

BlueZ

Official Linux Bluetooth protocol stack

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Bluetooth 2.1 devices

7th August 2008, 10:00 am by Marcel Holtmann

The Bluetooth 2.1 specification has been released over a year ago and so far no Bluetooth 2.1 device made it to market. However in the past months a couple of devices with Bluetooth 2.1 capable chips showed up. The only problem is that even with these chips built in, the host stacks on these devices are still only implementing the Bluetooth 2.0 specification. Examples of such devices are:

- Apple iPhone 3G
- Apple MacBook, MacBook Pro and MacBook Air
- Asus EeePC 901

So in theory all of these devices could support Simple Pairing and Extended Inquiry, but for some reason both companies decided to go the easy way. And I guess there are even more out there since I had a Symbian based Samsung phone in my hands with a Bluetooth 2.1 chips, but no 2.1 features enabled.

All big host stack vendors like Microsoft, Apple, Broadcom and Symbian are working on Simple Pairing support, but only BlueZ has put it out there for public consumption. Seems like everybody is waiting for the others to go first.

So I am most disappointed with Apple here since neither their iPhone 3G nor their new MacBooks make use of the possibilities that their hardware offers.

BD Address: 00:21:E9:xx:xx:xx
Device Name: Marcel's iPhone 3G
LMP Version: 2.1 (0x4) LMP Subversion: 0x12e9
Manufacturer: Cambridge Silicon Radio (10)
Features: 0xff 0xff 0x8f 0xfe 0x9b 0xff 0x59 0x83

And it is not about which company provided the Bluetooth chip since Apple clearly buys chips from CSR and Broadcom. While on older MacBooks and other Apple machines clearly CSR dominated, they now also go with Broadcom like they have done for their keyboard and mouse products.

BD Address: 00:21:E9:xx:xx:xx
Device Name: Marcel's MacBook Pro
LMP Version: 2.1 (0×4) LMP Subversion: 0×2187
Manufacturer: Broadcom Corporation (15)
Features: 0xff 0xff 0x8f 0xfe 0x9b 0xff 0×71 0×83

Both iPhones still have a CSR chip in it. The original comes with a 2.0 chip and the 3G version with the 2.1 version of it.

When the Bluetooth 1.2 specification was development, Apple was the first ones to add support for Adaptive Frequency Hopping (AFH) to their products and also provided firmware updates for the chips they used. I expected Apple to push forward with Simple Pairing support, but now I think it is unlikely to happen soon.

BD Address: 00:15:AF:xx:xx:xx
Device Name: Marcel's EeePC 901
LMP Version: 2.1 (0×4) LMP Subversion: 0x420e
Manufacturer: Broadcom Corporation (15)
Features: 0xff 0xff 0x8f 0xfe 0x9b 0xff 0×79 0×83

The EeePC 901 comes with Windows XP per-installed at the moment. Installing Linux with a 2.6.27 kernel and BlueZ 4.0 on it would make it the first product with Simple Pairing and Extended Inquiry support. So happy hacking.

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