Software Is the Answer But What Is the Question?

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Abstract. Consumer electronics and communications products typically comprise embedded systems whose complexity dwarfs the supercomputer center of two decades ago. Along with this embedded hardware capability have come equally complex applications, such as digitally encoded video and advanced wireless modulation and protocols, which not only have to function in a world-wide network, but which must also do so while using miniscule amounts of energy. The primary constraint for the deployment of these systems is the availability of the software which enables them. I will present some of the issues which challenge developers of such software and the embedded systems themselves, and will examine some pragmatic approaches to the solution of these engineering problems.