

Cover Note — “UEFI, HP, and Me: A Bootloader Love–Hate Story”

This presentation chronicles my multi-year (and occasionally adversarial) relationship with an HP EliteBook 8560p and its UEFI firmware — a system so determined to “help” that it could boot almost anything... except, apparently, what I actually wanted it to.

Through a series of experiments, firmware dissections, and increasingly creative bootloader hacks, I set out to make this trusty, battle-scarred, decade-old machine behave like a compliant UEFI system. The journey explores not only how HP’s firmware differs from the UEFI specification, but also how persistence (and a little assistance from GPT-5) turned that chaos into a reproducible, boot-anything set-up.

Along the way, we’ll look at:

- How HP’s firmware treats FAT partitions like a haunted treasure map.
- Why the “HP_TOOLS” partition label unlocks powers best left undisturbed.
- What happens when installers fail to set EFI variables.
- And how a single laptop inspired a miniature operating system project — **TinyOS** — to make sense of it all.

The talk blends firmware forensics, Linux bootloader lore, and a few horror stories from the BIOS/UEFI twilight zone — delivered with equal parts technical precision and gallows humour.

So grab your favourite recovery USB, sit back, and enjoy this firmware séance.

— **Brendon Green**

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