NAME

monitor, edparams − load and start Minix, modify boot parameters

SYNOPSIS

/boot
edparams *device* [*command* ...]
boot.com *virdisk* [*command* ...]

DESCRIPTION

This text describes the Boot Monitor, a boot time interactive program designed not only to load and start Minix, its most important task, but to also provide an interface to configure Minix and to boot other operating systems.

The monitor is controlled with an environment that is modeled after the Bourne shell. This environment is filled at startup with default values that depend on the machine the monitor is running on and the environment settings saved into the boot parameters sector (the second sector on a device). When the environment is loaded, the monitor executes the function named **main**, which by default starts a simple menu.

The environment can be manipulated at boot time from the monitor prompt, but may also be edited using **edparams** on a given device. **Edparams** simulates the monitor as much as it can, echoing commands it can't execute between brackets. It can also be used in Makefiles and scripts by giving it commands as arguments.

The DOS version of the monitor, usually named **boot.com** under DOS, boots Minix from a "DOS virtual disk". **Boot.com** is a simple COM program that interprets a DOS file as a disk, loads a Minix kernel from the active partition in the same way as the BIOS based monitor, and executes it to start Minix. All the monitor commands function in the same way, except for the **boot** command, it can only load Minix. The monitor grabs as much free memory as it can for Minix to work in, as the **memory** variable shows. Further details on how to run Minix under DOS, Windows 95, or even Windows NT are written down in **dosminix**(8).

COMMANDS

The monitor is best described by the commands you can type to the '>' prompt. This is known as the "monitor mode". You can enter this mode by hitting the Escape key. These are the monitor commands:

name = [**device**] *value*

Set environment variable.
Changes the value of *name* to *value*. The optional word **device** marks *name* as being subject to device translation. (See the section on devices.) These (name, value) pairs are passed to the kernel who uses them to configure itself. These variables are passed by default:

rootdev
This is the device used as your root device. It is by default set to **ram,** which means that the device specified by **ramimagedev** will be loaded into the RAM disk and used as root. If you change this variable then a physical device will be used as root, and the RAM disk will be uninitialized and have the size specified by **ramsize**.

ramimagedev
Describes the device to use to initialize the RAM disk if **rootdev** is set to **ram**. It's by default set to **bootdev**, a special name for the device the monitor booted from.

ramsize
The size of the RAM disk. If the RAM disk is used for the root file system then the root file system is stretched out to **ramsize** if possible.

processor
Set by default to **86**, **186**, **286**, **386**, **486**, ... depending on the hardware you have. You can set it to a smaller value to test your kernel in a more limited environment.

bus

The type of system bus, either **xt**, **at** or **mca**. This answers basic questions like: "How many interrupt controllers and how to initialize?" Or: "Does the keyboard have LEDs?"

memory

List of memory free for use by Minix. It is a comma separated list of *base:size* pairs denoting the byte offsets and sizes of free memory in hexadecimal. **800:925E0,100000:F00000** is a typical example of about 585K starting at 2K, and 15M starting at 1M. (The first 2K are BIOS parameters and the 53K under the 640K boundary is the monitor itself.) The very last number you can play with if you know what you are doing. Either increase it if the monitor has it wrong, or decrease it to test if Minix still runs with less memory then normal.

memsize, **emssize**

Obsolete conventional and extended memory sizes. Set for a kernel that doesn't have the "memory list" option set. Also shown here as an example of how a dumb error, using the EMS abbreviation for extended memory instead of XMS, can sometimes stay around for 6 years by virtue of being ingrained in the monitor/kernel low level startup code.

video

Describes capabilities of the VDU: **mda**, **cga**, **ega** or **vga**.

chrome

Either **color** or **mono**.

console

If set to a hexadecimal value makes the monitor set the BIOS video mode to this value when the screen is cleared by **echo \c**, usually from the **leader** or **trailer** function. This allows the use of video modes with more rows or colums than the standard 80x25 mode. If you add 8000 to the mode number then the monitor will try to put the video card into 8x8 pixel font mode. This means that a 25 row mode will change to 50 rows. Try 8007 (mono) or 8003 (color). More parameters may follow the mode number that are of interest to the console driver, see **boot**(8). **Warning:** Not all monitors can handle all of the modes, some may generate frequencies that can damage your monitor. Read the manual of card and monitor for details. The 8x8 font trick is perfectly safe however.

dosd0

Set by the DOS version of the monitor to the name of the virtual disk, i.e. the *virdisk* argument as shown above. The "file" version of the **dosd**(4) driver will use this as the name of the file to use as a disk.

Two variables are only used by the monitor, even though they are passed to the kernel too:

image

The name of the file containing the kernel image, by default **minix**. If it refers to a directory however then the newest file inside the directory is chosen to be the kernel image. The names inside **/minix/** are best set to the Minix version you are using, which looks good when the monitor prints its name. Rules for pretty printing image names:

A '/' or '_' is changed to a space.

The first letter is changed from lowercase to uppercase.

An 'r' if followed by a digit changes to " revision ".

label

If set then only processes marked with this label or without a label are loaded from the image.

Installboot −boot will create functions to select images and labels. These functions will set

label and **image** and echo what you selected. The two numbers separated by a colon used as an image name tell the starting sector and sector count of the image on disk.

name() *command*

Define function.
Functions may be used to bundle a set of commands, so that you can easily boot Minix with a different set of parameters then normal. E.g.

```
ram() { rootdev=ram; boot }
```

will allow you to run Minix with the root device on RAM for a change, if you normally use a real device as root. There are three predefined functions, **leader**, with default value an **echo** command that shows the monitor's startup banner, **main**, with default value **menu**, and **trailer**, with default value a command that clears the screen. The monitor executes **leader;main** at startup to show the banner message and a menu. The **trailer** function is executed just before Minix is started. These three functions can be redefined as you please.

name(*key*) *command*

Define kernel selecting function.
The menu command uses functions like these to add menu entries to select a different kernel from a boot disk. **Installboot −boot** produces these functions when the images are labeled. The label **AT** would give:

```
AT(a) {label=AT;image=42:626;echo AT kernel selected;menu}
```

With the menu option:

```
a       Select AT kernel
```

Typing **a** will then execute the **AT** function above.

name(*key*,*text*) *command*

User defined menu option.
This variant may be used to make any menu entry you like:

```
dos(d,Boot MS-DOS) boot hd1
```

Text may be anything, even parentheses if they match.

name

Call function.
If *name* is a user defined function then its value is expanded and executed in place of *name*. Try a recursive one like 'rec() {rec;xx}' one day. You can see the monitor run out of space with nice messages about using **chmem**(1) to increase it's heap.

boot [−*opts*]
boot *device*

Boot Minix or another O.S.
Without an argument, **boot** will load and execute the Minix image named by the **image** variable. With options the variable **bootopts** is first set to −*opts* before Minix is started, and unset when Minix returns. With a *device* argument, **boot** loads the boot sector of *device* into memory and jumps to it, starting another operating system. You would normally use partitions on the first hard disk for this command (hd[1−4]), using hd0 will also work (choosing the active partition). One can also boot devices on the second hard disk (hd[5−9]) if the bootstrap writer did not hardwire the disk number to disk 0.
Some Operating Systems can only be booted from the active partition, if you use a '*', e.g. **boot *hd3**, then partition 3 is first made active. You'll then need to use **installboot −master** with a fix key to forcefully boot the Minix partition at startup.

delay [*msec*]

Delay (500 msec default).
Fast booting speed was one of the objectives when this program was created, so a hard disk boot usually takes only a fraction of a second. If you need some time (to hit Escape, or stare at the numbers) you can use **delay** to make the monitor pause for a specified number of

milliseconds.

echo *word ...*

Print these words.

Used to display messages, like the startup banner. Echo normally prints all words with spaces in between and a newline at the end. Echo understands special '\' escape sequences as follows:

\	(At the end) Don't print a newline.
\n	Print a newline.
\v	Print the monitor's version.
\c	Clear the screen.
\w	Wait until a RETURN is typed
\\	Print a backslash.

ls [*directory*]

List contents of a directory.

Useful when looking for kernel images.

menu

Menu driven startup.

This command allows you to execute functions defined with a *key*. If no menu functions have been defined then **menu** will use this one hidden built-in function:

```
*(=,Start Minix) boot
```

Kernel selecting functions only add new options to this set, but if you define a two argument function yourself then the above one is no longer shown, allowing you to customize the menu completely. Your first function definition should therefore be one that starts Minix.

Menu entries are shown in the same order as **set** shows them. If you don't like the order then you have to unset the functions and retype them in the proper order.

If you type a key then a scheduled trap is killed and the appropriate menu function is executed. If you need more time to choose then hit the spacebar. A key not on the menu also kills a trap, but does nothing more.

save

Save environment.

This will save all the environment variables and functions with nondefault values to the parameter sector (the second sector on the boot device), so they are automatically set the next time you boot the monitor.

set

Show environment.

Show the current values of the environment variables and functions. Default values are shown between parentheses to distinguish them from values that were explicitly set.

trap *msec function*

Schedule function.

Schedules a function to be executed after *msec* milliseconds. Only the monitor mode cannot be interrupted, a scheduled trap is killed when the prompt is printed. Example:

```
main() {trap 10000 boot; menu}
```

This gives you 10 seconds to choose a menu option before Minix is booted.

unset *name ...*

Unset environment variables.

Removes the named variables and functions from the environment, and sets special variables back to their default values. This is also the only way to remove the "device name translation" property from a variable.

exit

Exit the monitor.
Reboot the machine, exit to Minix or exit to DOS as appropriate.

{ *command*; ... **}**
Bundle commands.
Treat a number of commands as a single command. Used for function definitions when a function body must contain more than one command.

DEVICES

The Minix kernel can't do anything with device names, so they have to be translated to device numbers before they are passed to the kernel. This number is found under the st_rdev field (see **stat**(2)) of the file on the boot file system. The monitor will look for the device file with the working directory set to '/dev'. If it can't find the device name then it will translate names like 'ram', 'fd1', 'hd6', 'hd3a', and 'sd2' to what it itself thinks the numbers should be.

The special name **bootdev** is translated to the name of the device booted from, like 'fd0', or 'hd2a', and then searched for in /dev. **Bootdev** can't be translated to a device other then the fd or hd devices, so SCSI devices for instance must be named explicitly.

EXTENSIONS

A few extensions have been made to this program for kernel hackers. They may be triggered by setting bits in the flags word in the kernel startup code (the mpx file.) The flag bits are:

0x0001 Call kernel in 386 mode.

0x0002 Do not make space for the bss areas of processes other then the kernel.

0x0004 Use the stack size set by **chmem**(1).

0x0008 Load MM, FS, etc. into extended memory.

0x0010 No need to patch process sizes into the kernel.

0x0020 The kernel can return to the monitor on halt or reboot.

0x0040 Offer generic BIOS support instead of just INT 13 (disk I/O).

0x0080 Pass memory lists for free and used memory (processes).

SEE ALSO

chmem(1), **stat**(2), **dosd**(4), **installboot**(8), **usage**(8), **boot**(8), **dosminix**(8).

BUGS

The **delay** command will hang forever on the original IBM PC (not the XT!). Not that it matters, as everything takes forever on that box.

Reading the first sector to boot a floppy (e.g. **boot fd1**), is done using whatever floppy parameters boot currently has available. This will probably always work.

By redefining **leader** one can easily hide the identity of this program.

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Earl Chew, for the inspiration his ShoeLace package provided, unless he wants to file a "look and feel" suit against me, then I will say I modeled it after the Sun ROM boot monitor, which is also true.

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