The cpia2 driver

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Notes to developers

- This is a driver version stripped of the 2.4 back compatibility and old MJPEG ioctl API. See cpia2.sf.net for 2.4 support.

Programmer's overview of cpia2 driver

Cpia2 is the second generation video coprocessor from VLSI Vision Ltd (now a division of ST Microelectronics). There are two versions. The first is the STV0672, which is capable of up to 30 frames per second (fps) in frame sizes up to CIF, and 15 fps for VGA frames. The STV0676 is an improved version, which can handle up to 30 fps VGA. Both coprocessors can be attached to two CMOS sensors - the vvl6410 CIF sensor and the vvl6500 VGA sensor. These will be referred to as the 410 and the 500 sensors, or the CIF and VGA sensors.

The two chipsets operate almost identically. The core is an 8051 processor, running two different versions of firmware. The 672 runs the VP4 video processor code, the 676 runs VP5. There are a few differences in register mappings for the two chips. In these cases, the symbols defined in the header files are marked with VP4 or VP5 as part of the symbol name.

The cameras appear externally as three sets of registers. Setting register values is the only way to control the camera. Some settings are interdependant, such as the sequence required to power up the camera. I will try to make note of all of these cases.

The register sets are called blocks. Block 0 is the system block. This section is always powered on when the camera is plugged in. It contains registers that control housekeeping functions such as powering up the video processor. The video processor is the VP block. These registers control how the video from the sensor is processed. Examples are timing registers, user mode (vga, qvga), scaling, cropping, framerates, and so on. The last block is the video compressor (VC). The video stream sent from the camera is compressed as Motion JPEG (JPEGA). The VC controls all of the compression parameters. Looking at the file cpia2_registers.h, you can get a full view of these registers and the possible values for most of them.

One or more registers can be set or read by sending a usb control message to the camera. There are three modes for this. Block mode requests a number of contiguous registers. Random mode reads or writes random registers with a tuple structure containing address/value pairs. The repeat mode is only used by VP4 to load a firmware patch. It contains a starting address and a sequence of bytes to be written into a gpio port.