



Managed PC Boot Agent (Boot ROM)

Centralized PC Boot Management for Lower Cost of Ownership

The Argon Managed PC Boot Agent (MBA) brings network booting functionality to desktop computers and networked devices helping to lower total cost of ownership and improve desktop management.

Key Benefits

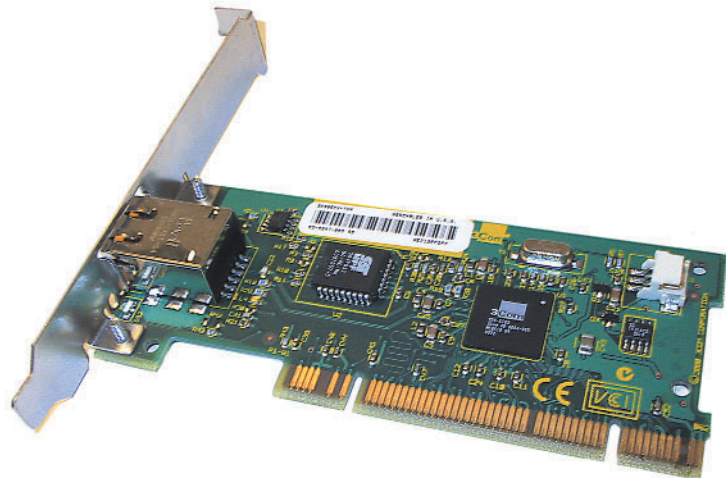
Pre-OS. System Administrators can setup a "Pre-OS boot" in which PCs are booted from a network server before the operating system is loaded from the local hard drive.

Disaster Recovery. With the proper controls designed into your management application, the Managed PC Boot Agent can permit PCs to boot off the server in a "network safe mode" if local boot-up fails.

Security. To secure data and eliminate unauthorized programs, administrators can use the Managed PC Boot Agent to search hard disks, or to disallow a local boot from a hard disk or diskette.

Compatibility. The Managed PC Boot Agent is compatible with many standard boot protocols and client management software.

Client PC. Any computer, terminal, workstation, device or embedded system that is networked



Argon Managed PC Boot Agent (Boot ROM) strikes a balance between administrators' need for control and consistency and users' desire for freedom and flexibility.

Managed PC Boot Agent is client-based firmware that works with your Network Interface Card (NIC) to enable client PCs to access and boot from boot image files located on a network server.

With Managed PC Boot Agent, administrators can have PCs perform a Pre- OS boot and accomplish a comprehensive range of management tasks or repairs from a central management station. Examples include OS and application deployment, critical file back up and restoring, BIOS updates, and virus scanning. Once these tasks are completed, the PC can continue to boot from its local hard disk.

Managed PC Boot Agent can be used on diskless workstations to boot the entire target Operating System from the server.

Managed PC Boot Agent provides the means to improve manageability and reduce administrative costs, without requiring major network infrastructure changes or wholesale upgrades to "thin client" network PC devices.

Bringing Increased Manageability to All PCs

While desktop PCs empower users, they require considerable management resources. Administration represents nearly 50 percent of PC ownership costs.

To reduce these costs, some administrators have turned their attention to NetPCs and Network Computers (NCs), or “thin clients.”

Thin clients promise to lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) by simplifying general PC maintenance and upgrades. Taking advantage of this technology, however, means discarding your substantial investment in traditional PCs.

Bridging the gap is Argon's Managed PC Boot Agent, one in a series of enhanced desktop management services from Argon. With Managed PC Boot Agent installed on your NICs, your existing PCs can receive all or any part of their boot-up instructions from the network. It provides the precise level of centralized control deemed appropriate by the network manager.

The Advantages of Pre-OS Booting

Booting from the network is not a new concept, however now administrators can perform “Pre-OS booting” to boot even Client PCs without a functional operating system installed.

When the Client PC is powered on, the Argon Managed PC Boot Agent communicates with a boot server to download a boot image file. Once downloaded onto the Client PC, the boot image file executes. The boot image file can contain a temporary operating system and desktop management agents. When the desktop management tasks are completed, the Pre-OS environment is terminated and the Client PC continues to boot normally from its own hard drive.

Beyond Wired for Management Compliance

Today, virtually all PCs shipped worldwide comply with the Wired for Management (WfM) specification. A key element of that specification is the Preboot Execution Environment (PXE). Argon Managed PC Boot Agent technology complies with the PXE standard while providing functionality PXE, The Argon Managed PC Boot Agent also supports a full range of other standard boot protocols including NetWare NCP/IPX (802.2, 802.3, Ethernet II), RPL, BOOTP and DHCP.

Compatibility with Client Systems and Architectures

Because so many types and implementations are available, a Boot ROM's interaction with the system (i.e. BIOS and PCI) can be problematic. However, Managed PC Boot Agent contains mature and robust system interface code, the result of many years of experience with a large variety of systems and close relationships with system and BIOS vendors.

Managed PC Boot Agent works with your PCs whether or not their BIOS is compatible with BBS (BIOS Boot Specification).

Looking ahead, a special version of Managed PC Boot Agent is available for 64-bit Intel Architecture (IA64) systems that contain the Extensible Firmware Interface (EFI).

Compatibility with Leading Client Management Systems

Managed PC Boot Agent works with popular client management software, including: 3Com® Boot Services, 3Com® Virtual LAN Drive, Windows Remote Installation Services, IBM's LANClient Control Manager, Intel's LANdesk Configuration Manager, OnTechnology's OnCommand CCM, Computer Associate's Unicenter TNG, Symantec's Ghost Enterprise, Altiris eXpress, and more.

Argon Managed PC Boot Agent Formats

Argon Managed PC Boot Agent is available in the following formats:

- In a chip (DIP or PLCC) that can be plugged into the Boot ROM socket on your NICs
- A binary file that can be integrated into the system BIOS of select PC motherboards (primarily for LAN-on-motherboard implementations)
- As a flash upgrade for users of older versions of Managed PC Boot Agent or 3Com/BootWare TriROMs
- As a bootable floppy disk or CD

Supported Network Interface Cards and Network Controllers

Argon has a Managed PC Boot Agent available for NICs and LAN Controller chipsets from all major manufacturers including 3Com, Intel, SMC, Realtek, DEC, AMD, National Semiconductor, Accton, etc.

Administrator & Client Utilities

Accompanying the Managed PC Boot Agent are many useful tools and utilities needed to setup client PCs for a network booting environment. These include a Windows based Boot Image Editor to create and edit boot image files, tools to enable Pre-OS, a configuration utility to setup advanced MBA options, etc.

Features

Capabilities

Provides method to remotely execute client management tasks such as deploying an OS, perform BIOS upgrades, etc.

Provides method to remotely scans for and eliminates viruses, games, or problematic Internet downloads

Client PCs can be booted off the server if local boot-up fails. The PC can then be restored to an operational state with no user intervention, even if drive reformatting and partitioning is required

Allows remote client management without a desktop management suite

Supports various boot protocols and network environments

Many configurable options

Benefits

Lower total cost of ownership

Increased security

Enhanced disaster recovery

Lower total cost of ownership

PXE-like capabilities for legacy systems

Flexible to various needs and uses

Compatibility and Reliability

Compatible with Windows 3.x, 9x, NT, 2000 with FAT 16; DOS; UNIX; and Novell NetWare

Supports network management software from key vendors including 3Com, Microsoft, IBM, Intel, On Technology, Computer Associates, Symantec, Altiris, etc.

Compatible variety of boot protocols, including PXE, NCP/IPX, RPL, BOOTP, and DHCP

Supports BBS (BIOS Boot Specification) and non-BBS compliant PCs and provides options for boot control

Compatible with NICs and LAN Controllers from 3Com, Intel, SMC, Realtek, DEC, AMD, National Semiconductor, Accton, etc.

Support for popular operating systems

Support for widely used client management software

Boot protocol independent

Greater support for various systems and BIOSs

Provides Managed PC Boot Agent functionality and quality to variety of systems using different NICs



Argon Technology Corporation

the network booting specialists

Network Booting Solutions to help you manage networked clients, devices and embedded systems

Contact us:

For product information, or to speak with one of our representatives, to discuss your specific customization needs, or to place an order, please contact us.

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Boot protocols supported:

- Wired for Management PXE
- NetWare NCP/IPX - 802.2, 802.3, Ethernet II
- IBM's Remote Program Load (RPL)
- TCP/IP BOOTP, DHCP

MBA configuration options:

- Default Boot: Network or Local
- Local Boot: Enable or Disable
- Configuration Menu: Enable or Disable
- Configuration Message: Enable or Disable
- Prompt Message Timeout: 3, 6, 12 seconds or Forever
- Boot Failure Prompt: Wait for Key or Wait for Timeout
- Boot Failure Action: Next BBS Device or Reboot
- TFTP Secure Mode: Enable or Disable
- Booting Messages: User Definable
- Default TCP/IP Image Filename: User Definable
- Default NetWare Image Filename: User Definable
- Multi Service Director (MSD): Enable or Disable
- Scan BOOTCONF.SYS: Enable or Disable
- Boot Control: Auto Detect, INT 19, INT 18, BBS
- MBA Base Code: Enable or Disable
- Network Service Boot (F12): Enable or Disable

Note: Availability of some options depends on a variety of factors, such as whether MBA is in a ROM chip or integrated into the BIOS, or whether the BIOS is BBS compliant.

