

Could secure boot lead to Linux v Linux strife?

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Could Microsoft's implementation of secure boot be, one day, the reason why Linux vendors get into strife with each other? Could Oracle one day go to Microsoft in order to get a key issued to Red Hat by Microsoft revoked?

Kernel developer Matthew Garrett raised this possibility last year, within the context of a discussion that focused on the additional measures that have to be implemented for Linux systems to satisfy all the requirements of secure boot, so that there is no door left open for Microsoft to revoke the key issued to any Linux distribution.

An exchange of cryptographic keys takes place at boot-time so that a system can verify that the operating system attempting to boot is a genuine one, and not malware. There are further key exchanges along the way. Microsoft controls the key-signing authority, and thus anyone who wishes to boot an operating system on hardware certified for Windows 8 has to buy a Microsoft key.

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