



Series 2: BG22 Bluetooth® SoCs and Modules

Next Generation IoT Wireless Connectivity



Introduction to Proprietary Wireless

- What is a Proprietary Wireless Application?
- Two EFR32 Application Development Paths: RAIL vs. Connect
- RAIL-based Application Development
 - Simplicity Studio v5
 - SSv5 Radio Configurator
 - API Feature Review
 - Walk-thru of Simple TRX RAIL sample application



High Level Overview

of EFR32 Proprietary Wireless



What is Proprietary Wireless and when is it Appropriate?

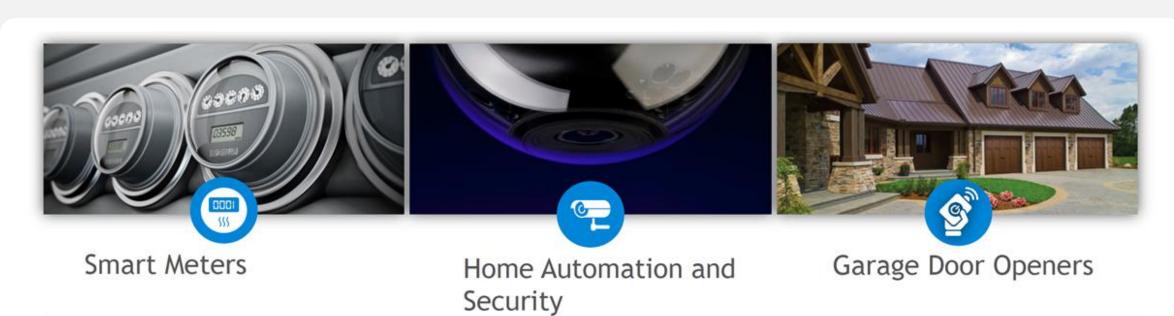
When the application demands

- Backwards-compatibility with existing/legacy proprietary protocol(s)
- High degree of protocol optimization
 - For energy consumption
 - For wireless range
- Techtalks discussing the advantages of having full control over the protocol:
 - https://www.silabs.com/support/training/long-range-connectivity-using-proprietary-rf-solution
 - https://www.silabs.com/support/training/sub-ghz-proprietary-and-connect-software-stack

... at the expense of

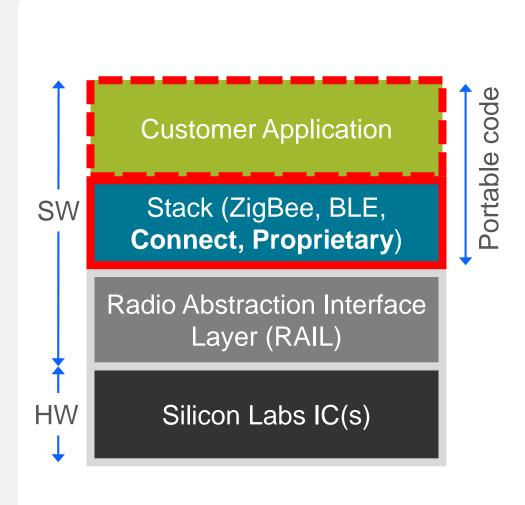
- Requires a higher level of expertise, in-depth knowledge of RF, regulatory specifications, and protocol design.
- More difficult development, longer "time to market"
- Security holes that can remain hidden for a long time due to the difficulty of the analysis
 - But once discovered, exploiting them is usually easy (high obfuscation, not necessarily high security)

Typical Proprietary Wireless Solutions

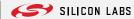




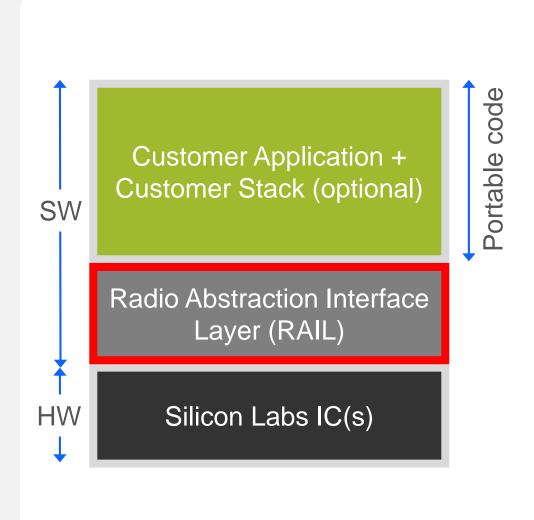
EFR32 Development Path #1: Connect-based Application



- Stack, up to the Network layer
 - Based on RAIL
 - Supports an extended star network topology
 - Configurable PHY (pre-set PHYs available for all ISM regions)
 - 15.4 based MAC (Frame format)
- Also supports MAC mode
 - Pure IEEE 802.15.4 MAC implementation
- Also includes some application layer features
 - Task scheduler
 - OTA bootloader image distribution



EFR32 Development Path #2: RAIL-based Application



- Radio Abstraction Interface Layer
- Library, used to access radio transceiver hardware
- Has some MAC features that can be accelerated by HW
 - Auto ACK
 - Address filtering
 - CSMA/CA or LBT
 - Scheduling and timestamping
- RAIL provides a common API across all supported chips
- All Silicon Labs stacks are implemented on top of RAIL

Best Path Depends on the Application Needs

RAIL

- Pros:
 - Very flexible
 - Support legacy proprietary systems
 - Can be based on custom PHY configuration
 - More efficient resource footprint

- Cons:
 - No network layer, so no multi-hop support
 - No application features like OTA
 - Security must be done in application

Connect

- Pros:
 - Full featured stack, including network layer
 - Task Scheduler
 - OTA bootloader
 - MAC provides 15.4 security
 - Preconfigured Worldwide PHYs
- Cons:
 - Fixed frame format, can't connect to existing networks
 - Not very flexible, e.g. difficult to set up deeper than EM2 sleep
 - RTC oscillator is required for scheduler
 - Larger resource footprint



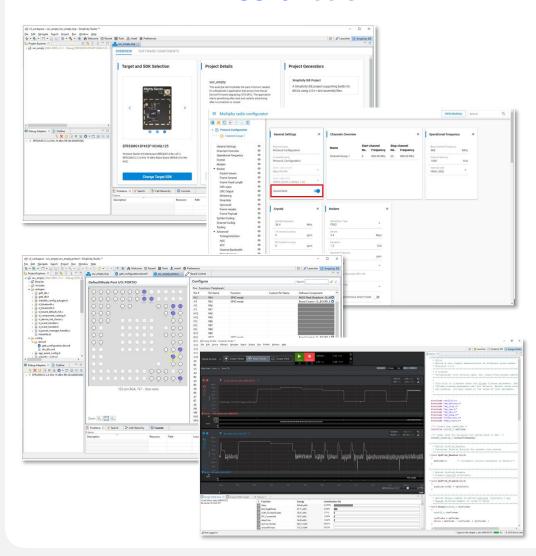
Creating a RAIL Project

In Simplicity Studio v5



Tools and API

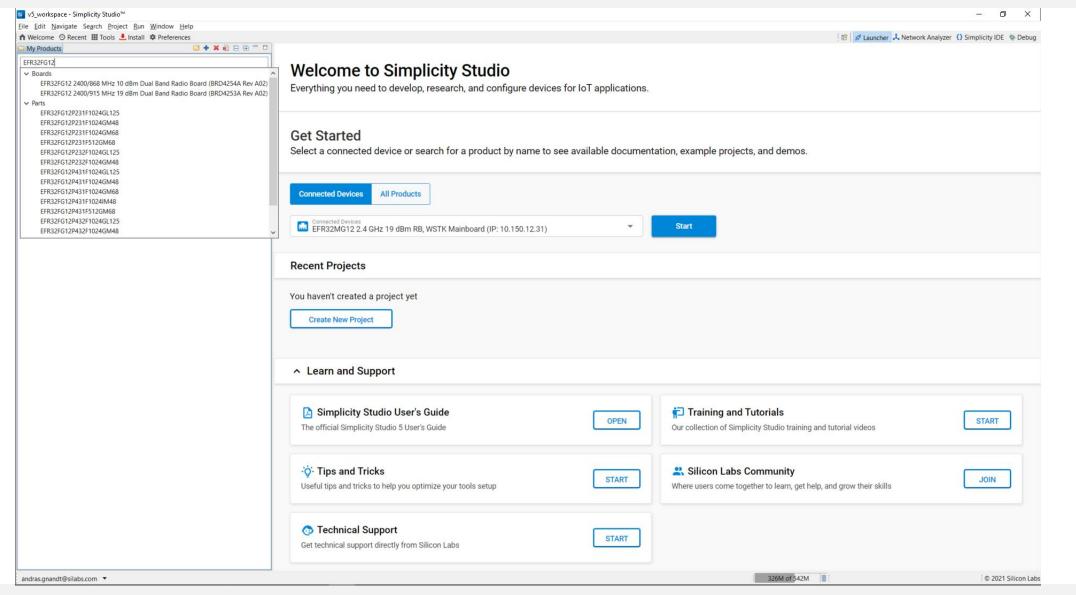
SSv5 Tools



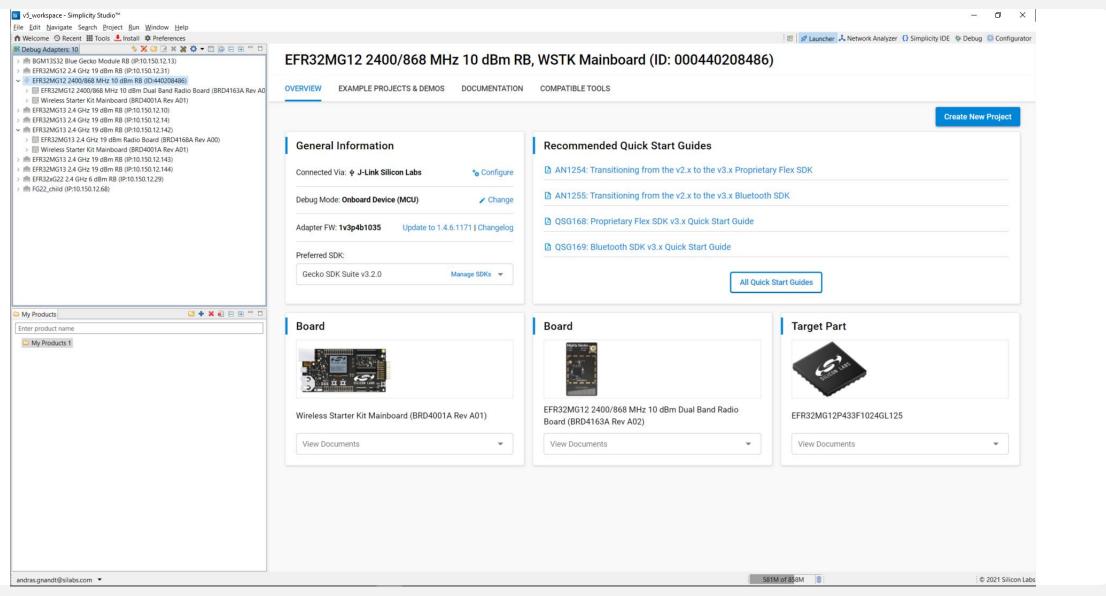
RAIL API

- Transmit/Receive
- Automatic State Transitions
 - E.g. automatically go to rx after tx
- Frame Buffering
 - Maintains buffer for both tx and rx
- Timekeeping, Timestamping and Timers
- Scheduled Transmit
- Scheduled Receive
- CCA with Retransmission
 - Supports CSMA/CA and LBT
- Address Filtering
 - With two fixed offset, max 4B address or 802.15.4 addressing
- Auto ACK
 - Preconfigured ACK packet automatically transmitted on every packet that passed all filtering or 802.15.4 ACK

Studio v5 – Starting up with a known product



Studio v5 – Starting up with a connected device

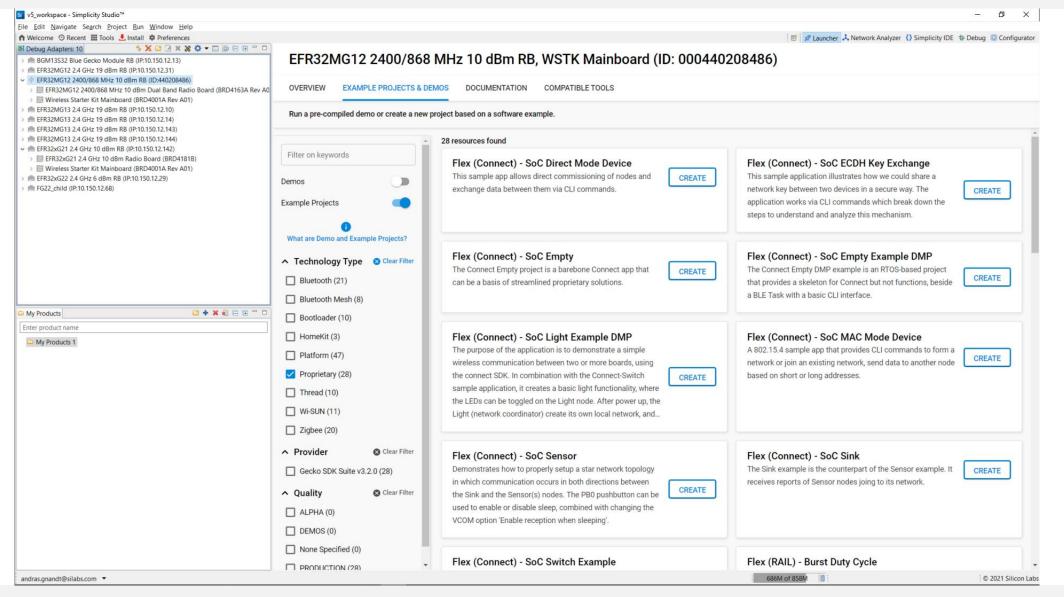


RAIL SimpleTRX Walkthrough

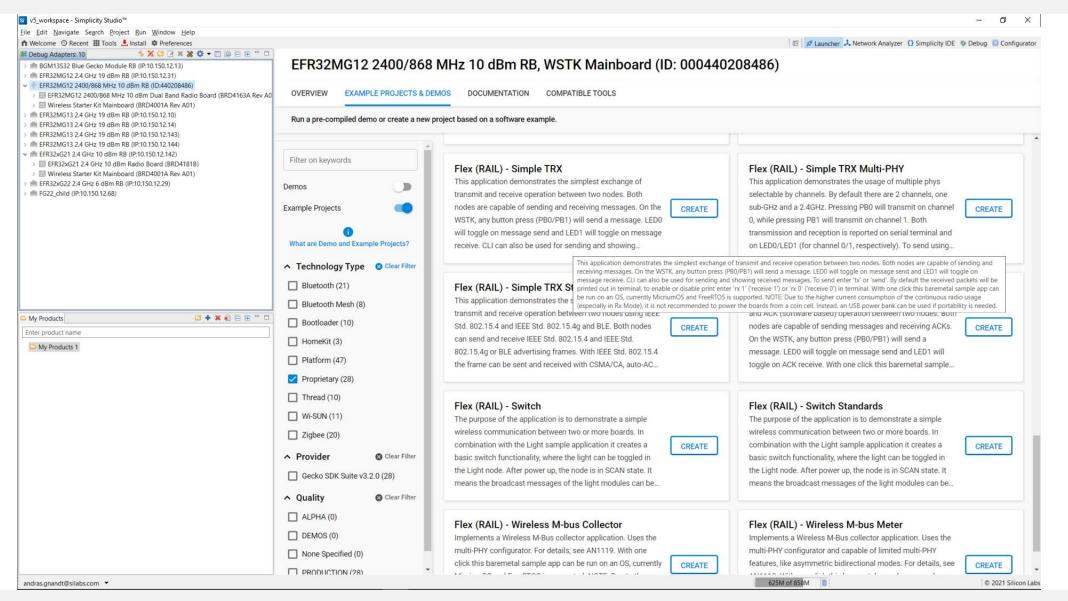
Create Project in SSV5



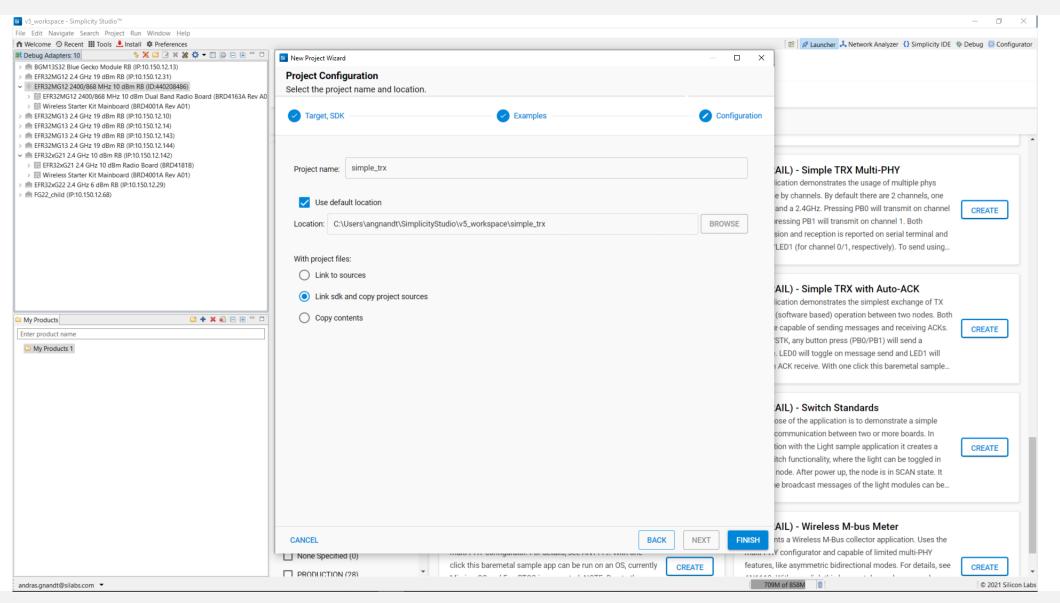
Studio v5 – Example Projects for Proprietary



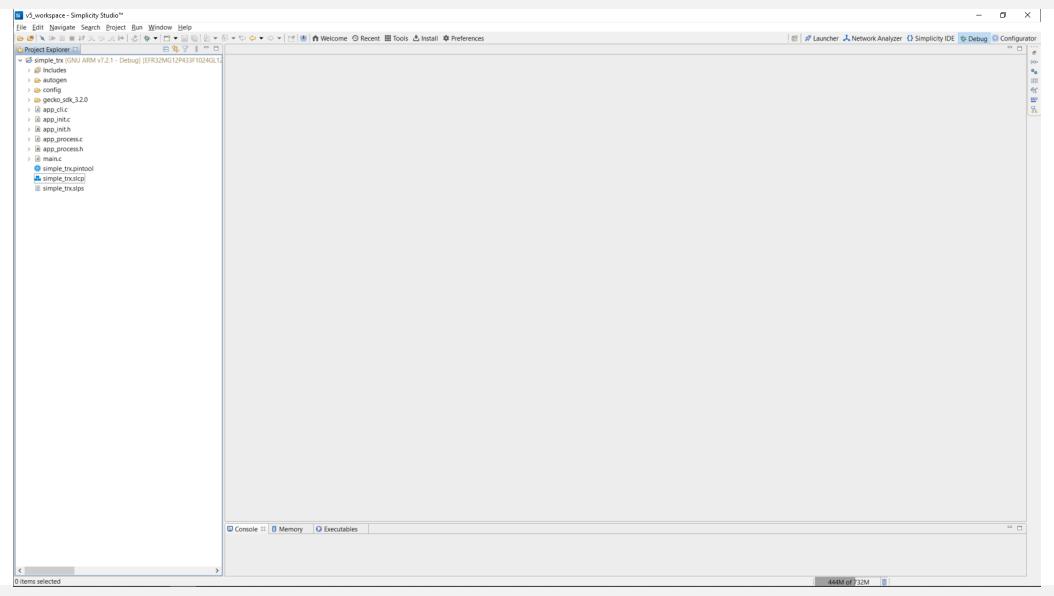
Studio v5 – SimpleTRX Example Project



Create SimpleTRX Sample Project



SimpleTRX Project Components

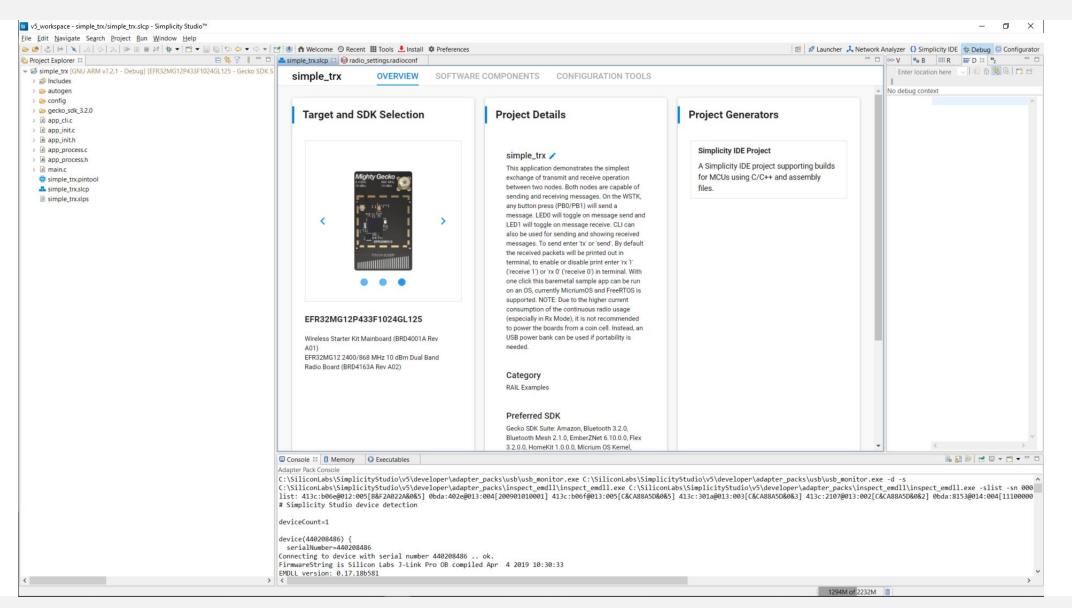


Software Components

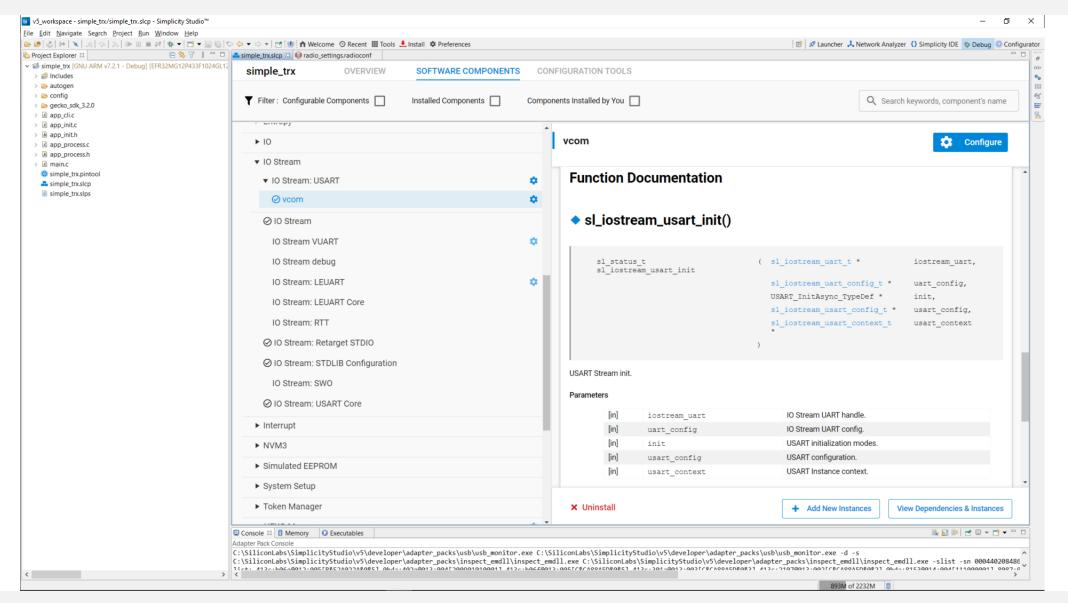
Demo



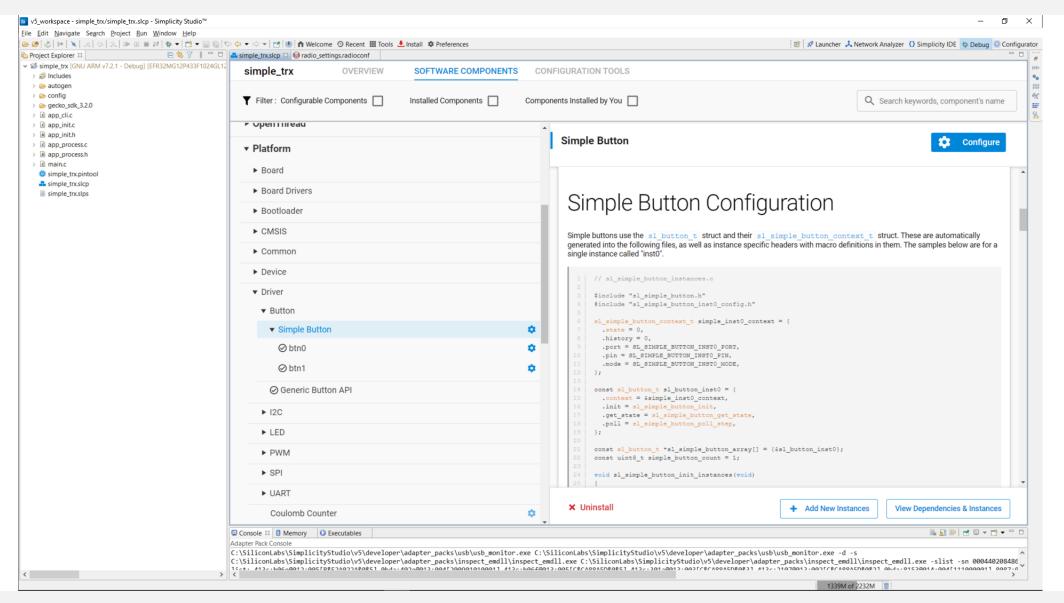
SimpleTRX Project Details



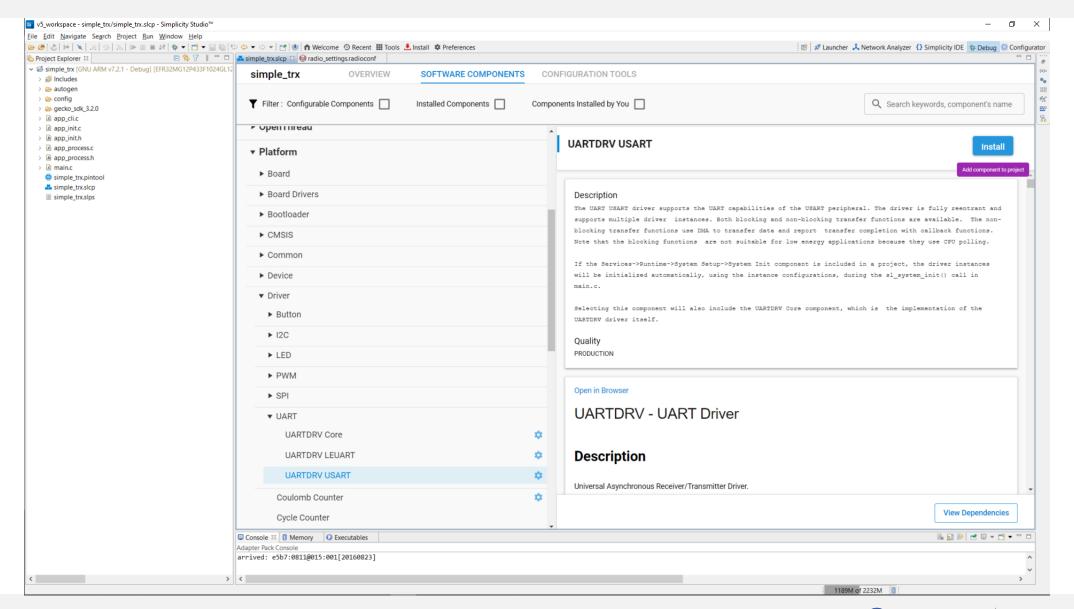
Drivers – USART vcom



Drivers – Simple button



Drivers - USART

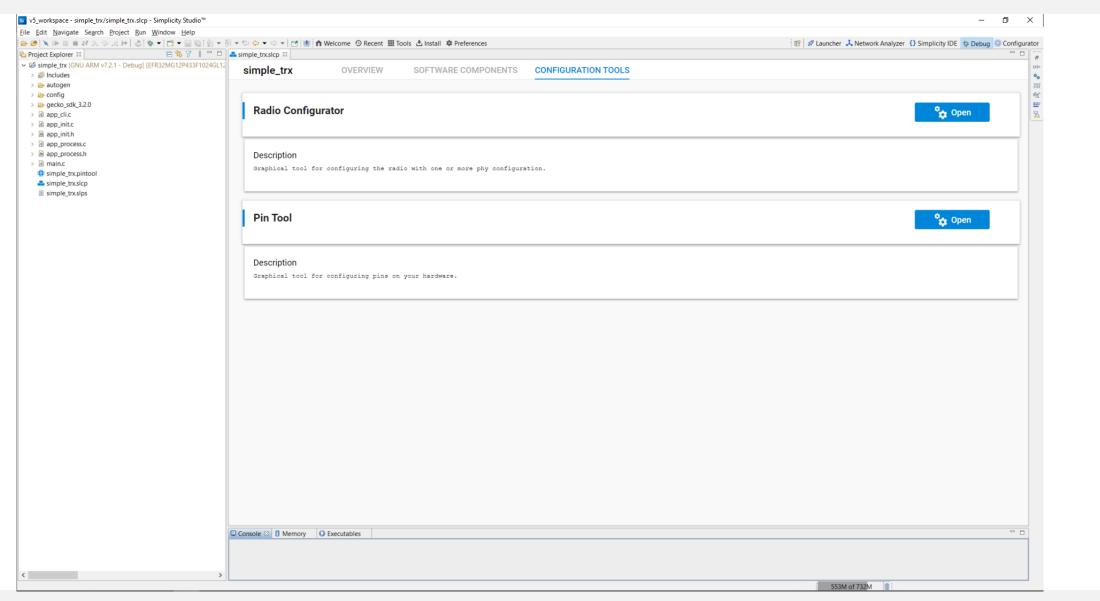


Radio Configurator Flow

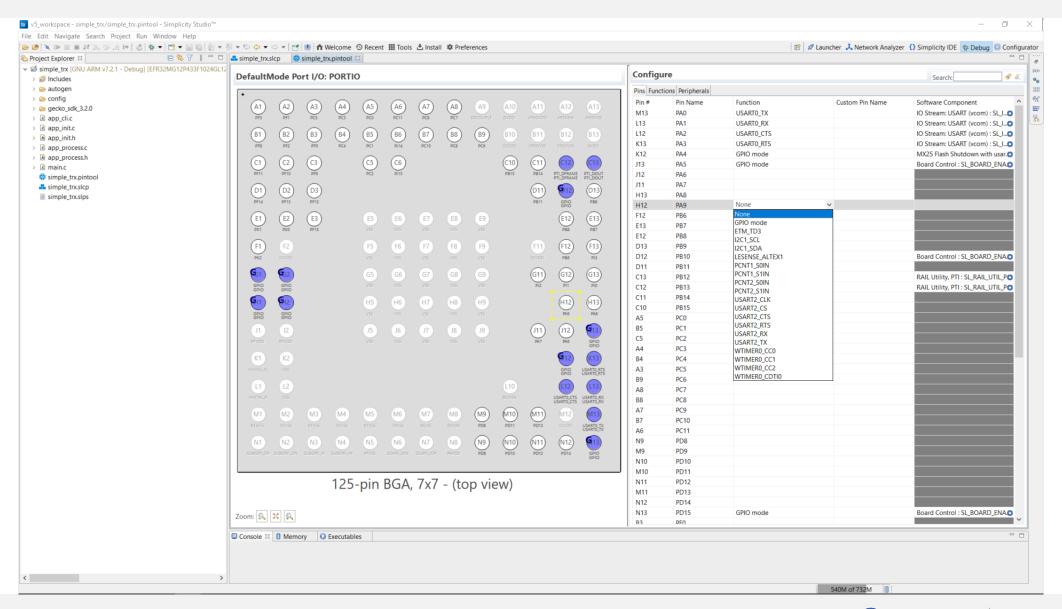
Demo



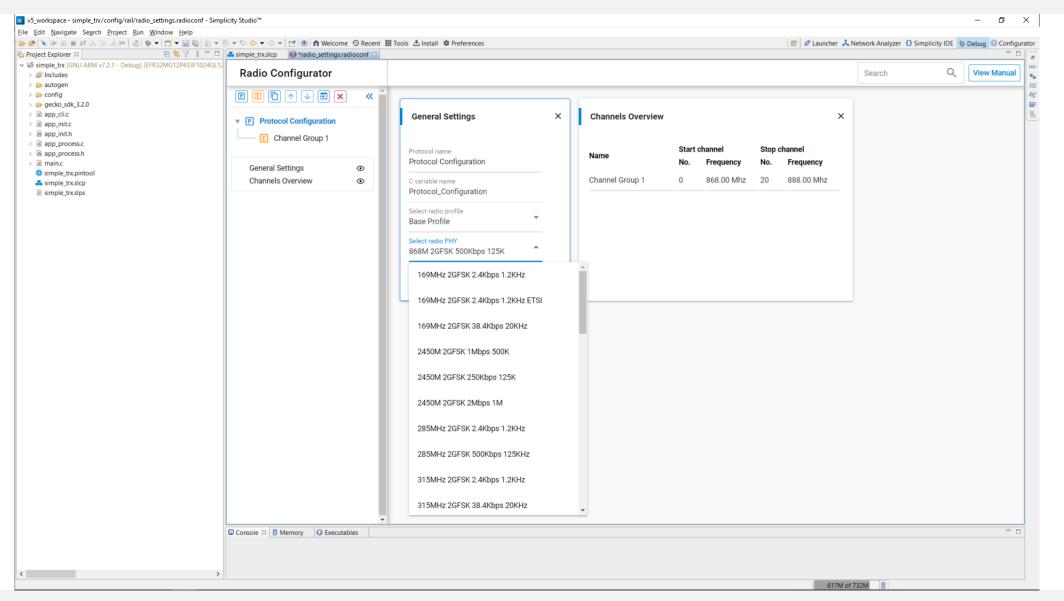
Configuration Tools



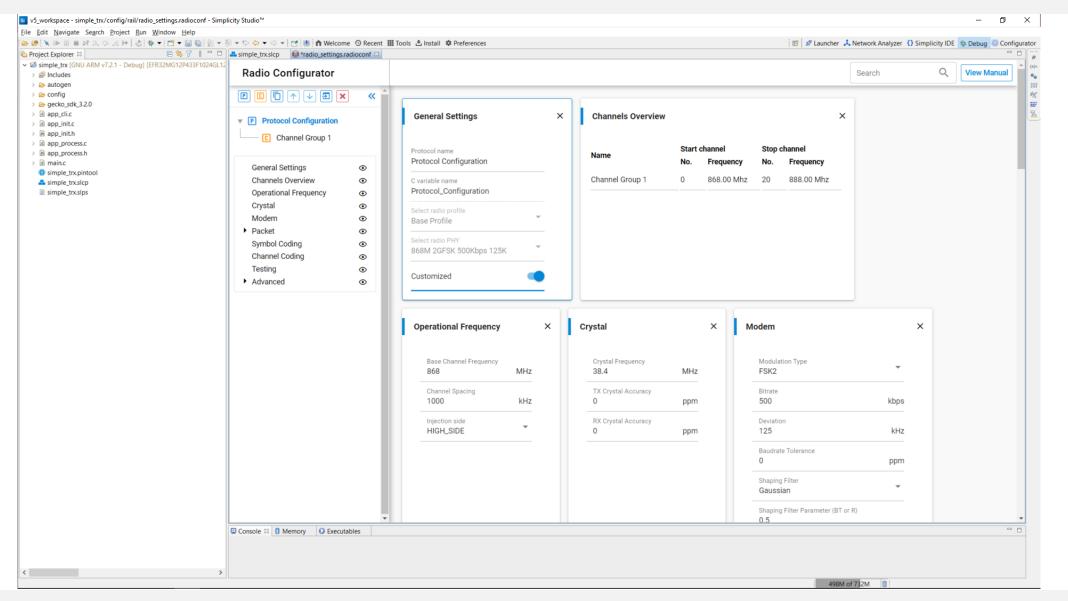
Configuration Tools – Pin Tool



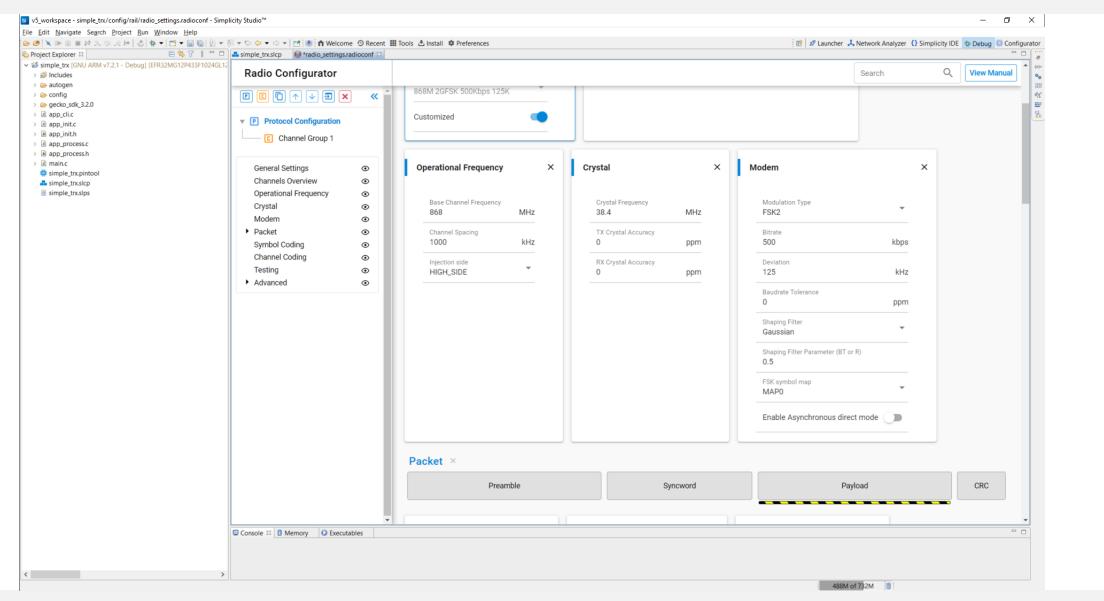
Configuration Tool – Radio Configurator



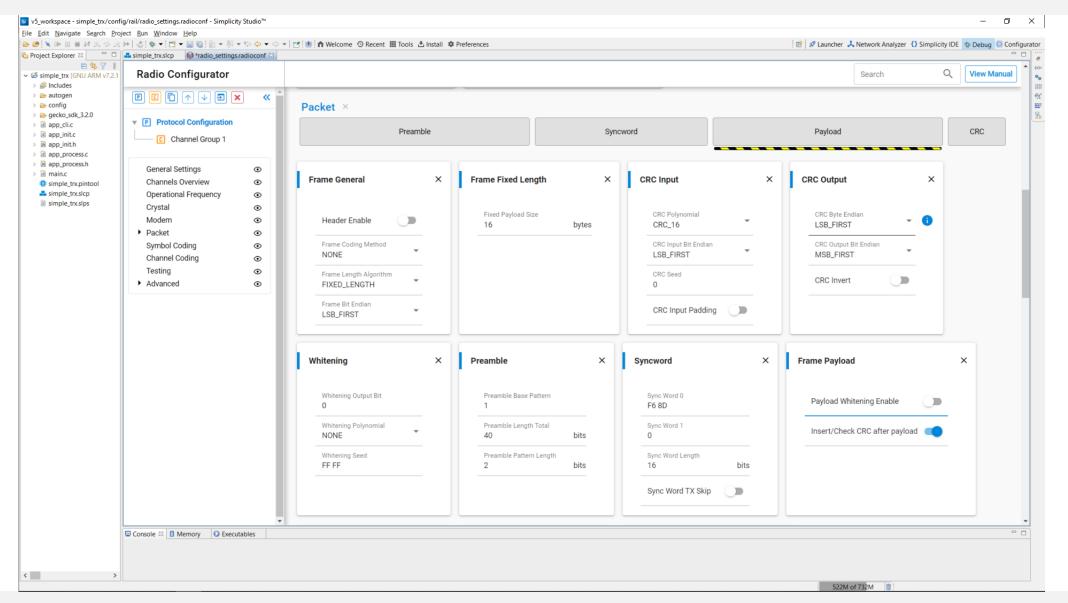
Radio Configurator - Customized



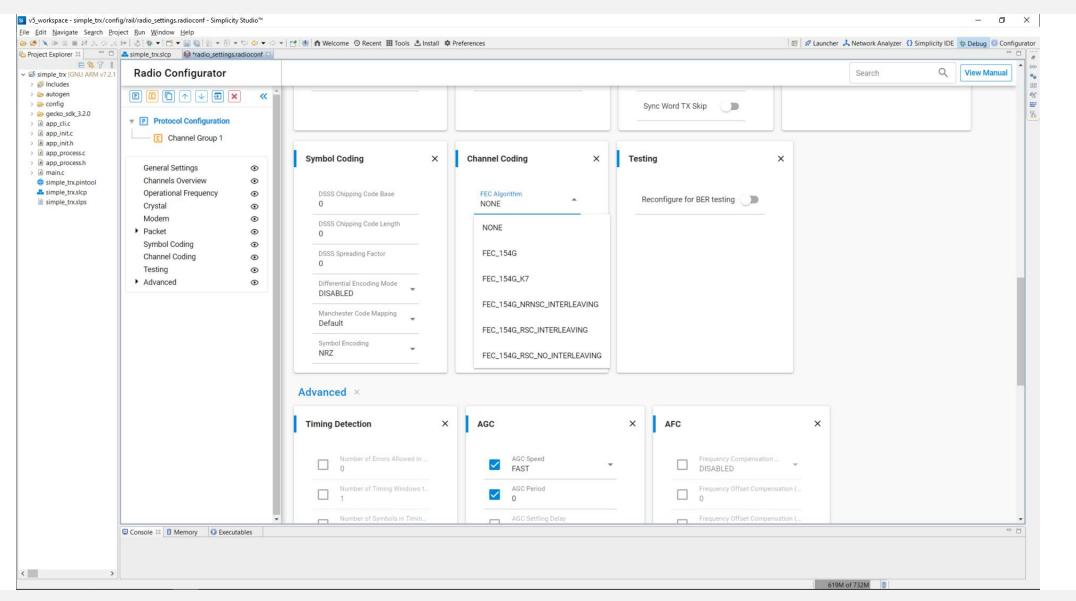
Radio Configurator – Modem settings



Radio Configurator – Packet structure settings



Radio Configurator – Packet structure settings

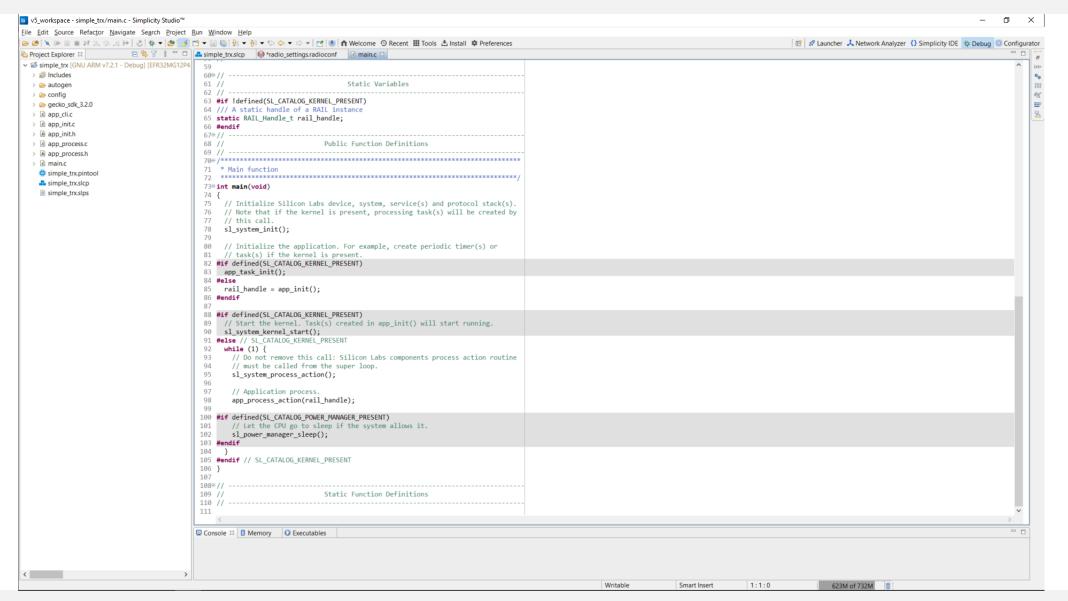


RAIL SimpleTRX Walkthrough

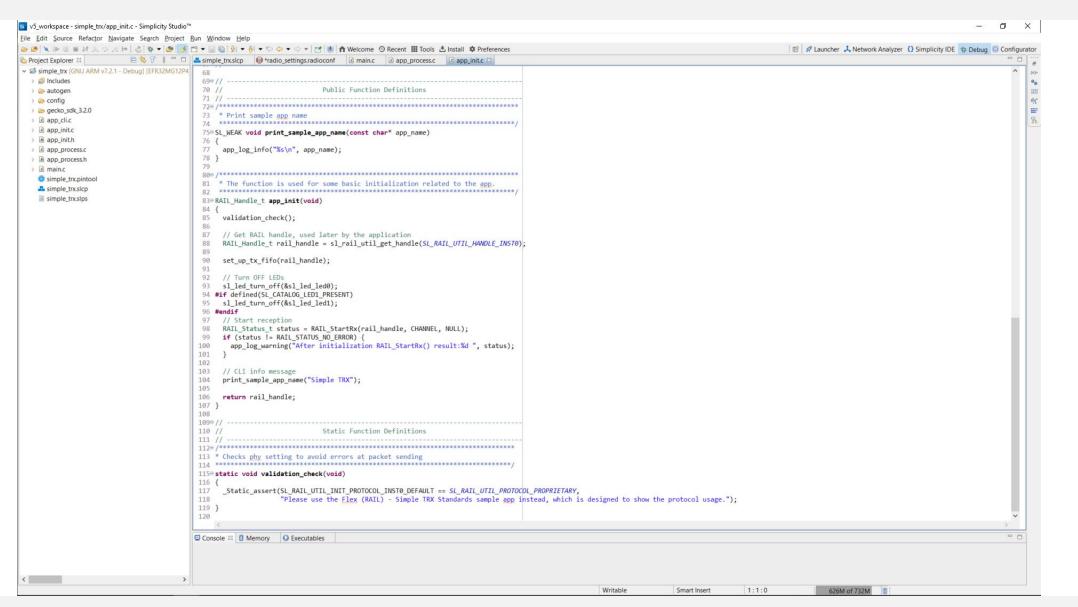
Init



SimpleTRX – main.c



SimpleTRX – RAIL App Init



RAIL Simple TRX Init - Summary

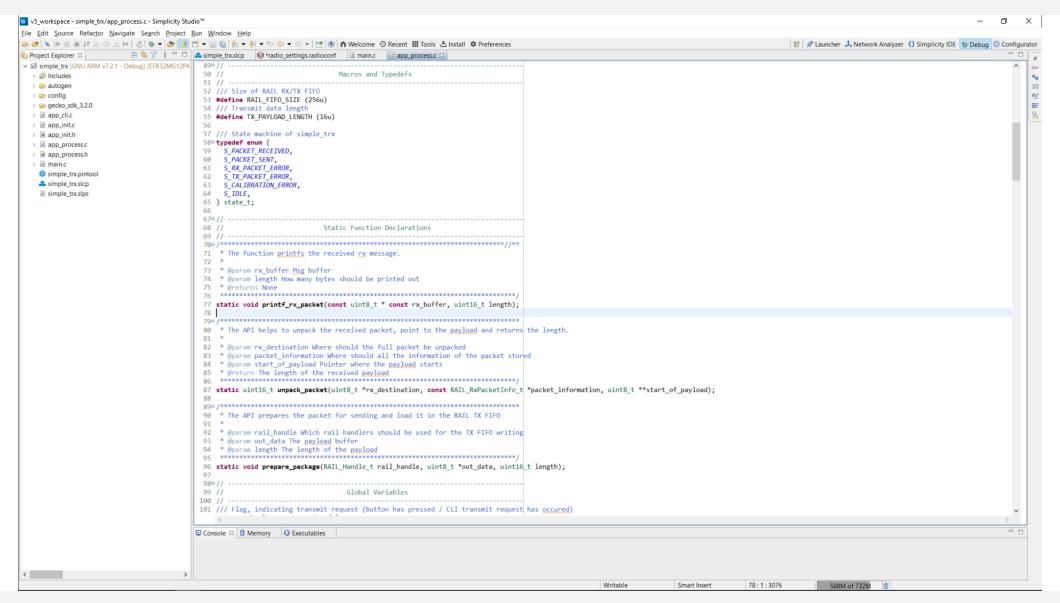
- Initialized through components:
 - Clocks, DCDC, UART etc
 - PA (required for tx only)
 - PTI (optional)
 - RSSI offset (required for accurate RSSI reading)
 - RAIL -> rail_handle, event handler is ready, sl_rail_util_on_event()
 - Load radio config
 - Automatic state transitions (optional)
 - Some events (recommended to do in code)
- Initialized trough app_init:
 - Tx fifo (required for tx only)
 - Start rx (sets starting radio state)

RAIL SimpleTRX Walkthrough

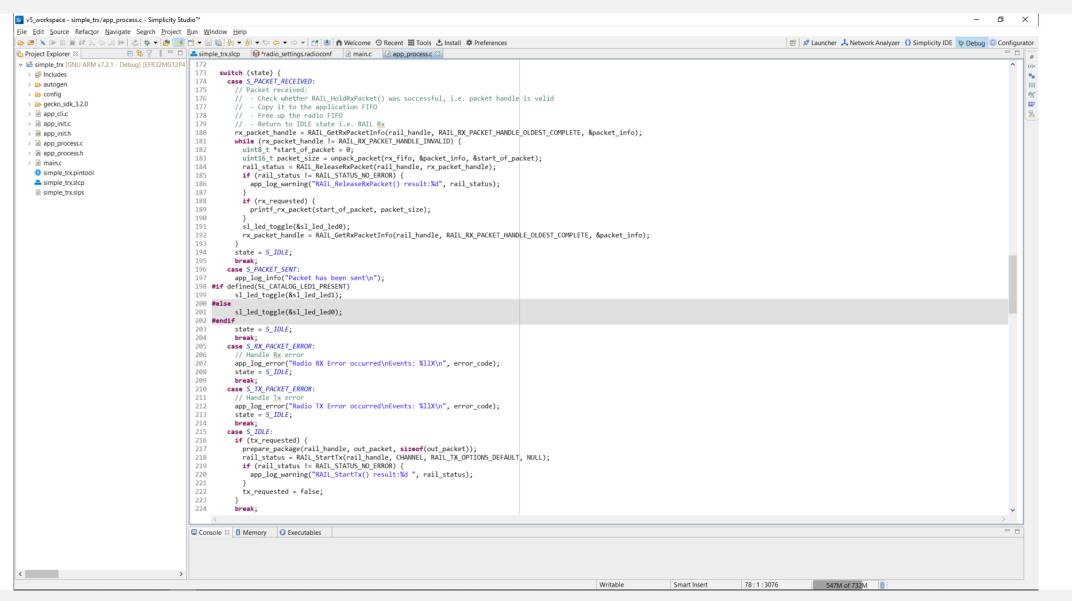
Process



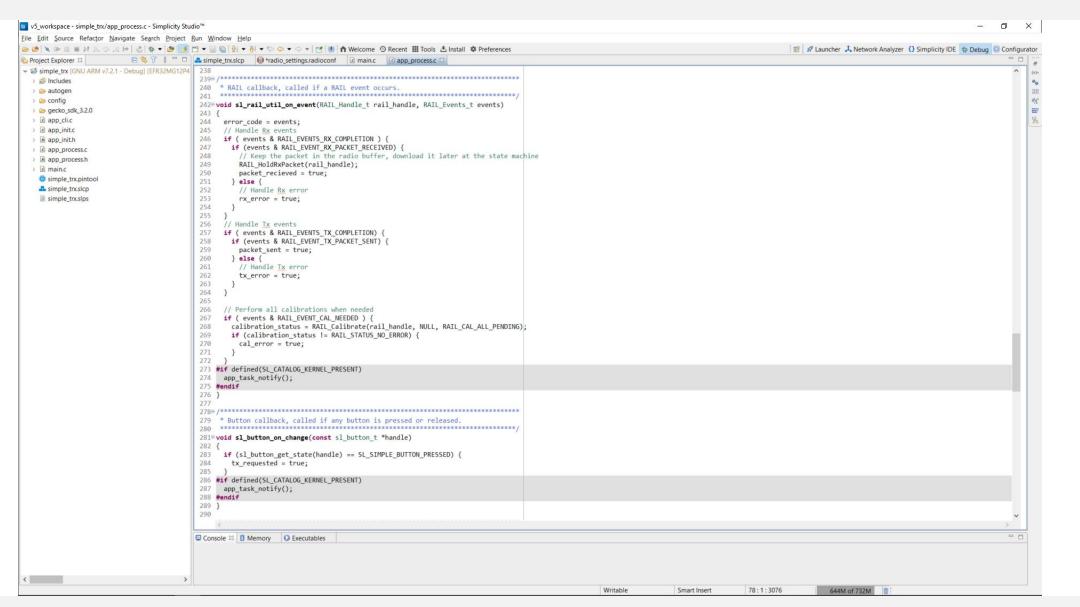
SimpleTRX – Process - Functions



SimpleTRX – Process – State Machine



SimpleTRX – Process - RAIL



RAIL Simple TRX Process

Transmit

- Init:
 - PA configuration (RAIL PA component)
 - RAIL_SetTxFifo()
- Main Loop:
 - RAIL_WriteTxFifo()
 - RAIL StartTx()
- Event handler:
 - Wait for RAIL_EVENT_TX_PACKET_SENT
 - Go back to RX state: auto state transition in RAIL init component

Receive

- Init:
 - RAIL_StartRx()
- Event handler
 - Wait for RAIL_EVENT_RX_PACKET_RECEIVED
 - RAIL HoldRxPacket()
 - Go back to RX state: auto state transition in RAIL init. component
- Main loop:
 - RAIL GetRxPacketInfo() for RAIL_RX_PACKET_HANDLE_OLDEST_COMPLETE
 - If returns packetHandle:
 - RAIL_CopyRxPacket()
 - RAIL_ReleaseRxPacket()
 - Repeat until returns valid packetHandle



Resources

- Proprietary Flex SDK v3.x Quick Start Guide -- QSG168
- RAIL Fundamentals -- UG103.13
- Connect Fundamentals -- UG103.12
- Multiprotocol Fundamentals -- UG103.16
- Dynamic Multiprotocol User's Guide -- UG305
- Simplicity Studio® 5 User's Guide
- EFR32 Migration Guide for Proprietary Applications -- AN1244
- About the Connect v3.x User's Guide -- UG435.01
- Building Low Power Networks with the Silicon Labs Connect Stack v3.x -- AN1252
- Silicon Labs Connect API Reference Guide
- EFR32 Radio Configurator Guide for Simplicity Studio 5 -- AN1253
- RAILtest User's Guide -- UG409
- FFR32 RF Evaluation Guide -- AN972
- Silicon Labs RAIL API Reference Guide
- https://www.silabs.com/support/training/rail
- RAIL Tutorials





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