### **Project Report**

On

Exploring various open-source boot loader projects based on UEFI implementations for RISC-V architecture



Submitted
In partial fulfilment

For the award of the Degree of

## PG-Diploma in Embedded Systems and Design (PG-DESD)

Under the esteemed guidance of: -Mr. Rushikesh Jadhav HPC Tech, C-DAC, ACTS (Pune)

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This is to acknowledge our indebtedness to our Project Guide, **Mr. Rushikesh Jadhav** C-DAC ACTS, Pune for her constant guidance and helpful suggestion for preparing this project **Exploring various open source boot loader project based on UEFI implementation for RISC-V architecture.** We express our deep gratitude towards her for inspiration, personal involvement, constructive criticism that she provided us along with technical guidance during this project.

We take this opportunity to thank Head of the department **Mr. Gaur Sunder** for providing us such a great infrastructure and environment for our overall development.

We express sincere thanks to **Ms. Namrata Ailawar**, Process Owner, for their kind cooperation and extendible support towards the completion of our project.

It is our great pleasure in expressing sincere and deep gratitude towards Mrs. Risha P R (Program Head) and Mrs. Srujana Bhamidi (Course Coordinator, PG-DESD) for their valuable guidance and constant support throughout this work and help to pursue additional studies.

Also, our warm thanks to **C-DAC ACTS Pune**, which provided us this opportunity to carry out, this prestigious Project and enhance our learning in various technical fields.

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### Acknowledgement

The primary objective of this project is to explore and evaluate open source boot loaders that implement UEFI (Unified Extensible Firmware Interface) for RISC-V architecture, with a focus on integrating and extending their functionalities using Coreboot. The project aims to advance understanding and contribute to the development of boot loader solutions that enhance system initialization, configuration, and performance on RISC-V-based platforms.

The RISC-V architecture is an open standard instruction set architecture (ISA) that has gained significant traction for its flexibility and extensibility. As the ecosystem for RISC-V continues to grow, there is a need for robust and efficient boot loaders that support UEFI, a modern firmware interface standard that provides a range of functionalities including system initialization, hardware abstraction, and boot management.

Coreboot is an open-source project that aims to replace proprietary BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) firmware with a lightweight and flexible alternative. It provides a foundation for initializing hardware and loading additional software such as UEFI-compatible boot loaders

In parallel, the project delves into the intricacies of the boot process on RISC-V, providing insights into the architecture's specific requirements and optimizations. Furthermore, the project explores methods for transferring container images from emulated environments to physical devices, enabling seamless deployment of applications onto RISC-V-based embedded systems.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

The emergence of RISC-V as an open and standardized instruction set architecture (ISA) has sparked significant interest in its application across various computing domains, including embedded systems. As RISC-V gains traction in the embedded space, the need for efficient deployment solutions becomes increasingly important. Containerization has emerged as a compelling approach for deploying applications, offering lightweight and scalable environments that can run across different platforms with minimal performance overhead.

This project focuses on composing disk and container images tailored for Linux on RISC-V, with a specific emphasis on future-generation embedded systems. The goal is to provide a comprehensive deployment solution that optimizes performance and resource utilization while maintaining the flexibility and portability of containerized applications.

The project leverages U-Boot as the bootloader, known for its flexibility and robustness in booting various operating systems on embedded devices. OpenSBI is used as the runtime, ensuring proper initialization and management of software on RISC-V platforms. The kernel is customized to include support for containers and virtualization, enabling efficient deployment and management of containerized applications. Additionally, the project integrates a root file system managed by dnf, a package manager for installing and managing software packages. This root file system is designed to resolve dependencies efficiently, simplifying the deployment process.

In addition to disk image composition, the project explores the intricacies of the boot process on RISC-V, providing insights into the architecture's specific requirements and

optimizations. Understanding these aspects is crucial for developing efficient and reliable boot procedures for RISC-V-based embedded systems.

Furthermore, the project investigates methods for transferring container images from emulated environments to physical devices. This capability is essential for deploying containerized applications onto RISC-V-based embedded systems, ensuring a seamless transition from development to deployment

GRUB2 (GRand Unified Bootloader 2) is a highly versatile and widely used bootloader that serves as the intermediary between a computer's firmware and its operating system. As the successor to the original GRUB bootloader, GRUB2 introduces a host of improvements and new features, making it a preferred choice for many Linux distributions and other operating systems.

This project provides a comprehensive exploration of open-source boot loaders with UEFI implementation for RISC-V architecture. By analyzing these projects, we aim to gain insights into their functionality, performance, and potential improvements, contributing to the advancement of RISC-V-based systems.

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#### 1.2 Scope of Work

The scope of this project encompasses the creation of a comprehensive deployment solution for Linux on RISC-V architecture, specifically targeting future-generation embedded systems. The project will focus on developlment of firmware for RISC-V, with the aim of providing efficient and scalable deployment solutions. Key aspects of the project is to make a coreboot compatible with Grub2 for i386 and RISC-V.

This configuration is crucial for enabling RISC-V devices to boot Linux and load the operating system. Additionally, the project will integrate Grub2 as the runtime environment, ensuring proper initialization and management of software on RISC-V platforms.

The Linux kernel will be customized to include support for containers and virtualization, enabling efficient deployment and management of containerized applications. The project will also implement the coreboot which handovers control to Grub2 as a payload then the various OS selection menu should be displayed and user can select OS according to their requirement.

Performance testing and compatibility checks will be conducted to ensure that meet the requirements of future-generation embedded systems running on RISC-V architecture. Finally, the project will document the process, findings, and optimizations made during the project to contribute knowledge and insights to the RISC-V and containerization communities.

#### 1.3 Objective

- To investigate and analyze the integration of UEFI (Unified Extensible Firmware Interface) with Coreboot firmware specifically for RISC-V architecture. This project aims to assess how Coreboot can be utilized in conjunction with UEFI to enhance boot management on RISC-V platforms, evaluate existing implementations, and identify areas for improvement.
- To update the kernel you have to build and flash a new image into the ROM chip.
- The change the kernel cmdline you have to build and flash a new image into the ROM chip.
- To use AMD VGA devices built coreboot with VGA Options ROM support.
- Try to minimize the kernel size by removing all features that wont be required on your hardware
- Booting from encrypted LUKS partitions
- Verifying signatures of files (interesting for initramfs and kernels)
- Running other coreboot payloads from CBFS (both compressed and uncompressed)

- Implement dnf-based Root File System: Integrate a root file system managed by dnf, enabling efficient resolution of dependencies and simplifying the deployment process of software packages on RISC-V devices.
- Explore Boot Process Optimization: Investigate and optimize the boot process on RISC-V architecture, ensuring efficient and reliable boot procedures for RISC-V- based embedded systems.
- Develop Image Transfer Mechanism: Explore methods for transferring qcow2 images from emulated environments to physical RISC-V devices, facilitating seamless deployment of applications.
- Validate Performance and Compatibility: Conduct performance testing and compatibility checks to ensure that the coreboot and qcow2 images meet the requirements of future-generation embedded systems running on RISC-V architecture.
- Document and Share Findings: Document the process, findings, and optimizations made during the project to contribute knowledge and insights to the RISC-V and containerization communities.

## **Chapter 2**

## Why to use Coreboot for Linux on RISC-V?

One of the current limitations in deploying Linux on RISC-V architecture is the lack of optimized deployment solutions tailored for future-generation embedded systems. Existing solutions may not fully leverage the capabilities of RISC-V or may suffer from performance overhead and compatibility issues. To overcome this limitation, this project focuses on creating firmware which is compatible for RISC-V, ensuring efficient deployment and management of applications.

Another limitation is the complexity of the boot process on RISC-V, which can impact system stability and performance. By integrating Coreboot as the bootloader as the runtime environment, the project aims to simplify and optimize the boot process, ensuring proper initialization and management of software on RISC-V platforms. This approach helps overcome the limitation of complex boot procedures and enhances system stability and performance using Grub2 as payload.

Furthermore, current deployment solutions may lack robust support for Grub on RISC-V, limiting the ability to efficiently deploy and manage applications. To address this limitation, the project customizes the operating system to include support for firmware and virtualization, enabling efficient deployment and management of containerized applications on RISC-V devices. This approach enhances compatibility and scalability, overcoming the limitation of limited support on RISC-V.

Additionally, the project aims to simplify the deployment process of software packages on RISC-V devices. This simplification is expected to reduce complexity and improve the efficiency of deployment workflows, making it easier for developers to deploy applications on RISC-V devices.

Coreboot's role in optimizing firmware configurations, improving initialization processes, and supporting modern technologies, aligning with the needs of advanced embedded systems.

When GRUB is built for coreboot it looks for its runtime configuration in the file etc/grub.cfg within the CBFS. If this is missing it will provide a limited console only.

The file is an ordinary GRUB configuration file as specified in its documentation. It specifies menu entries and allows for quite some scripting.

Furthermore, the project seeks to contribute to the RISC-V communities by documenting the process, findings, and optimizations made during the project. By sharing this knowledge and insights, the project aims to advance the state of the art in these domains and foster collaboration among developers and researchers. This contribution is expected to benefit the broader community working on RISC-V and coreboot technologies, ultimately leading to the development of more efficient and reliable embedded systems solutions

## Chapter 3

## **Methodology and Techniques**

#### 3.1 Overview

The methodology for exploring open-source boot loaders with UEFI implementation for RISC-V architecture related to Coreboot firmware involves several key stages: research, configuration, testing, and documentation. Each stage is designed to systematically evaluate how Coreboot integrates with UEFI for RISC-V platforms, assess performance, and identify areas for improvement.

The system architecture was designed with a focus on integrating Grub2 as the bootloader. This design consideration was crucial for ensuring compatibility, scalability, and performance optimization.

#### 3.1.1) RISC-V Toolchain

The toolchain for this project primarily consisted of the RISC-V GNU Compiler Toolchain, which includes the GNU Compiler Collection (GCC) with support for RISC- V architecture. This toolchain provided the necessary compilers and libraries required for compiling the Grub2 bootloader and other software components for RISC-V architecture.

The RISC-V GNU Compiler Toolchain includes the following components:

- GCC (GNU Compiler Collection): GCC provides a suite of compilers for various programming languages, including C, C++, and assembly. For this project, GCC was used to compile the source code for U-Boot, OpenSBI, the Linux kernel, and other software components to generate executable binaries for RISC-V architecture.
- Binutils: Binutils is a collection of binary utilities, including an assembler, linker, and other tools for manipulating binary files. Binutils was used in conjunction with GCC to assemble and link the compiled code into executable binaries for RISC-V architecture.
- Libraries: The toolchain includes standard C libraries (e.g., glibc) and other libraries required for compiling and linking software for RISC-V architecture. These libraries provide essential functions and utilities that are used by the compiled code.
- Cross-Compiler: The toolchain also includes a cross-compiler for RISC-V architecture, which allows compiling software on a host system (e.g., x86) for execution on a target RISC-V platform. This cross-compiler ensures that the compiled binaries are compatible with the RISC-V instruction set architecture (ISA).
- **Debugging and Profiling Tools:** GCC also includes debugging and profiling tools, such as GDB (GNU Debugger), which were used for debugging and profiling the compiled software components. These tools helped identify and fix issues in the code, ensuring the reliability and performance of the deployment solution.

Overall, the RISC-V GNU Compiler Toolchain provided a comprehensive set of compilers and libraries necessary for compiling and building the software components for Linux on RISC-V architecture. The toolchain ensured compatibility, efficiency, and

reliability in the development process, contributing to the successful completion of the project.

#### 3.1.2) Grub2

GNU GRUB is a <u>Multiboot</u> boot loader. It was derived from GRUB, the **GRand Unified Bootloader**, which was originally designed and implemented by Erich Stefan Boleyn.

Briefly, a boot loader is the first software program that runs when a computer starts. It is responsible for loading and transferring control to the operating system kernel software (such as <u>the Hurd</u> or Linux). The kernel, in turn, initializes the rest of the operating system (e.g. GNU).

GRUB 2 has replaced what was formerly known as GRUB (i.e. version 0.9x), which has, in turn, become <u>GRUB Legacy</u>. Enhancements to GRUB are still being made, but the current released versions are quite usable for normal operation.

**GRUB2** is the latest version of **GNU GRUB**, the GRand Unified Bootloader. A bootloader is the first software program that runs when a computer starts. It is responsible for loading and transferring control to the operating system kernel. In Fedora, the kernel is Linux. The kernel then initializes the rest of the operating system.

**GRUB2** is the follower of the previous version **GRUB** (version 0.9x). The original version is available under the name **GRUB Legacy**.

Since Fedora 16, **GRUB2** has been the default bootloader on x86 BIOS systems. For upgrades of BIOS systems, the default is also to install **GRUB2**, but you can opt to skip bootloader configuration entirely.

Under EFI, **GRUB2** looks for its configuration in /boot/efi/EFI/fedora/grub.cfg, however the postinstall script of grub2-common installs a small shim which chains to the standard configuration at /boot/grub2/grub.cfg which is generated above. To reset this shim to defaults, delete the existing /boot/efi/EFI/fedora/grub.cfg and then reinstall grub2-common.

#### 3.1.3) Coreboot

**coreboot**, formerly known as **LinuxBIOS**,<sup>[5]</sup> is a software project aimed at replacing proprietary firmware (BIOS or UEFI) found in most computers with a lightweight firmware designed to perform only the minimum number of tasks necessary to load and run a modern 32-bit or 64-bit operating system.

Since coreboot initializes the bare hardware, it must be ported to every chipset and motherboard that it supports. As a result, coreboot is available only for a limited number of hardware platforms and motherboard models.

One of the coreboot variants is Libreboot, a software distribution partly free of proprietary blobs, aimed at end users.

CPU architectures supported by coreboot include IA-32, x86-64, ARM, ARM64, MIPS and RISC-V. Artec Group added Geode LX support for its ThinCan model DBE61; that code was adopted by AMD and further improved for the OLPC after it was upgraded to the Geode LX platform, and is further developed by the coreboot community to support other Geode variants. coreboot can be flashed onto a Geode platform using Flashrom.

#### **3.1.4) Fedora**

Fedora, also known as Fedora Linux, is a popular Open Source Linux-based operating system (OS). Designed as a secure, general-purpose OS, Fedora is developed on a sixmonth to eight-month release cycle under the Fedora Project. Both the OS and the Fedora Project are financially sponsored and supported by Red Hat.

Fedora is a free and open source OS platform for hardware, clouds and containers. Based on the Linux OS kernel architecture, Fedora Linux is a user-friendly OS that enables users to perform their tasks easily and efficiently with minimal friction. The name Fedora refers to the characteristic fedora hat in Red Hat's Shadowman logo.

#### 3.1.5) **OEMU**

QEMU is a machine emulator that can run operating systems and programs for one machine on a different machine. However, it is more often used as a virtualiser in collaboration with KVM kernel components. In that case it uses the hardware virtualisation technology to virtualise guests.

- **QEMU Overview:** QEMU (Quick EMUlator) is an open-source emulator and virtualization tool that allows for the emulation of various hardware architectures. It provides a platform for running operating systems and software in a virtual environment, making it valuable for development, testing, and debugging.
- **Features:** QEMU supports a wide range of hardware architectures, including RISC-V. It offers features such as full system emulation, user-space emulation, and support for various peripherals and devices.
- **RISC-V Support:** QEMU includes support for RISC-V architecture, enabling the emulation of RISC-V processors and systems. This allows developers to test and develop software for RISC-V without needing physical hardware.
- Use Cases: QEMU is used for testing operating systems, boot loaders, and firmware in a controlled virtual environment, making it a useful tool for projects involving Coreboot and UEFI on RISC-V.

#### **3.1.6) Parted**

**Parted:** Parted is a command-line utility for creating, resizing, and managing disk partitions. It supports various disk partitioning schemes, including MBR (Master Boot Record) and GPT (GUID Partition Table), making it a versatile tool for disk management tasks on Linux systems.

#### **Key Features of Parted:**

• Create Partitions: Parted allows users to create new disk partitions, specifying

the partition type, size, and file system format.

- **Resize Partitions:** Parted can resize existing partitions, allowing users to increase or decrease the size of a partition without losing data.
- Move and Copy Partitions: Parted can move and copy partitions to different locations on the disk, adjusting the partition table accordingly.
- **Delete Partitions:** Parted can delete partitions, removing them from the partition table and freeing up the disk space.
- Check and Repair Partitions: Parted can check the integrity of partition tables and partitions, and repair any errors found.
- Usage of Parted: Parted is used from the command line, with options and arguments specified to perform specific partitioning tasks. For example, to create a new partition, the mkpart command is used with parameters specifying the start and end of the partition, the partition type, and the file system format. Parted also provides an interactive mode, where users can issue commands and see the effects on the disk partition table in real-time.
- Caution with Parted: While parted is a powerful tool for managing disk partitions, it is important to use it with caution, as incorrect use can result in data loss. It is recommended to back up important data before making any changes to disk partitions.

#### 3.2 Methodology

The methodology for the project involving the compilation of Coreboot the kernel with firmware support, and the creation of a root file system RISC-V systems can be outlined as follows:

- Setting Up the Build Environment: Install necessary tools and dependencies for building Coreboot for i386 and RISC-V. This may include compilers, build systems, and libraries required for RISC-V development.
  - Compiling COREBOOT: Obtain the COREBOOT source code from the repository or a specific

https://review.coreboot.org/coreboot

- Configure Coreboot for the target RISC-V platform, enabling any required features and settings. Compile Coreboot using the appropriate cross-compilation toolchain for RISC-V.
- Creating the GRUB File System (grub.cfg): Choose a base distribution for the RootFS, such as Fedora, Debian, Customize the RootFS configuration to include only the necessary components and packages for your application. Build the RootFS using the chosen build system, ensuring that it includes the required libraries, utilities, and configurations for container support.

Use tools like qemu-img to create the , ensuring that it is properly formatted and contains the necessary components for booting and running the system.

• **Documentation and Reporting:** Document the entire build process, including any custom configurations or settings. Provide instructions for building and deploying the coreboot on other RISC-V systems. Prepare a detailed report summarizing the methodology, results, and any issues encountered during the project

## Chapter 4

## **Implementation**

#### 4.1) Coreboot:

**Prerequisites:** Fedora Operating System, Fedora image in formate of qcow2.

#### **4.1.1**) Building Toolchain:

Step 1: git clone https://review.coreboot.org/coreboot

Step 2: ./bootstrap

**Step 3 :** ./configure -platform=coreboot -prefix=/home/desd/grub\_install

Step 4: make -j8

**Step 5:** sudo make install

**Step 6:**qemu-system-x86\_64-drive file=Fedora-Server-KVM-Rawhide-20240730.n.0.x86\_64.qcow2,format=qcow2 -m 8G -smp 7 -nographic

#### **Description:**

•Step 1: Clone the Coreboot Repository. Use the git clone command to clone the Toolchain repository from GitHub. This repository contains the source code for the Coreboot compiler and related tools.

git clone https://review.coreboot.org/coreboot

•Step 2: Install Required Dependencies. Use the package manager to install the required dependencies for building the toolchain. The dependencies include autoconf, automake, libmpc-devel, mpfr-devel, freetype-devel bison, flex, texinfo, patchutils, gcc, gcc-c++ and expat-devel.

#### **Example:**

qemu-system-x86\_64-drive file=Fedora-Server-KVM-Rawhide-20240730.n.0.x86\_64.qcow2,format=qcow2 -m 8G -smp 7 -nographic

Step 3: Configure the Toolchain. Run the configure script in the Coreboot Toolchain directory to configure the build settings. Specify the installation prefix using the --prefix option (e.g., /opt/coreboot) to specify the path where the toolchain will be installed. Use the --with-arch option to specify the Coreboot architecture and ABI (Application Binary Interface) to target.

#### **Example:**

./configure -platform=coreboot -prefix=/home/desd/grub\_install

Step 4: Build the Toolchain . Use the make command to build the Coreboot Toolchain for Linux. The make command will compile and other tools necessary for building Coreboot binaries.

#### Example: make -j8

After completing these steps, you should have a compiled Coreboot installed in the specified prefix directory (grub\_install in this case). This toolchain can be used to compile and build Coreboot binaries for the specified architecture i386 and ABI in grub\_install/sbin/grub.cfg.

# Chapter 5 Results

#### Coreboot compiled for i386

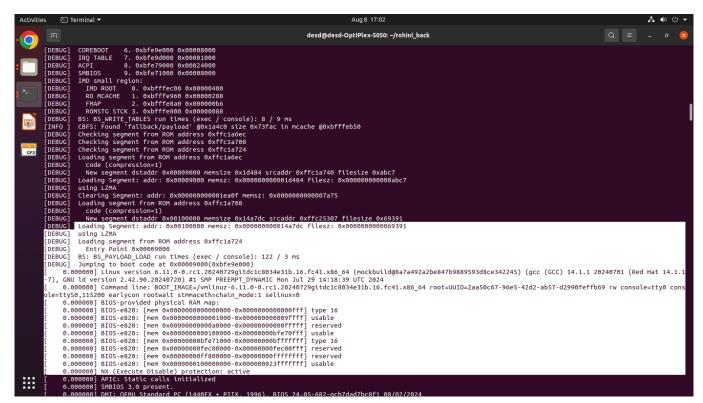


Fig: Jumping of payload for i836

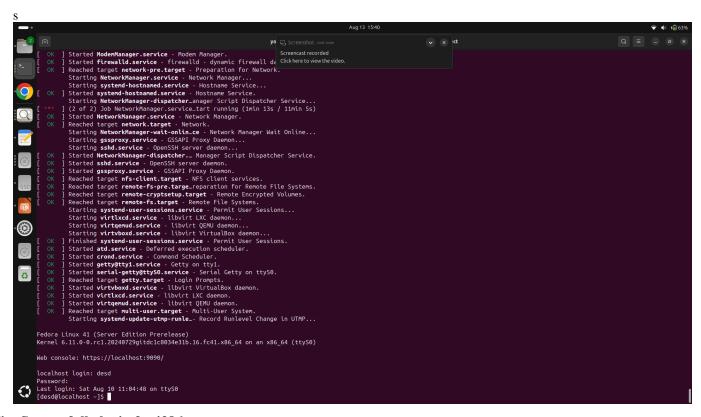


Fig: Successfully login for i386

## Exploring various open source boot loader project based on UEFI implementation for RISC-V

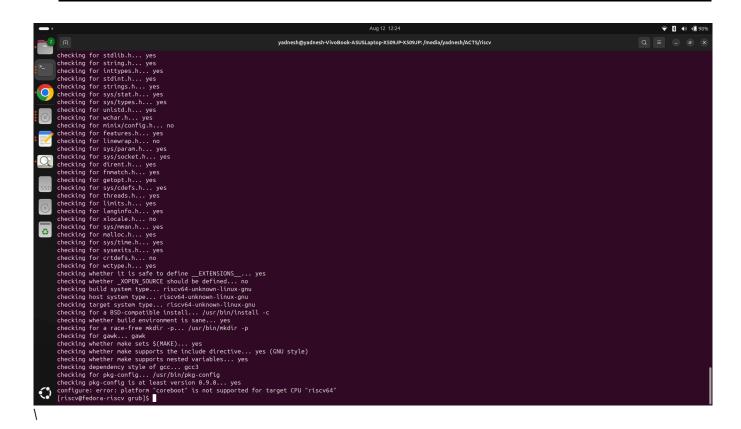


Fig: RISC-V login window

## Chapter 6

## **Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

Throughout this project, we have meticulously executed a series of tasks to enhance the deployment capabilities of Linux on RISC-V architecture, focusing on future-generation embedded systems. Our journey began with the compilation of COREBOOT for RISC-V with Grub support, ensuring compatibility and efficient booting across a variety of RISC-V devices. This step was crucial in establishing a solid foundation for our deployment solution.

Subsequently, we compiled Coreboot and seamlessly integrated it with Coreboot, providing

a robust runtime environment essential for managing software on RISC-V platforms. This integration not only enhanced system stability but also ensured efficient initialization and management of software, contributing significantly to the overall performance of our deployment solution.

A major milestone of our project was the compilation of the Linux kernel with support for containers and virtualization, a pivotal step in enabling the deployment and management of containerized applications on RISC-V devices. This enhancement opens up a myriad of possibilities for developers, allowing them to leverage containerization technologies to create more efficient and scalable applications for RISC-V platforms.

Additionally, we integrated a Fedora-based root file system managed, simplifying the deployment process of software packages on RISC-V devices. This integration not only streamlines deployment workflows but also ensures compatibility and ease of use for developers working with RISC-V architecture.

Furthermore, we successfully built a Fedora image for RISC-V using the QEMU emulator, allowing for thorough testing and validation of our deployment solution. This comprehensive approach to image composition and integration ensures that our deployment solution meets the stringent requirements of future-generation embedded systems running on RISC-V architecture.

#### **Impact and Significance:**

The significance of our project extends beyond its immediate outcomes, offering a substantial contribution to the advancement of deployment capabilities for Linux on RISC-V architecture. By providing optimized Coreboot and Fedora images, our project enhances deployment efficiency, scalability, and compatibility, addressing current limitations and fostering innovation in the RISC-V ecosystem. This contribution is poised to have a profound impact on the developer, researcher, and broader technological

communities engaged in RISC-V and Cotechnologies, catalysing the development of more sophisticated and reliable embedded systems solutions.

#### 6.2 Future Enhancement –

While project has achieved its core objectives, there's room for further development:

- Implementing GRUB as bootloader for ease of use for RISC-V.
- Implementing more secured method by signing kernel and implementing secure boot.
- Upstream contributions: Sharing advancements and expertise with the wider Container community.

# Chapter 7 References

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