

Building Embedded Operating System with IMGUI Demo for *Raspberry π - 4 - model B* with *Yocto*

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Tuesday 24th October, 2023 15:15

revision 2893

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table of contents

1	introduction	3
2	metadata	4
3	configuration	7
3.1	MACHINE	7
3.2	PACKAGE_INSTALL	7
3.3	IMAGE_FSTYPES	8
4	build	9
5	install	11
6	run	12
7	outlook	14

1 introduction

These instructions[5] follow the configuration and build of a Linux-based operating system for *Raspberry π - 4 - model B*[7] with *Yocto*[2]. Find project overview in [6].

The *operating system* (OS) build is done in several steps organized in corresponding sections as follows. Read in Section 2 how to fetch *metadata*. Section 3 shows how to configure the OS build. In Section 4 learn how to build the OS *image* and see how to copy *image* to *SD* card in Section 5. Section 6 is dedicated to post-install issues like the configuration of the WiFi interface from the command line.

2 metadata

Metadata is a set of instructions to build targets. It is organized in *recipe* files with the *.bb* suffix. Further there are *class* files with the suffix *.bbclass* with information shared between *recipes*. Finally, there are configuration files with the extension *.conf*. These define configuration variables to control the build process. *Metadata* is organized in *layers*. Layers logically separate information of a project. *OpenEmbedded*[1] defines the following layer types.

- base layers contain base *metadata* for the build
- machine aka *board support package* (BSP) layers include *hardware* (HW) support
- distribution layers hold the policy configuration
- *software* (SW) layers are used for additional SW
- miscellaneous layers do not fall in upper categories

The complete list of *github* SW *metadata* repositories used in this project includes *Yocto* layers, the *Raspberry π - 4 - model B* BSP layer, a SW layer with custom recipes, and the build configuration itself. Please refer [6] for details.

In short, users fetch *metadata* in contrast to the *real data* fetched by *bitbake* during OS build. See Section 4 for details. It is an user decision where to put fetched *metadata*. However, it is nice to have all layer sub-directories in one location. In these instructions this location is referred as <layer_directory>. The second directory to create is the <build_directory>. This is where the build and build configuration live. I suggest that this one is not inside the <layer_directory> to not mix *data* and *metadata*.

It is very likely that you will need to install *Yocto* requirements[3] to be able to run *bitbake*. Make sure to have the following command-line tools on your host machine: *chrpath*, *diffstat*, *lz4c*, *rpcgen*; Also have a look at your storage device. Fetched *metadata* requires 400 *MB* of free space. The build needs at least 100 *GB*.

I have a shell script to fetch *metadata* from public *github* repositories. This modification may serve people to build their own OS for *Raspberry π - 4 - model B*. The script performs *metadata* fetch, the *bitbake* initialisation and a simple check of installed layers.

```
#!/bin/sh
# metafetch.sh
# fetch rpi metadata

FETCHER=git@github.com
BRANCH=kirkstone

erreur() { echo $* && exit 0; }
confirm() {
    read -p "confirm (y/n) " choix
    [ "$choix" == "y" ] && return 0 || return 1
}

while getopts ":l:b:r:h" option; do
    case $option in
        h ) erreur usage: $0 -l layerdir -b buildir -r branch;;
        l ) LAYER=$OPTARG;;
        b ) BUILD=$OPTARG;;
        r ) BRANCH=$OPTARG;;
        * ) erreur minimal usage: $0 -l layerdir -b buildir;;
    esac
done

[ -n "$LAYER" ] || LAYER=$HOME/yocto_$BRANCH/layer
[ -n "$BUILD" ] || BUILD=$HOME/yocto_$BRANCH/build
[ -d $LAYER ] || mkdir -p $LAYER || erreur cannot create $LAYER
[ -d $BUILD ] || mkdir -p $BUILD || erreur cannot create $BUILD
LAYER=$(realpath $LAYER) && echo fetching $BRANCH in $LAYER || erreur cannot find $LAYER
BUILD=$(realpath $BUILD) && echo fetching configuration in $BUILD || erreur cannot find $BUILD

confirm || ( rm $LAYER; rm $BUILD; erreur stop $0 )

git clone -b $BRANCH $FETCHER:yoctoproject/poky.git $LAYER/poky
git clone -b $BRANCH $FETCHER:openembedded/meta-openembedded.git $LAYER/oe
git clone -b $BRANCH $FETCHER:agherzan/meta-raspberrypi $LAYER/rpi/meta-raspberrypi
git clone $FETCHER:kaloyanski/meta-thc.git $LAYER/thc/meta-thc
```

```

git clone $FETCHER:TripleHelixConsulting/rpiconf.git $BUILD/conf
sed -i s#/home/yocto/layer#/$LAYER/g $BUILD/conf/bblayers.conf || erreur cannot
sed

OEINIT=oe-init-build-env
cd $LAYER/poky && pwd || erreur cannot find $LAYER/poky
[ -x $OEINIT ] && . ./$OEINIT $BUILD || erreur cannot find $OEINIT

bitbake-layers show-layers
# bitbake core-image-x11

```

Download *metafetch.sh* [here](#). It is designed in a way that after a succesful run you may start a build with *bitbake*. The script takes <layer_directory> and <build_directory> from the command-line. You may use next commands to run *metafetch.sh*. The first one is a minimal example. You may specify directories like the first example. Otherwise the script will use default values. The default *Yocto branch* is *kirkstone*. You may want to specify another *branch* with the second command.

```

./metafetch -l <layer_directory> -b <build_directory>
./metafetch -l <layer_directory> -b <build_directory> -r <branch_name>

```

3 configuration

Build configuration is in `<build_directory>/conf`, check files *local.conf* and *bblayers.conf*. *Yocto* layers are specified in *bblayers.conf*. The build directives are in *local.conf*. Variables in this file control the build. Sometimes I call these *directives* to avoid repetitions. Many directives are not covered in these instructions. Please refer *bitbake*[8] documentation for details. It is not always easy to understand the meaning and the relations between different directives. What is more, *bitbake* syntax is pretty complicated. In short, your life can easily become unbearable if the build configuration is too long. Here is a short list.

3.1 MACHINE

No doubt, this is the most important directive, set here to *raspberrypi4-64*. You may want to change this value if you build an OS for a different HW. If you want to examine OS built for *Raspberry π - 4 - model B* on your host machine with *qemu*, set *MACHINE* to *qemuarm64*. I confirm that this works although I did not find this approach very useful to test a *graphical user interface* (GUI).

3.2 PACKAGE_INSTALL

This is where to specify additional SW packages. This is useful for packages not included in the *image* by default. In my experience, the default OS has all necessary programs or compact alternatives. However this is the directive used to append *imgui*.

3.3 IMAGE_FSTYPES

This is another important directive. Here I have removed archived *images* that I do not need to decrease the built time and added the *wic* format to have an *image* file ready to be copied to the *SD* card immediately after the build. See [Section 5](#) for details.

4 build

Yocto provides a list of image types. As I want to have a compact OS and I need a *X* server to run a GUI, I rely on *core-image-x11*^[2]. This is a very basic *X11* image.

The primary build tool of *OpenEmbedded* based projects, such as the *Yocto* project, *bitbake*, works in the `<build_directory>`. Here is a list of the most important sub-directory names by default. These are configurable but usually there is no need to change their default names.

- `<build_directory>/conf` - build (*local.conf*) and layer (*bblayers.conf*) configuration files
- `<build_directory>/downloads` - fetched source code archives
- `<build_directory>/tmp/work` - working directory where source code is extracted, configured, compiled and installed
- `<build_directory>/tmp/deploy/ipk` - final SW packages in *ipk* format
- `<build_directory>/tmp/deploy/images/raspberrypi4-64` - boot files, compiled kernels and OS *images*.

First, you need to initialize build environment.

```
source <layer_directory>/poky/oe-init-build-env <build_directory>
```

This will change your system path to `<build_directory>`. You may run now next command to check the project layers.

```
bitbake-layers show-layers
```

If this is fine, the following command is going to build the OS *image*.

task	description
do_fetch	fetch the source code
do_unpack	unpack the source code
do_patch	apply patches to the source
do_configure	source configuration
do_compile	compile the source code
do_install	copy files to the holding area
do_package	analyse holding area
do_package_write_ipk	create <i>ipk</i> package
do_package_qa	quality checks on the package

Table 1: A list of *bitbake* tasks

```
bitbake core-image-x11
```

Be patient because, unless your host machine is a supercomputer, this will take hours. Find a list of tasks performed by *bitbake* for a typical SW package in Table 1.

5 install

The OS includes a kernel *ARM*, 64 *bit* boot executable *image* of 23*MB*, a *Raspberry π - 4 - model B* configuration of Linux 5.15. The total size of kernel modules is 21*MB*. Happily this kernel release has a *long – term support* (LTS).

Yocto provides multiple package and *image* formats. Further, different ways exist to install *images* on *SD* card. The result is an OS with two partitions - */root* and */boot*. There are not *swap* and *home* partitions. I recommend the classic command-line tool *dd* to copy data. It works fine with different *image* formats like *rpi – sdimg*, *hddimg* and *wic*. The last format is recommended. Find the card device name, usually */dev/sda*, unmount it with *umount* if mounted, and do copy data with a simple command

```
dd if=core-image-x11-raspberrypi4-64.wic of=/dev/sda status=progress
```

note 1: run this command in `<build_directory>/tmp/deploy/images/raspb`
64

note 2: run this command with *root* privileges

note 3: be careful to not specify the device name of your hard drive (see note 2)

The transfer is going to take a while. Once it is over, put the card in you *Raspberry π - 4 - model B* and turn it on. That's it.

6 run

Wireless connection is established via classic command-line tools like *ip* and *iw*. I use a *dynamic host configuration protocol* (DHCP) client, *udhcpc*, and *wpa_supplicant* to store WiFi connection. The shell scripts *wifini.sh* is designed by me and installed in */usr/bin*, as well as a running GUI example to demonstrate the usage of the *Dear ImGui* library.

```
#!/bin/sh
# wifini.sh
# wifi connection requirements:
# wpa_passphrase, wpa_supplicant, ip, iw, grep, awk
# designed by kaloyansen at gmail dot com
# copyleft triplehelix-consulting.com
#####

WIFACE=$(/usr/sbin/iw dev|grep Interface|awk '{print $2}')
WPACONF=/etc/wpa_supplicant.conf
WPASOCKET=/run/wpa_supplicant/$WIFACE
UDHCPID=/run/udhcpc.$WIFACE.pid

erreur() { echo $* && exit 1; }

while getopts ":i:s:h" option; do

    case $option in
        i) WIFACE=$OPTARG;;
        s) SSID=$OPTARG;;
        h) erreur usage: $0 -s SSID;;
        *) erreur $0: option unknown;;
    esac
done

[ -n "$SSID" ] || erreur specify SSID
/usr/sbin/iw dev|grep $SSID > /dev/null && erreur $0: $WIFACE $SSID || echo $0
connecting
/sbin/ip link show $WIFACE | grep UP || /sbin/ip link set $WIFACE up
/usr/sbin/iw $WIFACE scan|grep $SSID || erreur warning: $0 cannot find network
$SSID;
grep $SSID $WPACONF || /usr/bin/wpa_passphrase $SSID >> $WPACONF
[ -S "$WPASOCKET" ] || /usr/sbin/wpa_supplicant -B -D wext -i $WIFACE -c $WPACONF
# [ -f "$UDHCPID" ] ||
/sbin/udhcpc -i $WIFACE || erreur $0 $?

# ip addr show $WIFACE
# echo interface $WIFACE SSID $SSID
# iw $WIFACE link
# ip route show
```

The script is available for download [here](#). Specify network *id* from the command line with a short command-line option *s*. See next example

usage.

```
./wifini -s <SSID>
```

Once an *internet protocol* (IP) address is assigned to *Raspberry π - 4 - model B*, the *secure shell* (SSH) server by *Dropbear*[\[4\]](#) allows for secure remote login, control and file transfer.

7 outlook

This reports the progress in the development of a custom Linux-based OS for *Raspberry π - 4 - model B*[\[7\]](#). The kernel version of this embedded OS is Linux release 5.15. An example GUI application using the *Dear ImGui* library is built as a part of the OS *image*. In addition, an SSH server provides remote connection, data transfer and device control. As the OS is now functional, performance and real-time tests are ongoing.

acronyms

BSP	<i>board support package</i>	4
SSH	<i>secure shell</i>	13
GUI	<i>graphical user interface</i>	7
SW	<i>software</i>	4
HW	<i>hardware</i>	4
OS	<i>operating system</i>	3
DHCP	<i>dynamic host configuration protocol</i>	12
IP	<i>internet protocol</i>	13
LTS	<i>long – term support</i>	11

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