for Intel x86 processors. - A proprietary implementation by Intel. - Provides a separate CPU mode (SMM) with its own address space and execution environment. - Focuses on handling low-level system management tasks, such as power management, hardware monitoring, and firmware updates. - Primarily used for system management tasks on PCs, servers, and other x86-based systems.

Summary in a table:

Feature/Aspect	ARM OP-TEE	Intel SMM
Platform	ARM-based systems	Intel x86 processors
Implementation	Open-source	Proprietary
Primary Focus	Trusted Execution Environment (TEE)	System Management Tasks
Typical Applications	Mobile, IoT, automotive, etc.	PCs, servers, x86-based systems
Architecture	ARM TrustZone	System Management Mode

Please note that while both technologies provide a secure and isolated execution environment, they serve different purposes and target different platforms. ARM OP-TEE is designed to enable secure applications on ARM-based devices, while Intel SMM is used for low-level system management tasks on Intel x86-based systems.

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Question: [15:19] <https://github.com/OP-TEE>

Answer:

The link you provided, <https://github.com/OP-TEE>, is the official GitHub repository for the OP-TEE project. This repository contains the source code, documentation, and other resources related to OP-TEE, an open-source Trusted Execution Environment (TEE) based on the Arm TrustZone technology.

The repository is organized into several sub-projects, including:

1. `optee_os`: The core component, which includes the secure kernel and related components that run within the secure world. It manages trusted applications, resources, and secure context switching.
2. `optee_client`: The library implementing the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API, which enables normal world applications to communicate with trusted applications in the secure world.
3. `optee_test`: A set of tests and examples to verify the functionality of the OP-TEE system, including trusted application examples and test suites for various cryptographic operations.
4. `build`: A set of scripts and configuration files to help users build and compile the OP-TEE components for different target platforms.

The GitHub repository is an excellent starting point for developers interested in working with OP-TEE, as it provides the necessary resources and documentation to understand, build, and deploy OP-TEE on supported platforms. If you are interested in learning more or contributing to the project, you can explore the repository, read the documentation, and follow the guidelines provided.

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## Multi-Thread & Multi-Process @ OP-TEE.0327.md

Question: [13:51] What is secure context switching in TrustZone?

Answer:

Secure context switching in TrustZone refers to the process of transitioning between different secure contexts (trusted applications) within the secure world while maintaining isolation and security. ARM TrustZone technology provides a hardware-based separation between the normal world and the secure world, allowing both to run independently and securely.

In the context of OP-TEE and TrustZone, when multiple trusted applications are running or when a normal world application requests a service from a trusted application, the secure kernel manages the execution of these trusted applications by performing secure context switching. This involves:

1. **Saving the current context:** The secure kernel saves the current state of the active trusted application, including its register values and memory, in a secure location.

2. Restoring the new context: The secure kernel restores the state of the trusted application that is being switched to by loading its previously saved register values and memory.
3. Switching execution: The secure kernel transfers control to the new trusted application, allowing it to continue executing where it left off.

Secure context switching ensures that each trusted application's state is kept separate and secure from others, maintaining isolation and preventing unauthorized access or tampering. Additionally, it allows the secure kernel to manage the concurrent execution of multiple trusted applications and handle requests from normal world applications efficiently.

In summary, secure context switching in TrustZone is the process of managing and transitioning between different trusted applications within the secure world while maintaining isolation, security, and efficient execution.

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Question: [13:53] Does OP-TEE support multi-process?

Answer:

OP-TEE supports multiple trusted applications (TAs) running concurrently within the secure environment provided by the Arm TrustZone. While the secure world in OP-TEE is primarily single-threaded, it can handle multiple processes in the form of trusted applications.

When multiple trusted applications are loaded and running, OP-TEE manages their execution using secure context switching. This ensures that only one trusted application is active at a time, while maintaining isolation and security between different trusted applications. The secure kernel in OP-TEE is responsible for managing resources, handling requests from the normal world, and switching between the trusted applications as needed.

On the normal world side, multiple processes can communicate with different trusted applications simultaneously, and OP-TEE will manage the context switching between them.

In summary, OP-TEE supports multi-process execution in the form of multiple trusted applications running concurrently within the secure environment, while also allowing multiple normal world processes to communicate with these trusted applications.

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Question: [13:56] Can secure kernel and trusted applications in OP-TEE can be multi-thread?

Answer:

As of now, the secure kernel and trusted applications in OP-TEE are primarily single-threaded. The secure world in OP-TEE does not support multi-threading within a single trusted application, meaning each trusted application can only execute one thread at a time.

However, OP-TEE does support parallelism in the sense that it allows multiple trusted applications to be loaded and executed concurrently. This is achieved through the use of secure context switching between different trusted applications, ensuring that only one trusted application is active at a time.

Although the secure environment itself is single-threaded, OP-TEE still enables concurrent communication with normal world applications. Multiple normal world applications can communicate with different trusted applications simultaneously, and OP-TEE will manage the context switching between them.

In summary, the secure kernel and trusted applications in OP-TEE are primarily single-threaded, but parallelism is achieved through secure context switching between multiple trusted applications and concurrent communication with normal world applications.

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Question: [13:57] Does OP-TEE support IPC?

Answer:

Yes, OP-TEE supports Inter-Process Communication (IPC) between trusted applications (TAs) within the secure world and between normal world applications and trusted applications.

1. IPC between trusted applications: Trusted applications in OP-TEE can share data and communicate with each other by invoking other trusted applications. However, the secure kernel must intermediate such communication to ensure

isolation and maintain security. Trusted applications use the TEE\_InvokeTACommand function to invoke another trusted application and pass data as parameters.

2. IPC between normal world applications and trusted applications: OP-TEE supports communication between normal world applications and trusted applications through the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API. Normal world applications can open a session with a trusted application, invoke commands, and share data with the trusted application while maintaining security.

In both cases, OP-TEE manages the IPC to ensure isolation between different trusted applications and maintain the security of the secure environment. While the communication mechanisms may vary, OP-TEE provides the necessary APIs and infrastructure to support IPC between trusted applications and between normal world applications and trusted applications.

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## Memory @ OP-TEE.0327.md

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Question: [13:59] Does OP-TEE support shared memory?

Answer:

Yes, OP-TEE supports shared memory, which allows normal world applications to share data with trusted applications (TAs) within the secure environment. Shared memory is used for exchanging data between the normal world and the secure world while maintaining security and isolation.

In OP-TEE, shared memory is managed by the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API, which provides functions for allocating, registering, and releasing shared memory. When a normal world application wants to share data with a trusted application, it creates a shared memory buffer using these API functions. The shared memory buffer is then passed as a parameter to the trusted application when invoking a command.

The secure kernel in OP-TEE ensures that the shared memory buffer is accessible by both the normal world application and the trusted application while preventing unauthorized access or tampering. The secure kernel also maintains the isolation between different trusted applications by limiting access to the shared memory buffers associated with each trusted application.

Please note that shared memory in OP-TEE is primarily used for communication between normal world applications and trusted applications. Sharing memory directly between different trusted applications is generally not supported, as it can compromise the isolation and security provided by the secure environment. Instead, trusted applications communicate with each other using the TEE\_InvokeTACommand function, as mentioned in a previous answer regarding IPC support.

In summary, OP-TEE supports shared memory for exchanging data between normal world applications and trusted applications while maintaining security and isolation within the secure environment.

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Question: [14:06] Can secure world can access memory in normal world?

Answer:

In general, the secure world in OP-TEE can access memory in the normal world, but it must do so with caution. The secure world has a higher level of privilege, allowing it to access both secure and normal world memory. However, accessing normal world memory from the secure world can introduce potential security risks, such as data leaks or manipulation of sensitive information.

To minimize such risks, OP-TEE employs a set of precautions and guidelines:

1. Use shared memory: When secure world applications need to access data from the normal world, it is recommended to use shared memory, which is explicitly allocated and managed by the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API. This ensures proper isolation and access control for the shared data.
2. Validate memory addresses: If the secure world must access normal world memory directly, it should first validate the memory address range to ensure it doesn't overlap with secure memory or any other protected memory region.
3. Be cautious of data manipulation: The secure world should be aware that normal world memory can be manipulated or tampered with by potentially malicious software running in the normal world. Sensitive operations should not rely solely on data stored in normal world memory without additional validation or protection.

4. Minimize normal world memory access: The secure world should minimize direct access to normal world memory whenever possible and instead rely on secure memory or shared memory buffers for data exchange.

While the secure world in OP-TEE can access normal world memory, it should be done with caution and following proper guidelines to maintain the security and isolation provided by the ARM TrustZone technology.

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Question: [14:07] Can normal world access memory in secure world?

Answer:

In the context of OP-TEE and Arm TrustZone technology, the normal world cannot directly access the memory in the secure world. The TrustZone technology enforces hardware-based isolation between the normal and secure worlds, which prevents normal world software from accessing or tampering with secure world memory.

The secure world memory, which includes the secure kernel, trusted applications, and their associated data, is protected from unauthorized access by the normal world. This ensures that sensitive data and operations within the secure world remain confidential and secure.

If a normal world application needs to exchange data with a trusted application in the secure world, it must use shared memory, which is explicitly allocated and managed by the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API. This provides a controlled mechanism for data exchange between the normal and secure worlds, maintaining security and isolation.

In summary, the normal world cannot directly access memory in the secure world, thanks to the hardware-based isolation provided by Arm TrustZone technology. Data exchange between the two worlds is facilitated through shared memory, which is managed by the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API.

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## Network @ OP-TEE.0327.md

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Question: [14:08] Does OP-TEE support network communication in secure world?

Answer:

OP-TEE does not provide built-in support for direct network communication from within the secure world. The main reason for this is to maintain the security and isolation of the secure environment, as exposing networking capabilities directly to the secure world could introduce potential vulnerabilities or attack surfaces.

In most use cases, network communication is handled by normal world applications. If there is a need for secure communication involving trusted applications in the secure world, it is usually done indirectly:

1. Normal world applications handle network communication and exchange data with trusted applications in the secure world using the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API and shared memory.
2. Secure operations, such as encryption, decryption, or authentication, can be performed by trusted applications in the secure world. The normal world application can then send or receive the processed data over the network.
3. If end-to-end security is required, the normal world application can use additional encryption or authentication protocols, in conjunction with secure operations performed by trusted applications.

By handling network communication in the normal world and only exchanging data with the secure world as needed, OP-TEE maintains the isolation and security of the secure environment while still enabling secure network communication indirectly.

In summary, OP-TEE does not support direct network communication within the secure world. Instead, network communication is typically handled by normal world applications, which can securely exchange data with trusted applications in the secure world using the GlobalPlatform TEE Client API and shared memory.

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## The article @ TrustZone.0329.md

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Question: [15:30] <https://genode.org/documentation/articles/trustzone>

Answer:



The link you've shared (<https://genode.org/documentation/articles/trustzone>) directs to an article on Genode's website that discusses TrustZone technology. Genode is an open-source operating system framework focused on creating a secure and scalable environment for running multiple instances of software. TrustZone is a security technology developed by ARM, which is widely used in modern processors.

TrustZone technology aims to provide a secure execution environment for trusted applications, protecting them from potential security threats posed by untrusted applications. It achieves this by dividing the system into two distinct worlds: the "Secure World" and the "Normal World." These two worlds run concurrently on the same hardware, but they are isolated from each other, ensuring that sensitive data and operations remain protected.

The "Secure World" is designed to handle security-sensitive tasks, while the "Normal World" handles general-purpose tasks. To switch between the two worlds, ARM provides a secure monitor call (SMC) instruction that manages the transitions.

Genode leverages TrustZone technology to enhance the security of its operating system framework. By using TrustZone, Genode can isolate critical parts of the system and applications from the rest of the system, reducing the risk of sensitive data leaks or unauthorized access.

If you have any specific questions about TrustZone or Genode, feel free to ask, and I'll do my best to help.

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Question: [15:31] Please summarize the following articles in short.

Answer:

It appears you forgot to provide the articles that you'd like me to summarize. Please provide the links or titles of the articles, and I'll be happy to provide summaries for you.

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Question: [17:37] Please compare TrustZone and TPM in a table.

Answer:

Feature	TrustZone	TPM
Purpose	Hardware-based security solution	Hardware-based security solution
Security functions	Freely programmable	Fixed-function
Execution environment	Secure world on ARM-based SoC	Standalone chip
Isolation	Two worlds: Secure and Non-secure	Separate from CPU
Complexity	Varies, from simple libraries to full OS	Limited, designed for specific functions
Interaction with peripherals	NS bit determines peripheral access control	Communicates via standard bus protocols
Cryptographic capabilities	Software implemented, based on user needs	Built-in cryptographic functions
Secure storage	Depends on SoC implementation	Built-in non-volatile storage
Secure boot	SoC-dependent, can be implemented	Provides support for secure boot process
Virtualization support	Limited, not designed for virtualization	Not applicable
Flexibility	More versatile, programmable functions	Less versatile, fixed-function
Performance impact	Depends on implementation complexity	Minimal, as it operates independently

Please note that this comparison is a high-level overview of TrustZone and TPM. The specific features and capabilities may vary depending on the implementation and the SoC used for TrustZone or the TPM version and vendor.

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Question: [17:40] What is bootstrap code?

Answer:



Bootstrap code, also known as boot code, bootloader, or bootstrapping, is a small program responsible for initializing a computer's hardware components and loading the operating system (OS) into memory. When a computer is powered on or restarted, the bootstrap code is the first code to execute, typically stored in a fixed location, such as a Read-Only Memory (ROM) chip, or firmware like Basic Input/Output System (BIOS) or Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI).

The primary function of the bootstrap code is to perform hardware checks, initialize essential hardware components (like CPU, memory, and peripherals), and locate the operating system's kernel. Once the kernel is found, the bootstrap code loads it into memory and transfers control to the kernel, enabling the OS to start and manage system resources.

In summary, bootstrap code is responsible for the initial steps in the boot process, laying the groundwork for the operating system to take over and provide a functional environment for the user.

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Question: [17:44] What are two lines in the section "Starting point" in the article?

Answer:

In the context of the "Starting point" section of the article, two lines refer to two distinct approaches to exploring TrustZone technology:

1. Line 1: Utilize TrustZone as a virtualization solution, exploring its potential to host multiple virtual machines or support multiple operating systems in the secure and non-secure worlds. This line of experimentation seeks to understand TrustZone's capabilities as a virtualization mechanism.
  2. Line 2: Use TrustZone as an alternative to Trusted Platform Modules (TPM), focusing on its ability to implement security functions and protect sensitive information within the secure world. This line of experimentation aims to investigate the versatility and programmability of TrustZone as a security mechanism compared to fixed-function TPMs.
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