

Creating Input/Output Controller (IOC) Applications

Andrew Johnson, AES/SSG

Includes material from Eric Norum, LBL

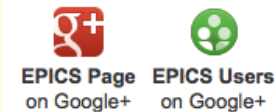
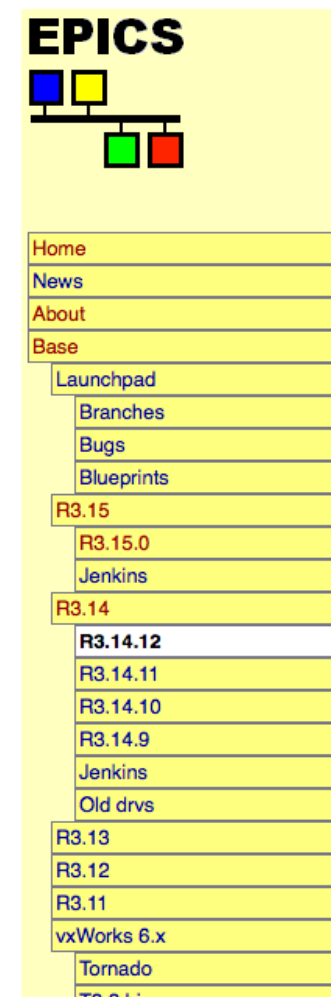
IOC Overview

- EPICS Input/Output Controller classifications?
- How to create a new IOC application?
- How to build an IOC application?
- How to run an IOC application on various platforms?
- Console interaction with an IOC application (iocsh)

Reference

EPICS: Input/Output Controller Application Developers Guide

Go to EPICS home page:
<http://www.aps.anl.gov/epics/>
then follow links:
BASE->R3.14->R3.14.12
Then click the “EPICS
Application Developer's Guide”




Base Release 3.14.12

The latest stable release is 3.14.12.4. Version 3.14.12 was the latest release with new features.

Documentation

The following documents cover EPICS Base version 3.14.12 and earlier:

NOTE: These documents may be revised at any time without notice.

- [Read Me \(Installation Instructions\)](#)
- [Release Notes R3.14.12.4](#)
- [Known Problems](#)
- [Release Checklist](#)
- [EPICS Application Developer's Guide](#)
by Marty Kraimer et al.
 [1.5 MB]
- [EPICS R3.14 Channel Access Reference Manual](#)
by Jeffrey O. Hill and Ralph Lange
- [Converting R3.13 Applications to R3.14](#)
by Janet Anderson
- [Perl 5 Interface to Channel Access](#)
by Andrew Johnson
- [Record Reference Manual](#)
by various. Wikified, please update!

What does an Input/Output Controller do?

- As its name implies, an IOC often performs input/output operations to attached hardware devices.
- An IOC associates the values of EPICS process variables with the results of these input/output operations.
- An IOC can perform sequencing operations, closed-loop control and other computations.



'Host-based' and 'Target' IOCs

- 'Host-based' IOC
 - Runs in the same environment as which it was compiled
 - 'Native' software development tools (compilers, linkers)
 - Sometimes called a 'Soft' IOC
 - IOC is an program like any other on the machine
 - Possible to have many IOCs on a single machine
- 'Target' IOC
 - Runs in a different environment than where compiled
 - 'Cross' software development tools
 - vxWorks, RTEMS, Linux, iOS
 - IOC boots from some medium (network, flash memory)
 - IOC is the only program running on the machine



IOC Software Development Area

- IOC software is usually divided into different <top> areas
 - Each <top> provides a place to collect files and configuration data associated with one or more similar IOCs
 - Each <top> is managed separately
 - A <top> may use products from other <top> areas (EPICS base, for example can be thought of as just another <top>)

IOC Software Development Tools

- EPICS uses the GNU version of make
 - Almost every directory from the <top> on down contains a ‘Makefile’
 - Make recursively descends through the directory tree
 - Determines what needs to be [re]built
 - Invokes compilers and other tools as instructed in Makefile
 - GNU C/C++ compilers or vendor compilers can be used

IOC Application Development Examples

The following slides provide step-by-step examples of how to:

- Create, build, run the example IOC application on a 'host' machine (Linux, Solaris, Darwin, etc.)
- Create, build, run the example IOC application on a vxWorks 'target' machine

Each example begins with the use of 'makeBaseApp.pl'



The 'makeBaseApp.pl' program

- Part of EPICS base distribution
- Populates a new, or adds files to an existing, <top> area
- Requires that your environment contain a valid EPICS_HOST_ARCH (EPICS base contains scripts which can set this as part of your login sequence)
 - linux-x86_64, darwin-x86, win32-x86
- Creates different directory structures based on a selection of different templates
- Commonly-used templates include
 - ioc - Generic IOC application skeleton
 - example - Example IOC application



Creating and initializing a new <top>

- Create a new directory and run makeBaseApp.pl from within that directory

```
mkdir first
```

```
cd first
```

```
/APSShare/epics/base-3.14.12.3/bin/linux-x86_64/  
makeBaseApp.pl -t example first
```

-
- Use the full path to makeBaseApp.pl script to select a particular version of base:
`<base>/bin/<arch>/makeBaseApp.pl`
 - The template is specified with the `'-t'` argument
 - The application name (firstApp) is specified with the `'first'` argument



<top> directory structure

- The makeBaseApp.pl creates the following directory structure in <top>:
 - configure/ - Configuration files
 - firstApp/
 - Db/ - Databases, templates, substitutions
 - src/ - Source code
- Every directory contains a 'Makefile'

<top>/configure files

- Some files may be modified as needed

- CONFIG_SITE

Specify make variables (e.g. to build for a particular target):

```
CROSS_COMPILER_TARGET_ARCHS = vxWorks-68040
```

- RELEASE

Specify location of other <top> areas used by applications in this <top>area.

- Other files are part of the (complex!) build system and should be left alone.

Create a host-based IOC boot directory

- Run `makeBaseApp.pl` from the `<top>` directory
 - `'-t example'` to specify template
 - `'-i'` to show that IOC boot directory is to be created
 - `'-a <arch>'` to specify hardware on which IOC is to run
 - name of IOC

```
makeBaseApp.pl -t example -i -a linux-x86_64 first
```

- If you omit the `'-a <arch>'` you may be presented with a menu of options from which to pick

<top> directory structure

- The command from the previous page creates another directory in <top>:
 - iocBoot/ - Directory containing per-IOC boot directories
 - iocfirst/ - Boot directory for 'iocfirst' IOC

Build the application

- Run the GNU make program
 - ‘make’ on Darwin, Linux, Windows
 - ‘gnumake’ or ‘gmake’ on Solaris

make

- Runs lots of commands

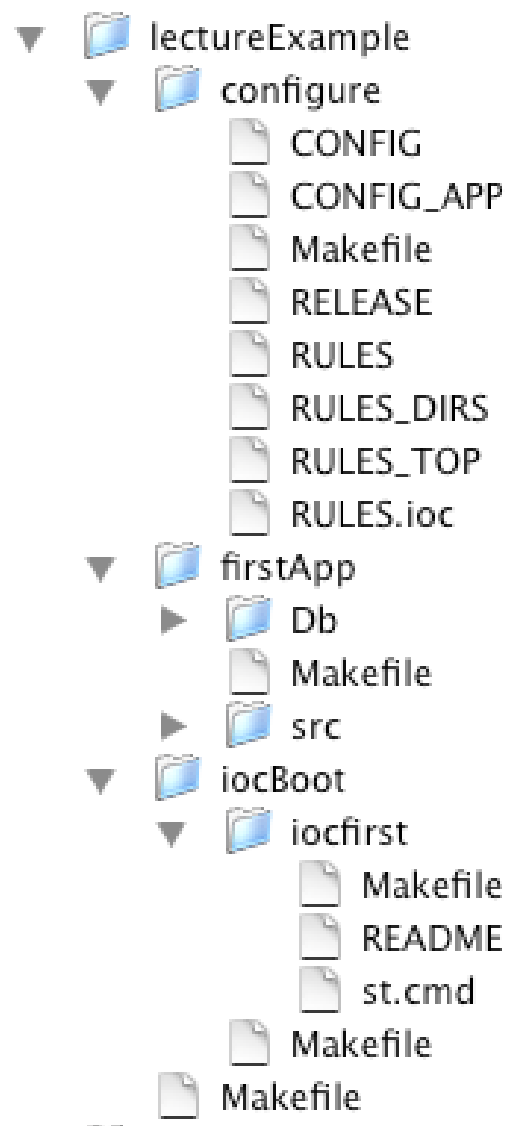


<top> directory structure after running make

- These additional directories are now present in <top>
 - bin/** - Directory containing per-architecture directories
 - linux-x86_64/** - Object files and executables for this architecture
 - lib/** - Directory containing per-architecture directories
 - linux-x86_64/** - Object libraries for this architecture
 - dbd/** - Database definition files
 - db/** - Database files (record instances, templates)
- There may be other directories under bin/ and lib/, too.



<top> directory structure after running make



IOC startup

- IOCs read commands from a startup script
 - Typically 'st.cmd' in the <top>/iocBoot/<iocname>/ directory
- vxWorks IOCs read these scripts with the vxWorks shell
- Other IOCs read these scripts with the iocsh shell
- Command syntax can be similar but iocsh allows more familiar form too
 - 'Familiar' to those used to the Unix/Linux command line
- Script was created by 'makeBaseApp.pl -i' command
- For a real IOC you'd likely add commands to configure hardware modules, start sequence programs, update log files, etc.

Example application startup script

```
1 #!../bin/linux-x86_64/first
2
3 ## You may have to change first to something else
4 ## everywhere it appears in this file
5
6 < envPaths
7
8 cd ${TOP}
9
10 ## Register all support components
11 dbLoadDatabase("dbd/first.dbd")
12 first_registerRecordDeviceDriver(pdbbase)
13
14 ## Load record instances
15 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample1.db","user=studentHost")
16 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample2.db","user=studentHost,no=1,scan=1 second")
17 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample2.db","user=studentHost,no=2,scan=2 second")
18 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample2.db","user=studentHost,no=3,scan=5 second")
19 dbLoadRecords("db/dbSubExample.db","user=studentHost")
20
21 ## Set this to see messages from mySub
22 #var mySubDebug 1
23
24 cd ${TOP}/iocBoot/${IOC}
25 ioclnit()
26
27 ## Start any sequence programs
28 #seq sncExample,"user=studentHost"
```



Example application startup script

```
1 #!../bin/linux-x86_64/first
```

- This allows a host-based IOC application to be started by simply executing the `st.cmd` script
- If you're running this on a different architecture the `'linux-x86_64'` will be different
- If you gave a different IOC name to the `'makeBaseApp.pl -i'` command the `'first'` will be different
- Remaining lines beginning with a `'#'` character are comments



Example application startup script

6 < envPaths

- The application reads commands from the 'envPaths' file created by 'makeBaseApp -i' and 'make'
- The envPaths file contains commands to set up environment variables for the application:
 - Architecture
 - IOC name
 - <top> directory
 - <top> directory of each component named in configure/RELEASE
- These values can then be used by subsequent commands

```
epicsEnvSet(ARCH,"linux-x86_64")  
epicsEnvSet(IOC,"iocfirst")  
epicsEnvSet(TOP,"/home/student/lectureExample")  
"epicsEnvSet(EPICS_BASE,"/opt/epics/iocapps/R3.14.12/base")
```

Example application startup script

```
8 cd ${TOP}
```

- The working directory is set to the value of the `${TOP}` environment variable (as set by the commands in 'envPaths')
- Allows use of relative path names in subsequent commands
- Should really be in quotes in case the 'TOP' value contains spaces

Example application startup script

```
11 dbLoadDatabase("dbd/first.dbd")
```

- Loads the database definition file for this application
- Describes record layout, menus, drivers



Example application startup script

12 `first_registerRecordDeviceDriver(pdbbase)`

- Registers the information read from the database definition files



Example application startup script

```
15 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample1.db","user=studentHost")
16 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample2.db","user=studentHost,no=1,scan=1 second")
17 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample2.db","user=studentHost,no=2,scan=2 second")
18 dbLoadRecords("db/dbExample2.db","user=studentHost,no=3,scan=5 second")
19 dbLoadRecords("db/dbSubExample.db","user=studentHost")
```

- Read the application database files
 - These define the records which this IOC will maintain
 - A given file can be read more than once (with different macro definitions)

Example application startup script

```
24 cd "${TOP}/iocBoot/${IOC}
```

- The working directory is set to the per-IOC startup directory
- Again, should be in quotes



Example application startup script

25 ioclnit()

- Activates everything
- After reading the last line of the 'st.cmd' script the IOC continues reading commands from the console
 - Diagnostic commands
 - Configuration changes

Running a host-based IOC

- Change to IOC startup directory (the one containing the st.cmd script)
 - `cd iocBoot/iocfirst`
- Run the IOC executable with the startup script as the only argument
 - `../../bin/linux-x86_64/first st.cmd`
- The startup script commands will be displayed as they are read and executed
- When all the startup script commands are finished the iocsh will display an 'epics>' prompt and wait for commands to be typed.

```
iocInit()  
#####  
### EPICS IOC CORE built on Jun 23 2004  
### EPICS R3.14.6 $R3-14-6$ $2004/05/28 19:27:47$  
#####  
Starting iocInit  
## Start any sequence programs  
#seq sncExample,"user=studentHost"  
iocInit: All initialization complete  
epics>
```

Some useful iocsh commands

- Display list of records maintained by this IOC

```
epics> dbl
```

```
studentHost:aiExample
```

```
studentHost:aiExample1
```

```
studentHost:aiExample2
```

```
studentHost:aiExample3
```

```
studentHost:calcExample
```

```
studentHost:calcExample1
```

```
studentHost:calcExample2
```

```
studentHost:calcExample3
```

```
studentHost:compressExample
```

```
studentHost:subExample
```

```
studentHost:xxxExample
```

- Caution – some IOCs have a lot of records



Some useful iocsh commands

■ Display a record

```
epics> dbpr studentHost:aiExample
```

```
ASG:                DESC: Analog input  DISA: 0           DISP: 0
DISV: 1             NAME: studentHost:aiExample  RVAL: 0
SEVR: MAJOR        STAT: HIHI                SVAL: 0           TPRO: 0
VAL: 9
```

```
epics> dbpr studentHost:aiExample
```

```
ASG:                DESC: Analog input  DISA: 0           DISP: 0
DISV: 1             NAME: studentHost:aiExample  RVAL: 0
SEVR: MINOR        STAT: LOW                SVAL: 0           TPRO: 0
VAL: 4
```

- `dbpr <recordname> 1` prints more fields
- `dbpr <recordname> 2` prints even more fields, and so on

Some useful iocsh commands

- Show list of attached clients

```
epics> casr
```

```
Channel Access Server V4.11
```

```
No clients connected.
```

- `casr 1` prints more information
- `casr 2` prints even more information



Some useful iocsh commands

- Do a 'put' to a field

```
epics> dbpf studentHost:calcExample.SCAN "2 second"  
DBR_STRING:          2 second
```

- Arguments with spaces must be enclosed in quotes

Some useful iocsh commands

- The 'help' command, with no arguments, displays a list of all iocsh commands
 - 100 or so, plus commands for additional drivers
- With arguments it displays usage information for each command listed
- Wildcard characters ('?', '*') can be used

```
epics> help dbl dbpr dbpf
dbl 'record type' fields
dbpr 'record name' 'interest level'
dbpf 'record name' value
```

Terminating a host-based IOC

- Type `'exit'` to the `iocsh` prompt
- Type your `'interrupt'` character (usually control-C)
- Kill the process from another terminal/window

Create a vxWorks IOC boot directory

- Almost the same as for a host-based IOC
 - just the *<arch>* changes
 - Run `makeBaseApp.pl` from the *<top>* directory
 - `'-t example'` to specify template
 - `'-i'` to show that IOC boot directory is to be created
 - `'-a <arch>'` to specify hardware on which IOC is to run
 - name of IOC
- `makeBaseApp.pl -t example -i -a vxWorks-68040 first`

vxWorks IOC startup script changes

- The startup script created by `'makeBaseApp.pl -i'` for a vxWorks IOC is slightly different than one created for a host-based IOC
- A vxWorks IOC uses the vxWorks shell to read the script
 - a host-based IOC uses the `iocsh` shell
- A vxWorks IOC incrementally loads the application binary into the vxWorks system
 - A host-based IOC runs as a single executable image

vxWorks IOC startup script changes

- The first few lines of the example st.cmd script for a vxWorks target are:

```
## Example vxWorks startup file
```

```
## The following is needed if your board support package doesn't at boot time
```

```
## automatically cd to the directory containing its startup script
```

```
#cd "/home/phoebus/student/lectureExample/iocBoot/iocfirst"
```

```
< cdCommands
```

```
#< ../nfsCommands
```

```
cd topbin
```

```
## You may have to change first to something else
```

```
## everywhere it appears in this file
```

```
ld < first.munch
```

vxWorks IOC startup script changes

- There is no '#!' line at the beginning of the script
- vxWorks IOCs can't be started by simply executing the startup script

vxWorks IOC startup script changes

- The startup script reads more commands from `cdCommands` rather than from `envPaths`
 - Assigns values to vxWorks shell variables rather than to `iocsh` environment variables
- Subsequent 'cd' commands look like

```
cd top
```

rather than

```
cd ${TOP}
```

vxWorks IOC startup script changes

- The startup script contains command to load the binary files making up the IOC application

```
ld < first.munch
```

- Binary fragments have names ending in '.munch'



Running a vxWorks IOC

■ Set up the vxWorks boot parameters

Press any key to stop auto-boot...

6

[VxWorks Boot]: c

',' = clear field; '-' = go to previous field; ^D = quit

boot device : ei

processor number : 0

host name : phoebus

file name : /usr/local/vxWorks/T202/mv167-asd7_nodns

inet on ethernet (e) : 192.168.8.91:fffffc00

inet on backplane (b):

host inet (h) : 192.168.8.167

gateway inet (g) :

user (u) : someuser

ftp password (pw) (blank = use rsh): somepassword

flags (f) : 0x0

target name (tn) : iocnorum

startup script (s) : /usr/local/epics/iocBoot/iocfirst/st.cmd

other (o) :

Running a vxWorks IOC

`host name` : Name of your FTP server
`file name` : Path to the vxWorks image on the FTP server
`inet on ethernet (e)` : IOC IP address/netmask
`inet on backplane (b)` :
`host inet (h)` : FTP server IP address
`gateway inet (g)` :
`user (u)` : User name to log into FTP server
`ftp password (pw) (blank = use rsh)` : Password to log into FTP server
`flags (f)` : Special BSP flags
`target name (tn)` : IOC name
`startup script (s)` : Path to IOC startup script on FTP server
`other (o)` :

- Once these parameters have been set a reboot will start the IOC

vxWorks shell

- The vxWorks shell requires that commands be entered in a slightly different form
 - String arguments must be enclosed in quotes
 - Arguments must be separated by commas
 - There is no 'help' command
 - Many vxWorks-specific commands are available
- For example, the 'dbpf' command shown previously could be entered as:

```
dbpf "studentHost:calcExample.SCAN" , "2 second"
```

- or as:

```
dbpf ( "studentHost:calcExample.SCAN" , "2 second" )
```

Review

- IOC applications can be host-based or target-based
- The makeBaseApp.pl script is used to create IOC application modules and IOC startup directories
- <top>/configure/RELEASE contents specify location of other <top> areas used by this <top> area
- <top>/iocBoot/<iocname>/st.cmd is the startup script for IOC applications
- The EPICS build system requires the use of GNU make
- vxWorks IOCs use the vxWorks shell, non-vxWorks IOCs use iocsh
- The EPICS Application Developer's Guide contains a wealth of information