Subject: Freenix GNU SeaBIOS LibreBoot ThinkPads?
Posted by dchmelik on Mon, 11 May 2020 06:19:40 GMT

I see others have 'open hardware' ThinkPads... I have Freenix LibreBoot T500 and want to install either SeaBIOS for (already have) LibreBoot or for (deblobbed) CoreBoot.

I'm not much a hardware person: paid Libiquity to install LibreBoot... didn't realize it's not really a BIOS; only loader; want a BIOS back; know you can install SeaBIOS but there aren't instructions; stable LibreBoot is five years outdated.

I asked freenode Internet Relay Chat (IRC) #libreboot, but main maintainer isn't around; mainly one person (hyper-technical; not as literary/social as average) is who did far less than Libiquity but claims that isn't related (Libiquity was a much larger contributor to LibreBoot than him) but that if you point out a commit page isn't instructions, they threaten ban; say ask Libiquity. I felt like it, and recommend Libiquity--they did a good (hardware) job but don't really want to bother them for a software issue that should be documented by LibreBoot for everyone... for now I don't want to go back to #libreboot (blaming users) but wondering if anyone here went through process installing SeaBIOS?

Seems BBCode is by people focused on popularity of the world wide web (WWW:)
[url=irc://freenode/#libreboot]#libreboot[/url].

Subject: Re: Freenix GNU SeaBIOS LibreBoot ThinkPads?
Posted by KRT1 on Thu, 28 May 2020 23:10:55 GMT

dchmelik wrote on Mon, 11 May 2020 00:19
[...]
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[...]

From my experience building custom images of Libreboot, you can specify SeaBIOS as a "payload", instead of the default GRUB. As such, SeaBIOS is even more of "just a loader" than GRUB is. I was never even able to bring up any menus or prompts. It just boots, that's all.

You can see it in action if you boot something in quemu: it also uses SeaBIOS to my knowledge. To get to a "BIOS-like interface" using qemu, you have to "boot to firmware", which in that case I think is the SeaBIOS feature of "Vitual Machine Firmware", which only applies to VMs I believe.

If I am understanding you correctly, you are possibly looking for a "setup menu" type of feature, similar to what you get from a stock vendor BIOS? If so, then it seems like you are out of luck.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BIOS#Vendors_and_products

Your only hope at this point would be to re-flash the original stock vendor BIOS ROM image. When I used to free ThinkPads, I would always supply those to the buyer just in case they wanted to go back to booting Windows, etc. Without that specific image though, it is nearly impossible to go back to a stock BIOS image, because you usually need Windows to install/update those, and Libreboot does not boot Windows. So you wind up in a Catch-22 situation without the original BIOS ROM image. I was never able to find a stock vendor generic BIOS ROM image that you could re-flash to factory default BIOS. That seems to be a factory-only thing. Although, someone might be clever enough to craft a custom vendor BIOS ROM that would work with your machine. I was not even able to take one from ThinkPad A and move it to ThinkPad B. There is probably a hard-coded serial-number in the ROM or something like that.

Anyway, I could be way off here, and I could be misunderstanding your question. But that was my experience, and I have liberated well over two dozen ThinkPads in my day. YMMV.

Subject: Re: Freenix GNU SeaBIOS LibreBoot ThinkPads?
Posted by dchmelik on Sun, 14 Jun 2020 05:06:50 GMT
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I posted I got it working but must've been offline.