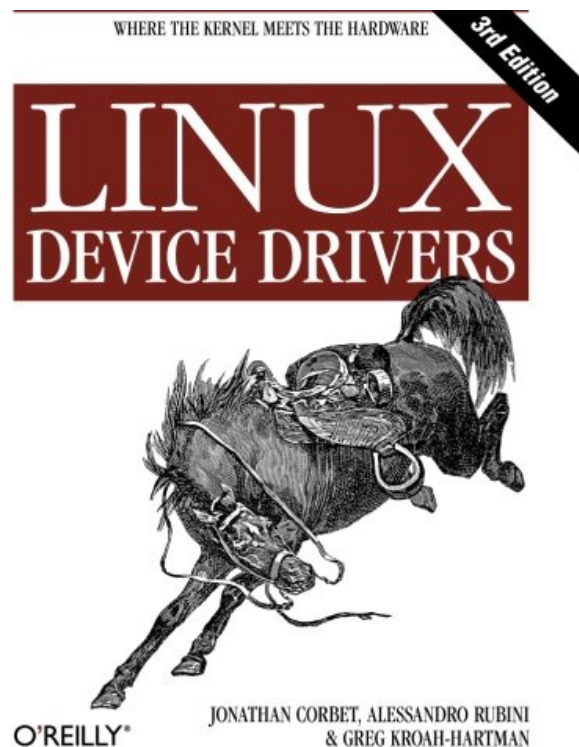


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JONATHAN CORBET, ALESSANDRO
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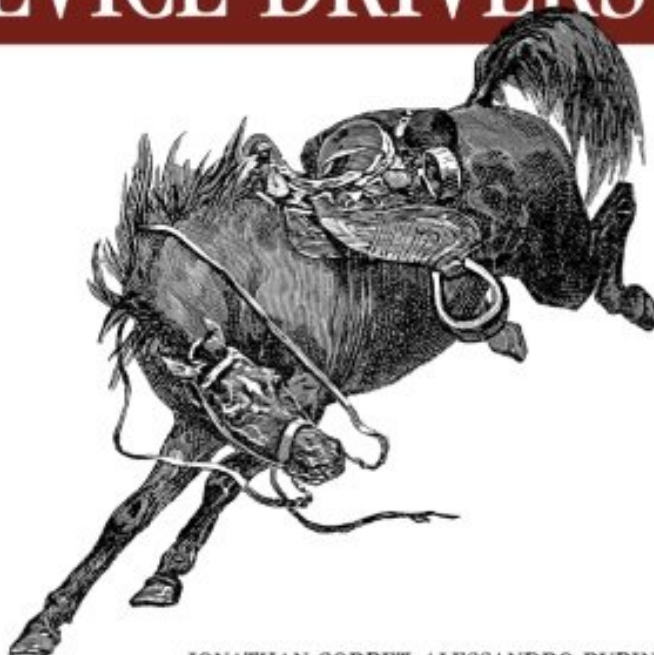
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WHERE THE KERNEL MEETS THE HARDWARE

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LINUX DEVICE DRIVERS



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About the Author

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PDF

Device drivers literally drive everything you're interested in--disks, monitors, keyboards, modems--everything outside the computer chip and memory. And writing device drivers is one of the few areas of programming for the Linux operating system that calls for unique, Linux-specific knowledge. For years now, programmers have relied on the classic Linux Device Drivers from O'Reilly to master this critical subject. Now in its third edition, this bestselling guide provides all the information you'll need to write drivers for a wide range of devices. Over the years the book has helped countless programmers learn:

- how to support computer peripherals under the Linux operating system
- how to develop and write software for new hardware under Linux
- the basics of Linux operation even if they are not expecting to write a driver

The new edition of Linux Device Drivers is better than ever. The book covers all the significant changes to Version 2.6 of the Linux kernel, which simplifies many activities, and contains subtle new features that can make a driver both more efficient and more flexible. Readers will find new chapters on important types of drivers not covered previously, such as consoles, USB drivers, and more. Best of all, you don't have to be a kernel hacker to understand and enjoy this book. All you need is an understanding of the C programming language and some background in Unix system calls. And for maximum ease-of-use, the book uses full-featured examples that you can compile and run without special hardware. Today Linux holds fast as the most rapidly growing segment of the computer market and continues to win over enthusiastic adherents in many application areas. With this increasing support, Linux is now absolutely mainstream, and viewed as a solid platform for embedded systems. If you're writing device drivers, you'll want this book. In fact, you'll wonder how drivers are ever written without it.

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Features

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Most helpful customer reviews

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

3rd edition is somewhat outdated by now, needs to be updated

By Gregor A. Glawitsch

I bought this book specifically to learn how to write a block device driver for CentOS 6.3 / RHEL 6.3

Alas, Linux has moved on since the 3rd edition was printed (2009) and kernel functions used in the example code, like `elv_next_request()`, or macros like `blk_fs_request()`, have since been **removed** from Linux, rendering this book somewhat obsolete.

For my driver, I need worker threads, and these can be implemented by means of workqueues.

Workqueues are a very important tool for the driver writer - basically, they are the kernel equivalent of user-space pthreads. If you want your driver to do things in parallel, you pretty much have to use workqueues.

Unfortunately, while there is a section on workqueues in this book, this section is rather short - just a few pages long.

All in all, this book did not meet my expectations.

33 of 35 people found the following review helpful.

Highly Overrated, but the only text on the market.

By d. time

Honestly, I really don't understand how anyone can give this book 5 stars. To start off on a positive tone, I'll say what I liked about it.

1) Lots of information. There is no denying this, it is very informative. However, this is a double edged sword (will discuss later)

2) The basic drivers are described pretty well. The scull driver is a good way to ease into driver development, imo. Simple enough that it's not too overwhelming and ununderstandable, but not overly simple so that you

actually get an idea of what's going on.

3) It's free.

That's it for the positives. Now for a huge list of negatives.

1) Most of the information is irrelevant. I feel like the authors lost focus as the book went on, and forgot they were not writing a general "Linux Kernel" book but a specific book for drivers. Many a time do they spend pages upon pages going on about something, only to mention "but this is never used by read driver developers" at the end. You end up in a really unpleasant situation where you have to sift through a bunch of useless info to get to the useful stuff. Most of the time I ended up just searching google, and got better results.

2) Lack of more complex examples. Let's face it, no one needs to write an extremely simple char driver. However, that's as complex as the examples get. Beyond the scull driver, it's just code fragments. I sincerely hope you don't have to write a serial tty device. Which leads me to my next point.

3) Outdated. Many kernel API changes have been made to the point where the code is no longer compilable (especially on the tty front). Methods used in the book have been done away with in the newer kernel API's.

Honestly, you're much better off just resorting to Google. If you want to write your own driver and you read through this book, you'll still have no idea where to start. The functions in the scull driver are well-described, but that's it. The authors use too much space writing about useless crap you really don't care about, and this comes at the expense of useful info that will actually help you write drivers.

This book will probably come up on your google searches, and it might be worth it to skim the regular chapters. Honestly though, it's not going to tell you anything your other search results won't. This is most definitely not the "end all, be all" of writing linux drivers, it just happens to be the only one.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Possibly still the best book on the subject

By T. Mikov

Even though the third edition is showing its age - it covers kernel version 2.6.10, which is terribly old - in my opinion this is still the best book on the subject.

Generally, it is not possible to create an up to date tutorial for programming the Linux kernel, since it changes constantly. SO, the key is to introduce the reader to the way of thinking necessary in order to understand and develop for the kernel. I think this book succeeds marvelously.

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