Security Leftovers

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- Intel audio drivers give Windows 11 the blues and Microsoft Installer borked following security update [2]

  Windows 11 has continued to notch up known issues as Microsoft admitted to problems in the Intel Smart Sound department and Microsoft Installer following a security update.

  The former turned up earlier this week, when Microsoft realised that "certain versions" of drivers for Intel Smart Sound Technology (SST) could tip Windows 11 into a blue screen (of death). The driver involved is IntcAudioBus.sys and file versions 10.29.0.5152 and earlier or 10.30.0.5152 and earlier are affected.

  The workaround is, unsurprisingly, to get an updated driver from one's OEM. 10.30.00.5714 and later or 10.29.00.5714 and later should do it, according to Microsoft. Slightly confusingly, "for addressing this issue, 10.30.x versions are not newer than 10.29.x versions." The key bit is the last of the version number.

- [Older: AMD fixes dozens of Windows 10 graphics driver security bugs] [3]

- New Alder Lake Linux bug is similar to Ryzen CPPC bug on Windows 11, patch incoming - Neowin [4]

  When Intel introduced its Alder Lake architecture back at its 2021 Architecture Day event, the company touted its performance optimization surrounding Microsoft's Windows 11. However, the same can not be said for Linux it seems. As only a few days ago, we reported on an Alder Lake bug that was causing performance loss on the upcoming Linux 5.16 kernel; and yesterday, a new patch was submitted for another issue detected on Alder Lake.
With GCC 12 having added a new option to enable Straight Line Speculation "SLS" mitigation for x86/x86_64 CPUs, Linux kernel developers are preparing to enable this new compiler feature for further reducing undesirable speculation exposure.

GCC 12 landed the -mharden-sls= option this week for x86/86_64 after Arm merged its Straight-Line Speculation mitigation to the open-source code compilers last year. The -mharden-sls= option supports values of none, all, return, or indirect-branch. The behavior mitigates against straight-line speculation of speculatively executing instructions linearly in memory past an unconditional change in control flow.

The kernel patch sent out on Friday proposes adding straight-line speculation mitigation handling and can be configured via the SLS Kconfig switch.

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