



WLAN overview



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This article explains how the WLAN framework is composed, how to configure it, and how to use it.

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1 Purpose

A wireless LAN (WLAN) is a wireless computer network that links two or more devices using wireless communication to form a local area network (LAN) within a limited area such as a home, school, computer laboratory, campus, office building etc. This gives to the users the ability to move around within the area and yet still be connected to the network. Through a gateway, a WLAN can also provide a connection to the wider Internet.

Linux[®] wireless subsystem contains two major blocks: `cfg80211` and `mac80211`, and they help the WiFi driver to interface with rest of the kernel and user space.

In particular, `cfg80211` provides configuration management services in the kernel. It also provides the management interface between the kernel and user space via `nl80211`.

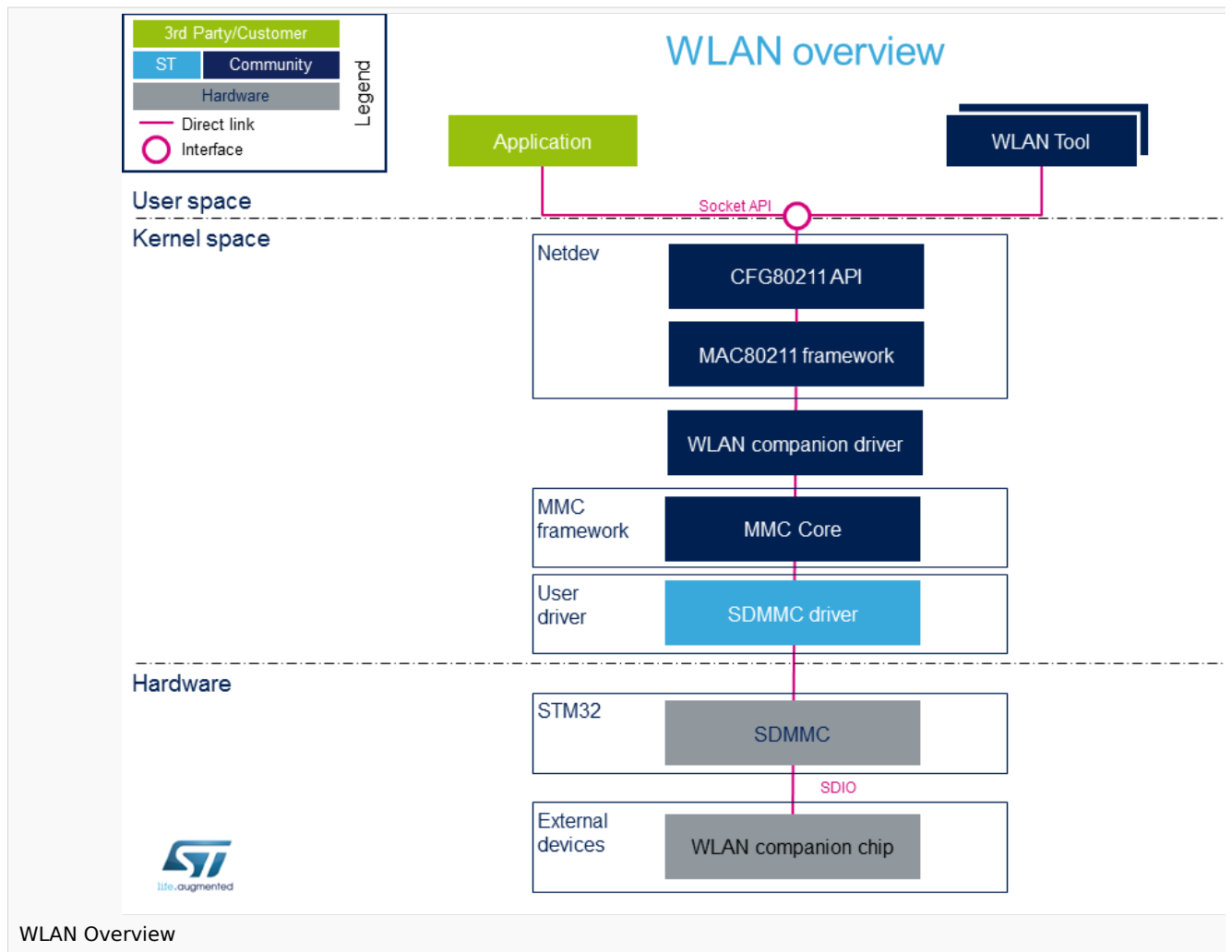
Both soft MAC and full MAC devices need to work with `cfg80211`. `Mac80211` is a driver API that supports only software MAC devices

WLAN can be used in many different use cases, as mentioned in `How to use WLAN` section:

- How to configure a wlan interface on client mode: [How to configure a wlan interface on client mode](#)

- How to configure a wlan interface on hotspot mode: How to configure a wlan interface on hotspot mode

2 System overview



2.1 Description of the components

From User space to hardware

- **Application** (User space)

There are lots of application which are using WLAN: such as Internet Browser, Streaming applications, FTP applications.

- **WLAN tool** (User space)

There are a set of utilities to manage wlan networks: **Network tools**

- **CFG80211 API** (Kernel space)



cfg80211^[1] is the configuration API for IEEE 802.11^[2] devices in Linux.

- It bridges the User space and drivers, and offers some utility functionality associated with IEEE 802.11.
- It must be used, directly or indirectly via mac80211, by all modern wireless drivers in Linux, so that they offer a consistent API via nl80211^[3].
- It is interfaced with Netlink^[4] socket.

- **MAC80211 framework** (Kernel space)

MAC80211 is a subsystem to the Linux kernel, which implements shared code for soft-MAC/half-MAC wireless devices^[5]

- **WLAN companion driver** (Kernel space)

WLAN companion driver register and control WLAN device.

- **MMC framework: MMC Core** (Kernel space)

The **MMC core** ensures compliance with MultiMediaCard (**MMC**)^[6] / secure digital (**SD**)^[7] / secure digital input/output (**SDIO**)^[8].

The communication link between MP1 and WLAN device is the SDIO bus.

- **SDMMC driver** (Kernel space)

More information in [MMC overview](#)

- **STM32: SDMMC** (Hardware)

More information in [MMC overview](#)

- **External devices** (Hardware)

WLAN companion chip

2.2 APIs description

MAC80211 is new wireless driver API, which implements the shared code for soft-MAC/half-MAC wireless devices^[9]

cfg80211^[10] is the new driver configuration API for IEEE 802.11^[11] devices in Linux.

3 Configuration

The WLAN API is not activated by default in ST deliveries. To active it, you can use Linux Menuconfig tool: [Menuconfig or how to configure kernel](#) and select:

For Network features:

```
[*] Networking support --->
  [*] Networking options --->
    [*] Packet socket
    [*] TCP/IP networking
      [*] IP: kernel level autoconfiguration
        [*] IP: DHCP support
        [*] IP: BOOTP support
        [*] IP: RARP support
    [*] INET: socket monitoring interface
```



```
[*] The IPv6 protocol
[*] DNS Resolver support
[*] Wireless --->
[*]   cfg80211 - wireless configuration API
      [*]   cfg80211 wireless extensions compatibility
[*]   Generic IEEE 802.11 Networking Stack (mac80211)
```

For example if the companion chip is Murata chip 1DX^[12]

```
[*] Device Drivers --->
  [*] Network device support --->
    [*] Wireless LAN --->
      [*] Broadcom devices
        [*] Broadcom FullMAC WLAN driver
```

For STM32 SDMMC : see [SDMMC configuration](#)

3.1 Device tree

The DT bindings documentation deals with all required or optional [device tree](#) properties.

Detailed DT configuration for STM32 peripherals: [WLAN device tree configuration](#).

4 How to use WLAN

4.1 How to use the WLAN user space interface

Please see examples based on the following use cases:

- How to setup wifi connection: [How to setup wifi connection](#)
- How to configure a wlan interface on client mode: [How to configure a wlan interface on client mode](#)
- How to configure a wlan interface on hotspot mode: [How to configure a wlan interface on hotspot mode](#)

5 How to trace and debug the framework

5.1 How to monitor

Please give instruction to help the developer/user to get information about this framework in the Linux file system

5.1.1 How to watch link quality

Proc filesystem provides information about Quality link:



```
Board $> cat /proc/net/wireless
Inter-| sta-| Quality | Discarded packets | Missed | WE
face | tus | link level noise | nwid crypt frag retry misc | beacon | 22
wlan0: 0000 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0
```

Example of stat:

```
Board $> watch -d -n 3 "iw dev wlan0 station dump; iwconfig wlan0; cat /proc/net/wireless"
```

```
Every 3.0s: iw dev wlan0 station dump; iwconfig wlan0; cat /proc/net/wir... stm32mp1:
Sun Nov 4 16:32:52 2018

Station 00:16:b6:2c:47:36 (on wlan0)
  inactive time: 0 ms
  rx bytes: 11001
  rx packets: 37
  tx bytes: 13077
  tx packets: 83
  tx failed: 0
  signal: -72 [-72] dBm
  tx bitrate: 12.0 MBit/s
  rx bitrate: 1.0 MBit/s
  authorized: yes
  authenticated: yes
  associated: yes
  WMM/WME: no
  TDLS peer: yes
  DTIM period: 1
  beacon interval:100
  short preamble: yes
  short slot time:yes
  connected time: 55 seconds
wlan0 IEEE 802.11 ESSID:"NETWORK1"
  Mode:Managed Frequency:2.462 GHz Access Point: 00:16:B6:2C:47:36
  Bit Rate=12 Mb/s Tx-Power=31 dBm
  Retry short limit:7 RTS thr:off Fragment thr:off
  Encryption key:off
  Power Management:on
  Link Quality=38/70 Signal level=-72 dBm
  Rx invalid nwid:0 Rx invalid crypt:0 Rx invalid frag:0
  Tx excessive retries:0 Invalid misc:0 Missed beacon:0

Inter-| sta-| Quality | Discarded packets | Missed | WE
face | tus | link level noise | nwid crypt frag retry misc | beacon | 22
wlan0: 0000 38. -72. -256 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
```

5.2 How to trace

This part is as example in case the companion chip is Murata chip

5.2.1 How to verify than the WLAN driver is well probed

- In dmesg log, check "brcmfmac" logs :



```
[ 67.306154] brcmfmac: brcmf_c_preinit_dcnds: Firmware version = wl0: Aug 6 2017 23:19:25 version 7.45.98.30 (r666241 CY) FWID 01-f0b000  
[ 67.326146] brcmfmac: brcmf_c_preinit_dcnds: CLM version = API: 12.2 Data: 7.11.15 Compiler: 1.24.2 ClmImport: 1.24.1 Creation: 2014-05  
[ 67.676323] brcmfmac: brcmf_cfg80211_reg_notifier: not a ISO3166 code (0x30 0x30)
```

5.2.2 How to debug the WLAN driver

5.2.2.1 Add dynamic debug firmware traces

Need to activate in the kernel config: CONFIG_DYNAMIC_DEBUG, more info on the dynamic debug

[How_to_use_the_kernel_dynamic_debug](#)

```
# cd /sys/kernel/debug/dynamic_debug/
```

Check all functions used to manage firmware:

```
# cat control | grep firmware  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:339 [firmware_class]__fw_free_buf =_ "%s: fw-%s buf=%p data=%p size=%u\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:462 [firmware_class]fw_set_page_data =_ "%s: fw-%s buf=%p data=%p size=%u\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:1102 [firmware_class]_request_firmware_prepare =_ "using built-in %s\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:290 [firmware_class]__allocate_fw_buf =_ "%s: fw-%s buf=%p\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:1194 [firmware_class]_request_firmware =_ "firmware: %s loading timed out\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:423 [firmware_class]fw_get_filesystem_firmware =_ "loading %s failed with error %d\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:429 [firmware_class]fw_get_filesystem_firmware =_ "direct-loading %s\012"
```

Add print info "+p" in all firmware functions (p: causes a printk() message to be emitted to dmesg)

```
# echo "file drivers/base/firmware_class.c +p" > control
```

Now "p" option is added in all firmware functions.

```
# cat control | grep firmware  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:339 [firmware_class]__fw_free_buf =p "%s: fw-%s buf=%p data=%p size=%u\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:462 [firmware_class]fw_set_page_data =p "%s: fw-%s buf=%p data=%p size=%u\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:1102 [firmware_class]_request_firmware_prepare =p "using built-in %s\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:290 [firmware_class]__allocate_fw_buf =p "%s: fw-%s buf=%p\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:1194 [firmware_class]_request_firmware =p "firmware: %s loading timed out\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:423 [firmware_class]fw_get_filesystem_firmware =p "loading %s failed with error %d\012"  
drivers/base/firmware_class.c:429 [firmware_class]fw_get_filesystem_firmware =p "direct-loading %s\012"
```

5.2.2.2 FMAC debug

5.2.2.2.1 Enable debug features in the defconfig file

- Enable CPTCFG_BRCMDBG and CONFIG_DEBUG_FS
- Rebuild your kernel

5.2.2.2.2 Enable brcmfmac debug log

- Message levels are listed in `drivers/net/wireless/broadcom/brcm80211/brcmfmac/debug.h`

```
/* message levels */
#define BRCMF_TRACE_VAL 0x00000002
#define BRCMF_INFO_VAL 0x00000004
#define BRCMF_DATA_VAL 0x00000008
#define BRCMF_CTL_VAL 0x00000010
#define BRCMF_TIMER_VAL 0x00000020
#define BRCMF_HDRS_VAL 0x00000040
#define BRCMF_BYTES_VAL 0x00000080
#define BRCMF_INTR_VAL 0x00000100
#define BRCMF_GLOM_VAL 0x00000200
#define BRCMF_EVENT_VAL 0x00000400
#define BRCMF_BTA_VAL 0x00000800
#define BRCMF_FIL_VAL 0x00001000
#define BRCMF_USB_VAL 0x00002000
#define BRCMF_SCAN_VAL 0x00004000
#define BRCMF_CONN_VAL 0x00008000
#define BRCMF_BCDC_VAL 0x00010000
#define BRCMF_SDIO_VAL 0x00020000
#define BRCMF_MSGBUF_VAL 0x00040000
#define BRCMF_PCIE_VAL 0x00080000
#define BRCMF_FWCON_VAL 0x00100000
```

```
$ modprobe brcmfmac debug=${BRCMF_Message_Level}
$ dmesg -n 8
```

5.2.2.2.3 Examples

- Add TRACE and INFO

```
$ modprobe brcmfmac debug=0x6
```

- Add TRACE, INFO and SDIO

```
$ modprobe brcmfmac debug=0x20006
```

- Add TRACE, INFO and WIFI_FW_LOG

```
$ modprobe brcmfmac debug=0x00100006
```

5.2.2.2.4 How to check wreg_on status and voltage setting

```
$ cat /sys/kernel/debug/regulator/regulator_summary
```




6 Source code location

The source files are located inside the Linux kernel.

- **Broadcom wlan driver:** of.c^[13]

7 References

- [1], cfg80211
- [2], IEEE_802.11
- [3], nl80211
- [4], Netlink
- [5], mac80211
- MultiMediaCard, embedded MultiMediaCard specification
- Secure Digital, secure digital specification
- Secure Digital Input Output, Secure Digital Input Output specification
- [6], mac80211
- [7], cfg80211
- [8], IEEE_802.11
- [9], 1DX
- [<https://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/stable/linux.git/tree/drivers/net/wireless/broadcom/brcm80211/brcmfmac/of.c>],of.c

Application programming interface

MultimediaCard

Secure digital

Secure digital input/output

Device Tree