



AUGUST 6-7, 2025
MANDALAY BAY / LAS VEGAS

Windows Hell No for Business

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“Windows Dissected”

- Funded by the German Federal Office for IT Security, carried out by ERNW
- *“Various in-depth security analyses of security-critical components and functions in Windows...”*
- Started in 2024, planned to end in spring 2026
- Various work packages including
 - Windows Hello for Business
 - eXtended Control Flow Guard – state of the art and limitations
 - Code Integrity – caching and known bypasses
 - Group Policy Objects – processing flow



Who am I?

- Tillmann Osswald
- **ERNW Enno Rey Netzwerke GmbH**
 - Security researcher and Windows System Analyst
 - Since 2015
 - "Make the world a safer place"
- Master degree in IT security from the University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt.
- 💡❤️ Reverse engineering Windows components.



Who am I?

- Dr David Baptiste
- I am 🇫🇷 and I work in 🇩🇪
- **ERNW Enno Rey Netzwerke GmbH**
 - Computer security service in Heidelberg, Germany
 - “Make the World a Safer Place!”
- Did many conferences
 - Black Hat USA, DefCon, EICAR, Recon, ...
 - And also, one called TROOPERS 😄
- I like good food and good wine 😊





Windows Hello for Business

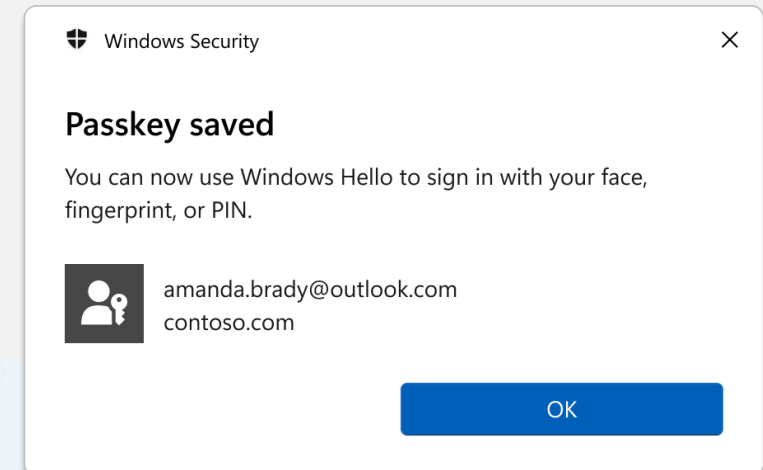
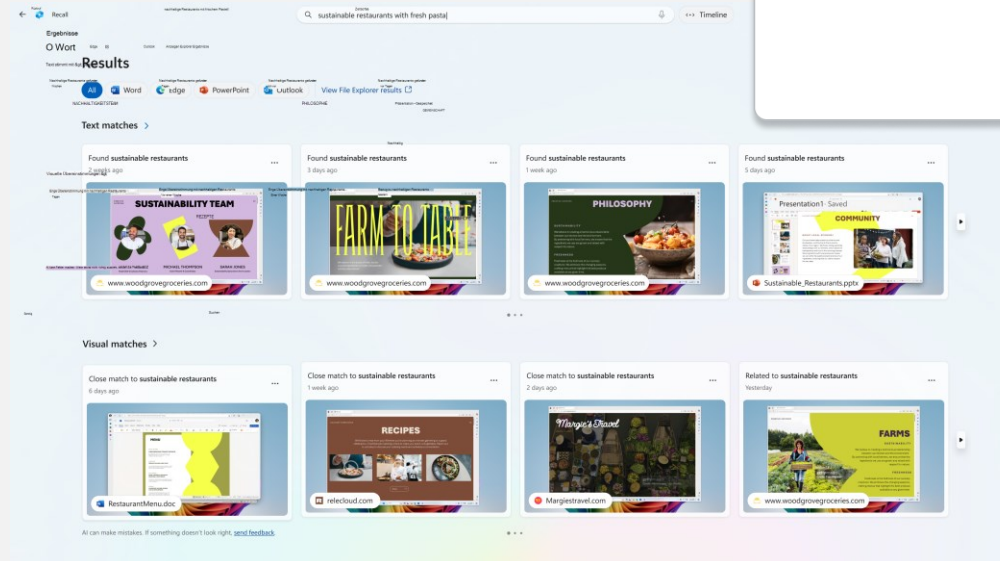
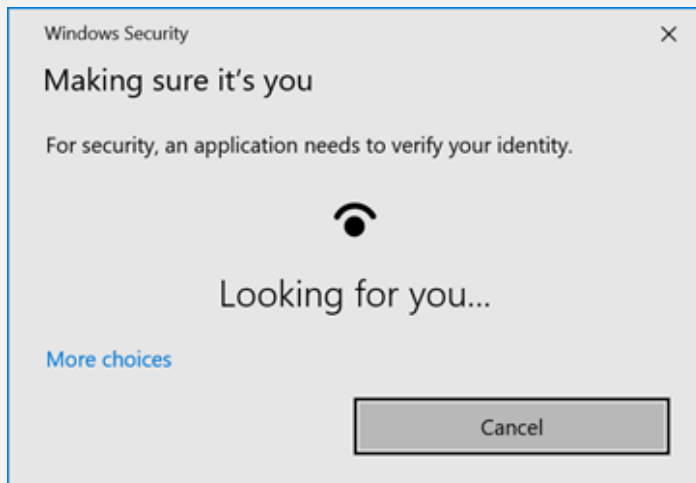
As a whole

Say Hello to Windows Hello



What is Windows Hello for Business?

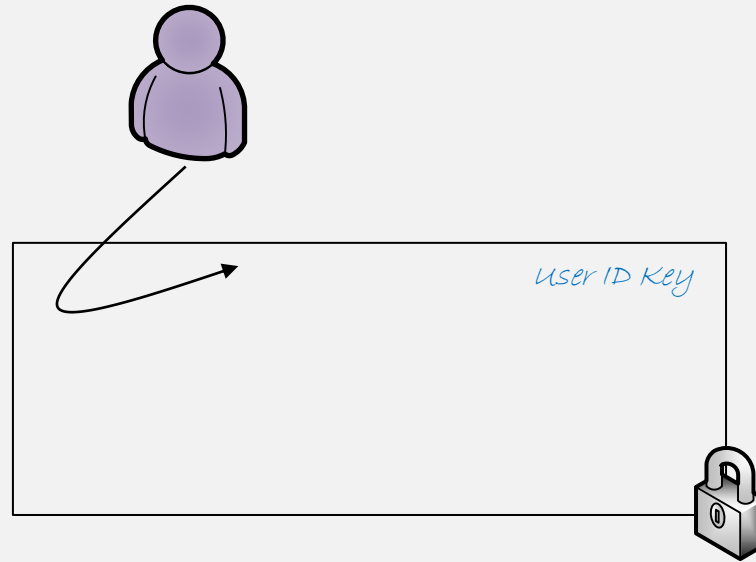
- Windows Hello for Business is Microsoft's passwordless flagship
 - Windows Recall, Passkey, ...
- Build on two key principals
 - Identification -> Windows Hello ...
 - Authentication -> ... for Business



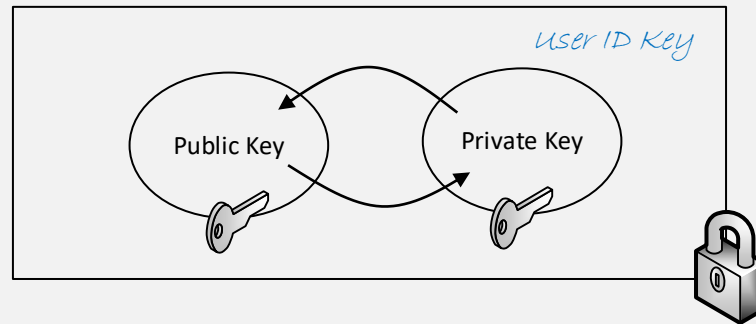
Windows Hello for Business – Enrollment



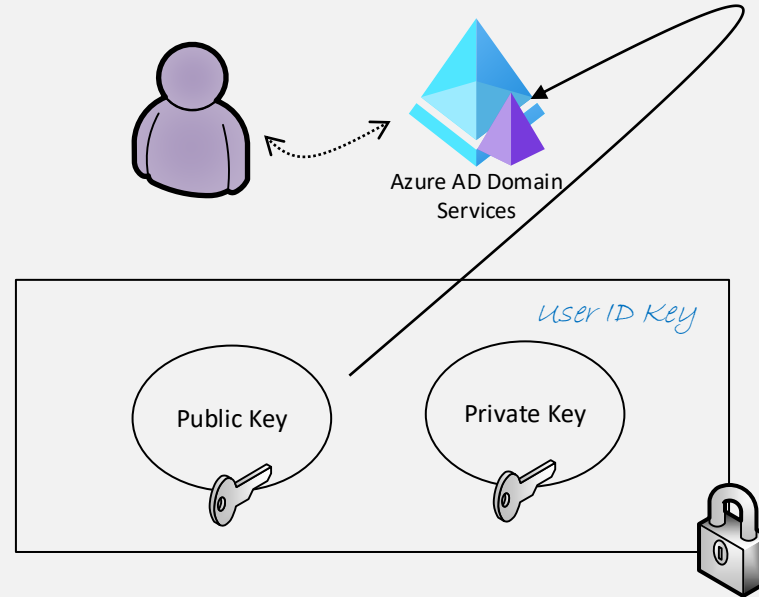
Windows Hello for Business – Enrollment



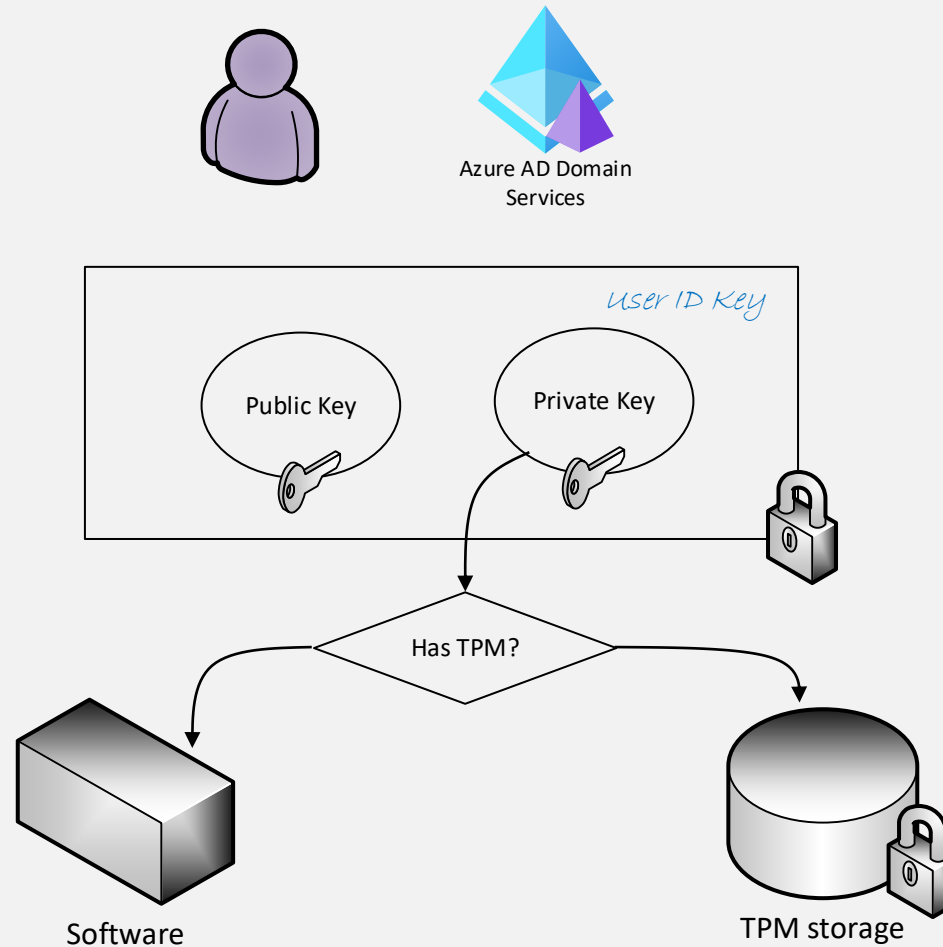
Windows Hello for Business – Enrollment



Windows Hello for Business – Enrollment



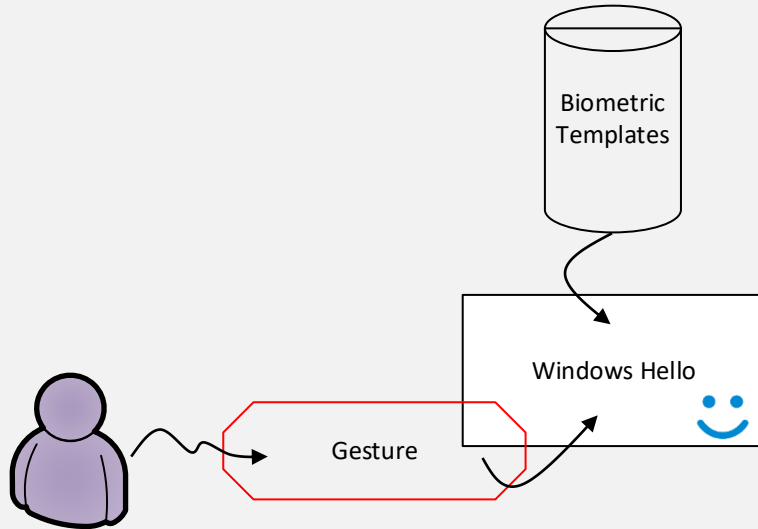
Windows Hello for Business – Enrollment



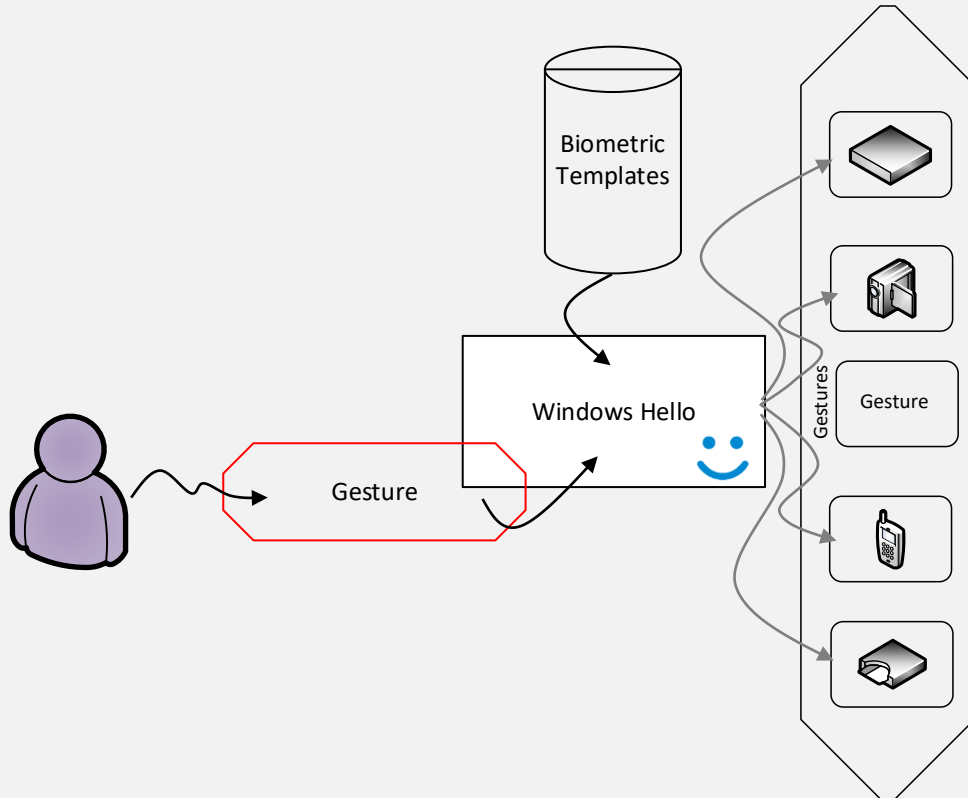
Windows Hello for Business



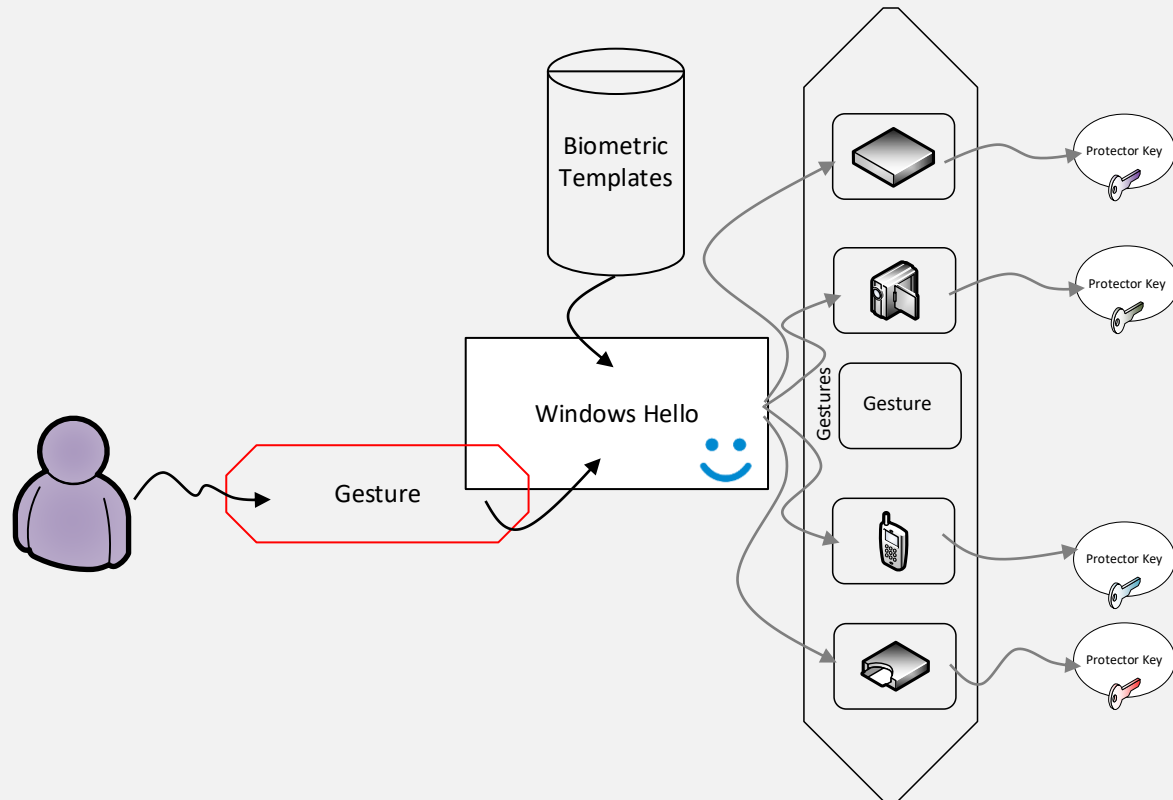
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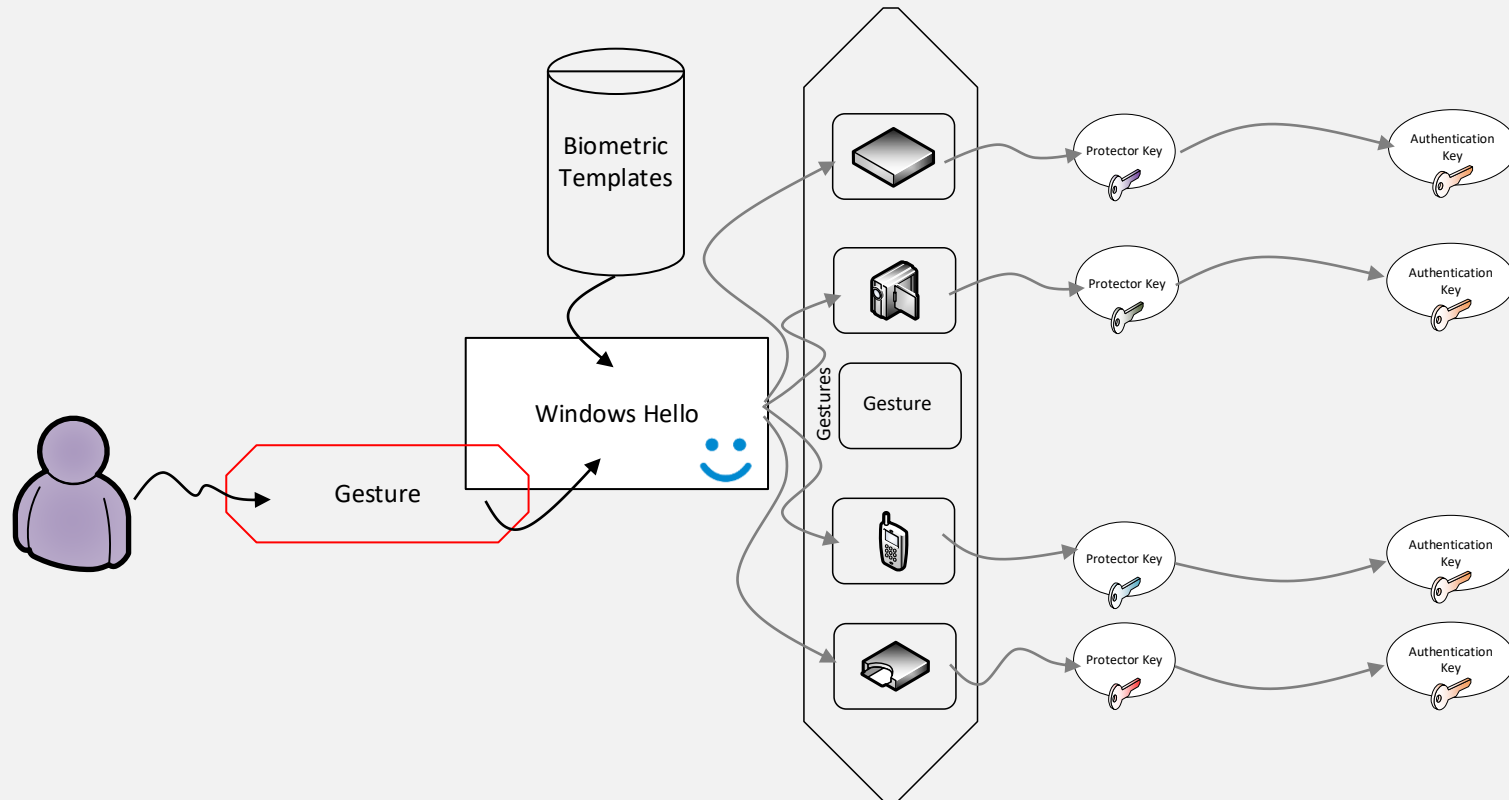
Windows Hello for Business



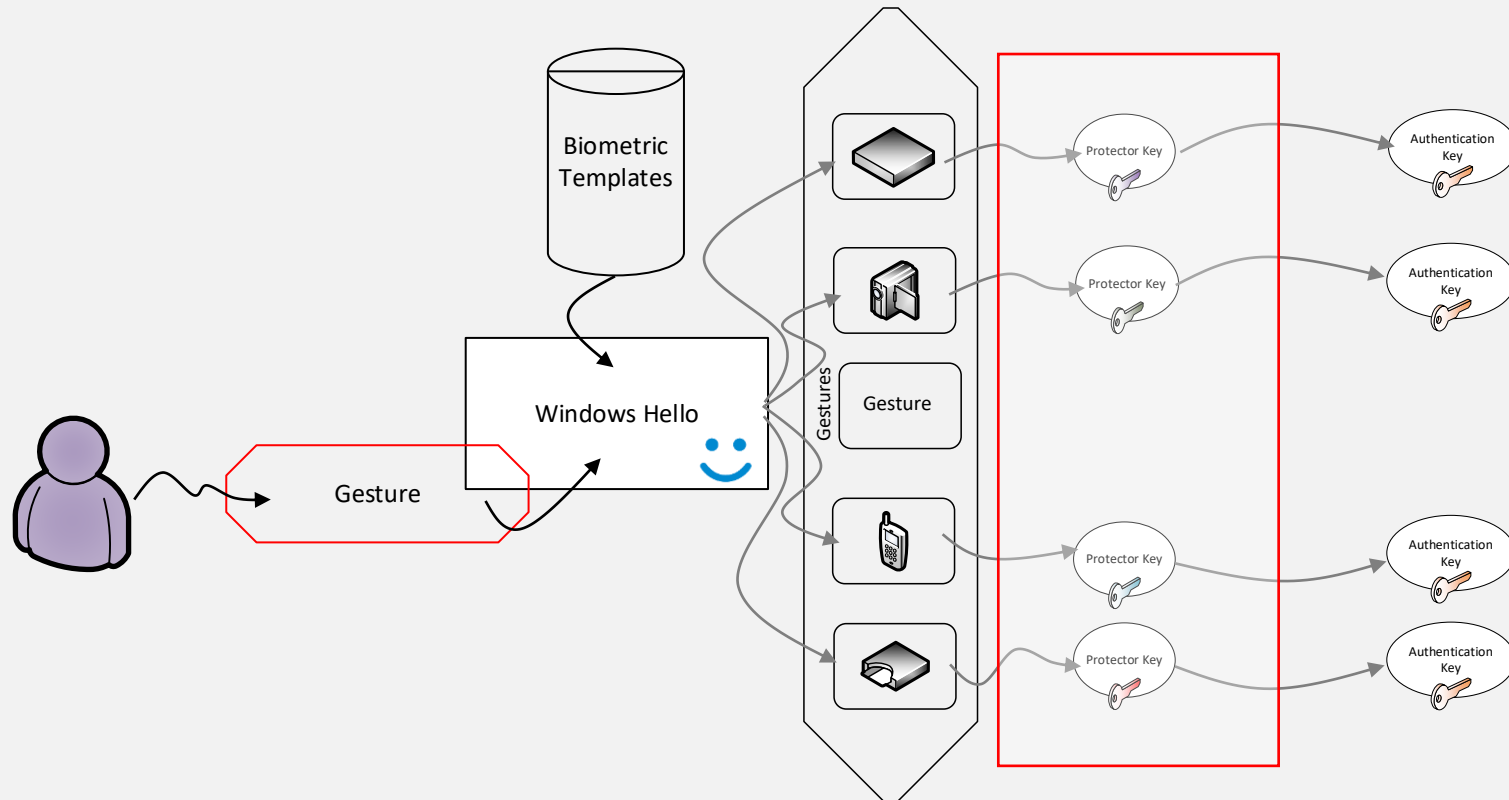
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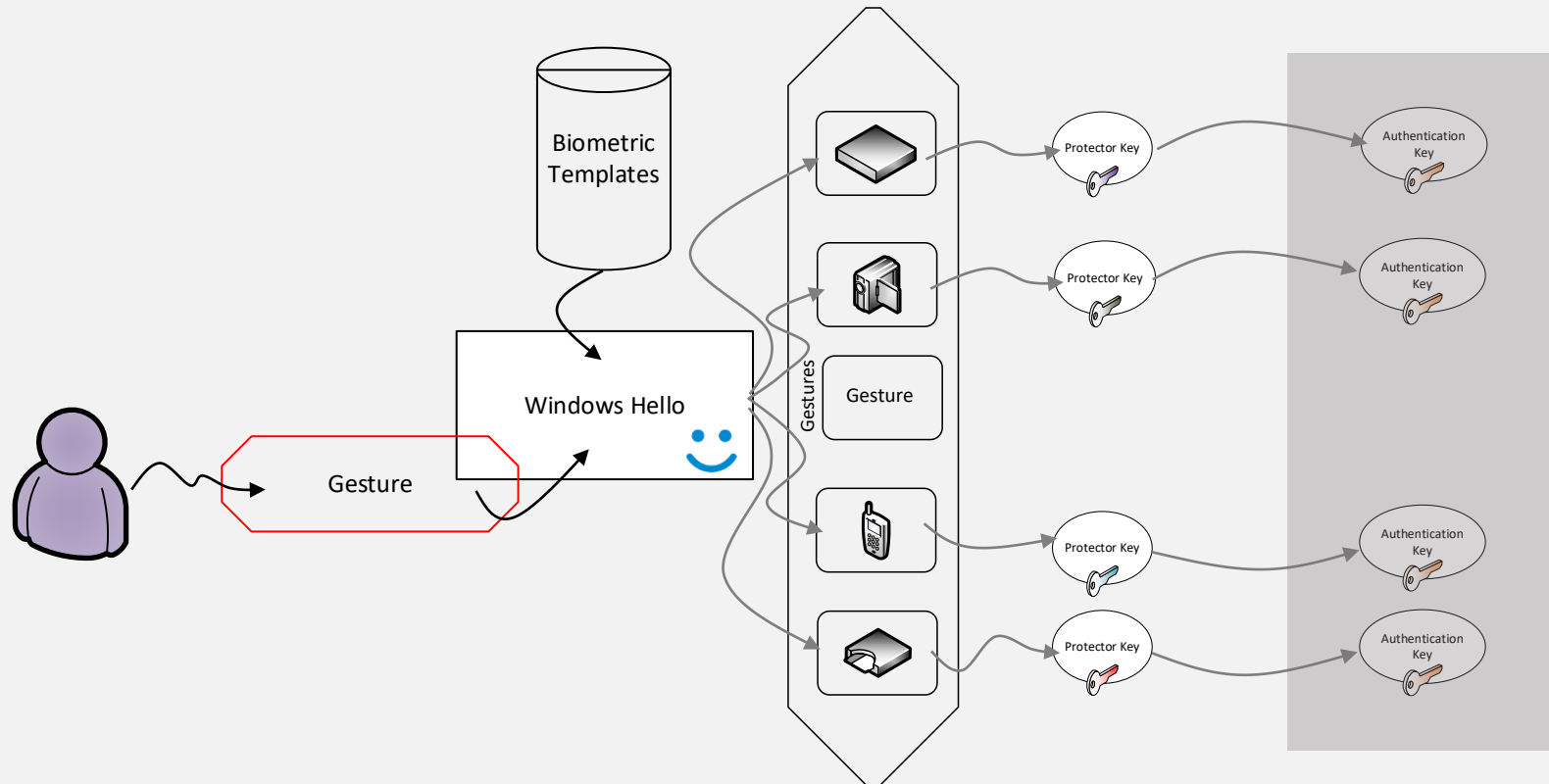
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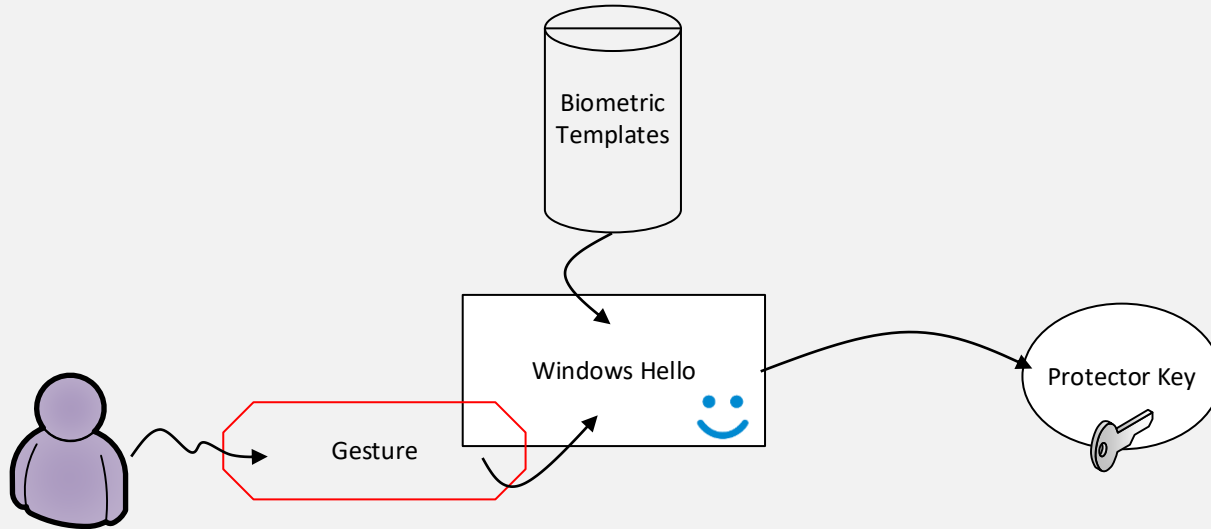
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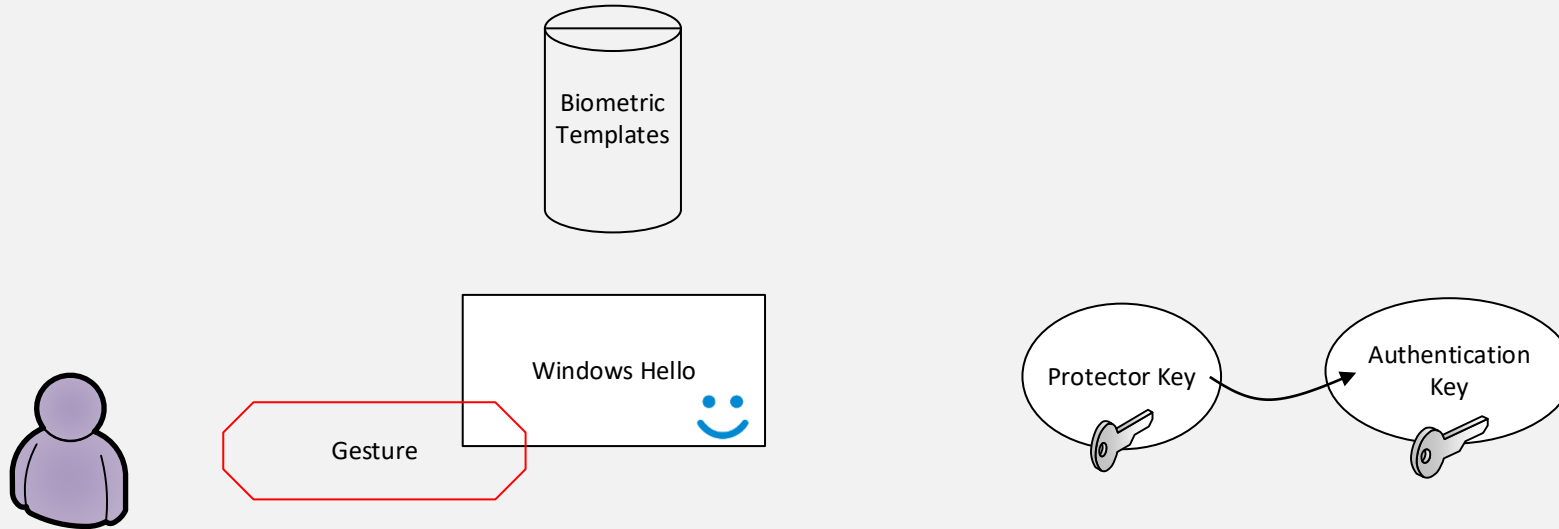
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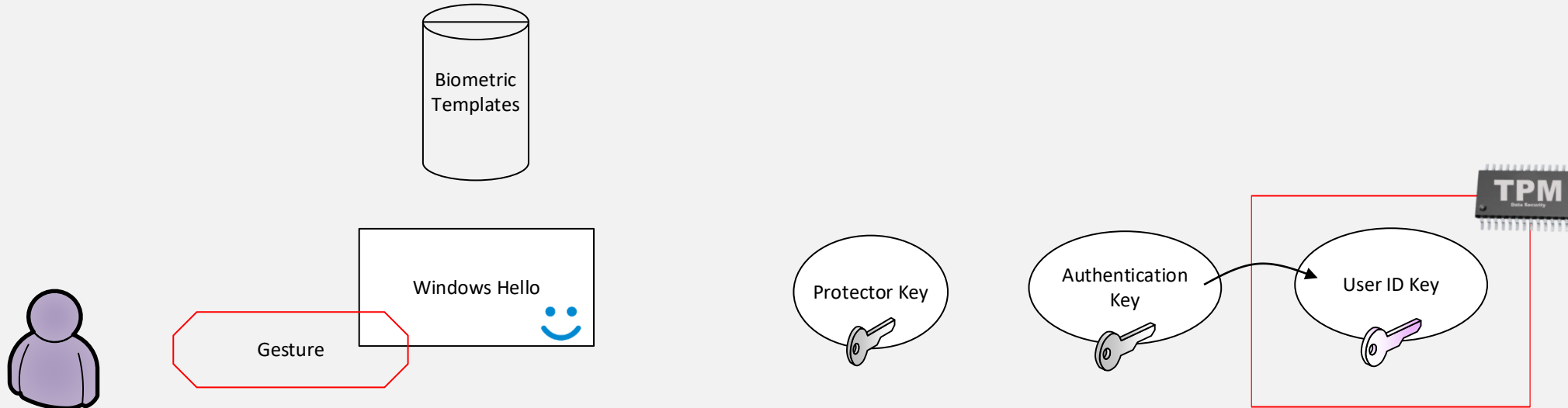
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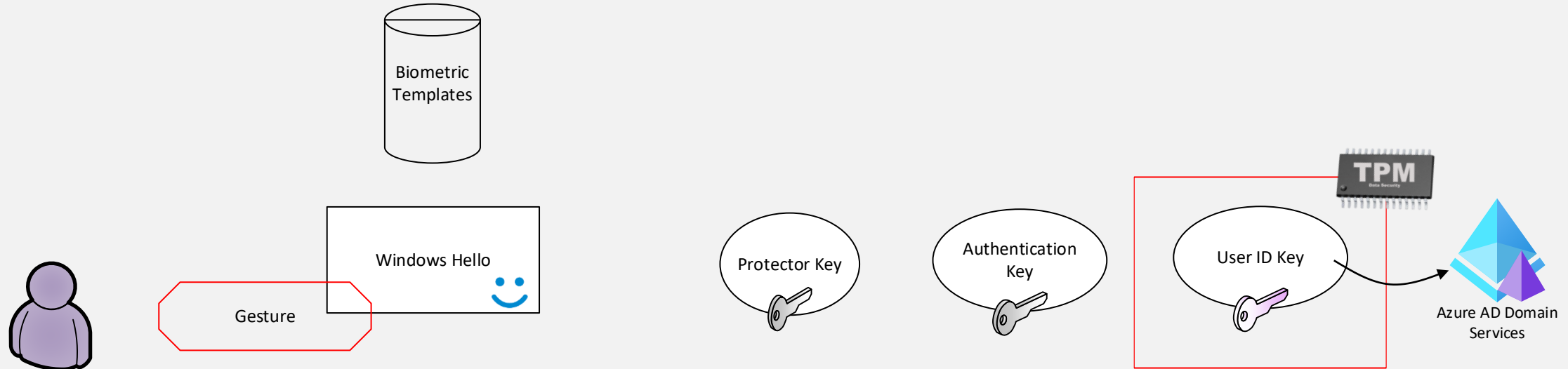
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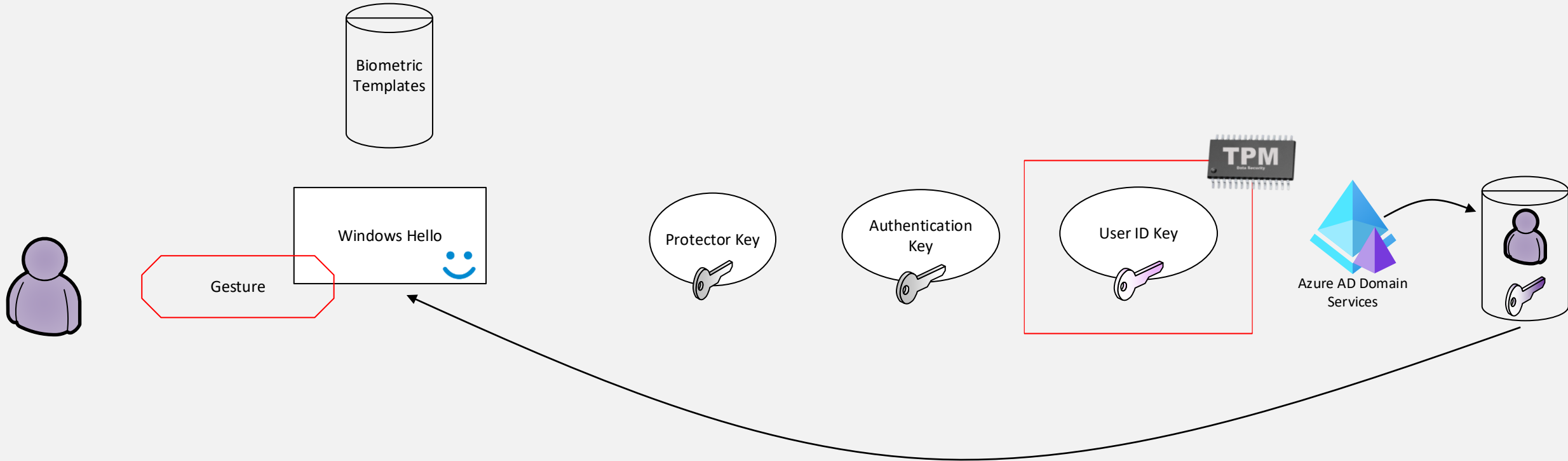
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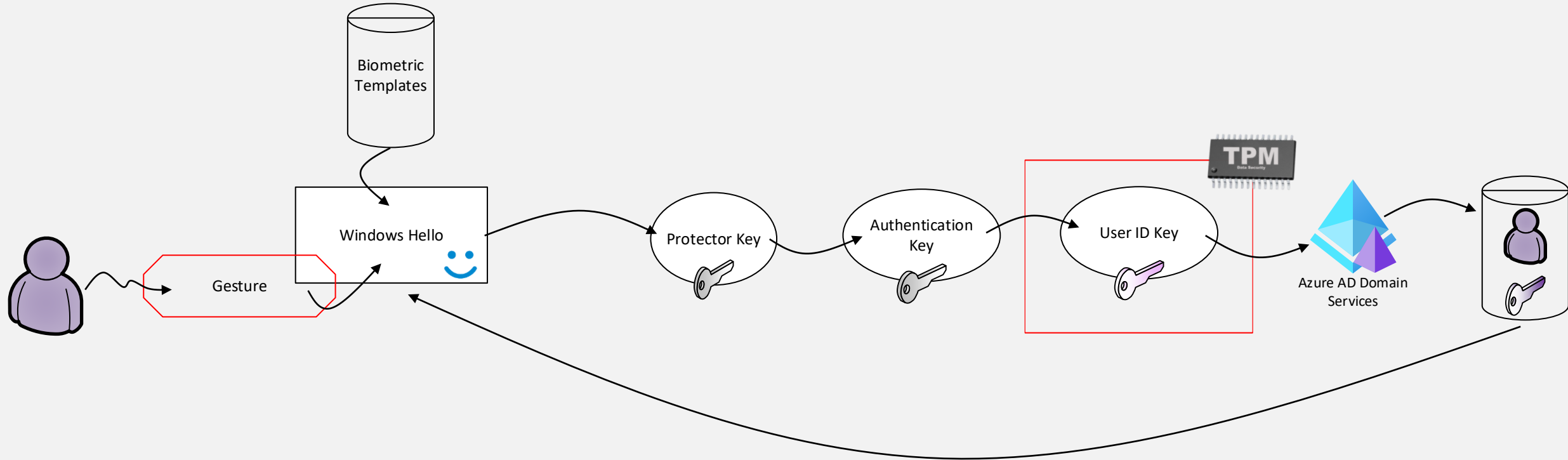
Windows Hello for Business



Windows Hello for Business



Windows Hello for Business





Windows Hello for Business

Internals

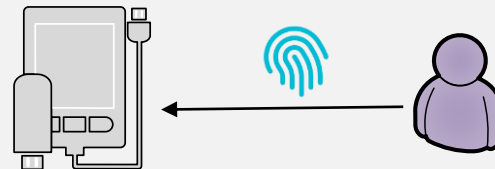
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



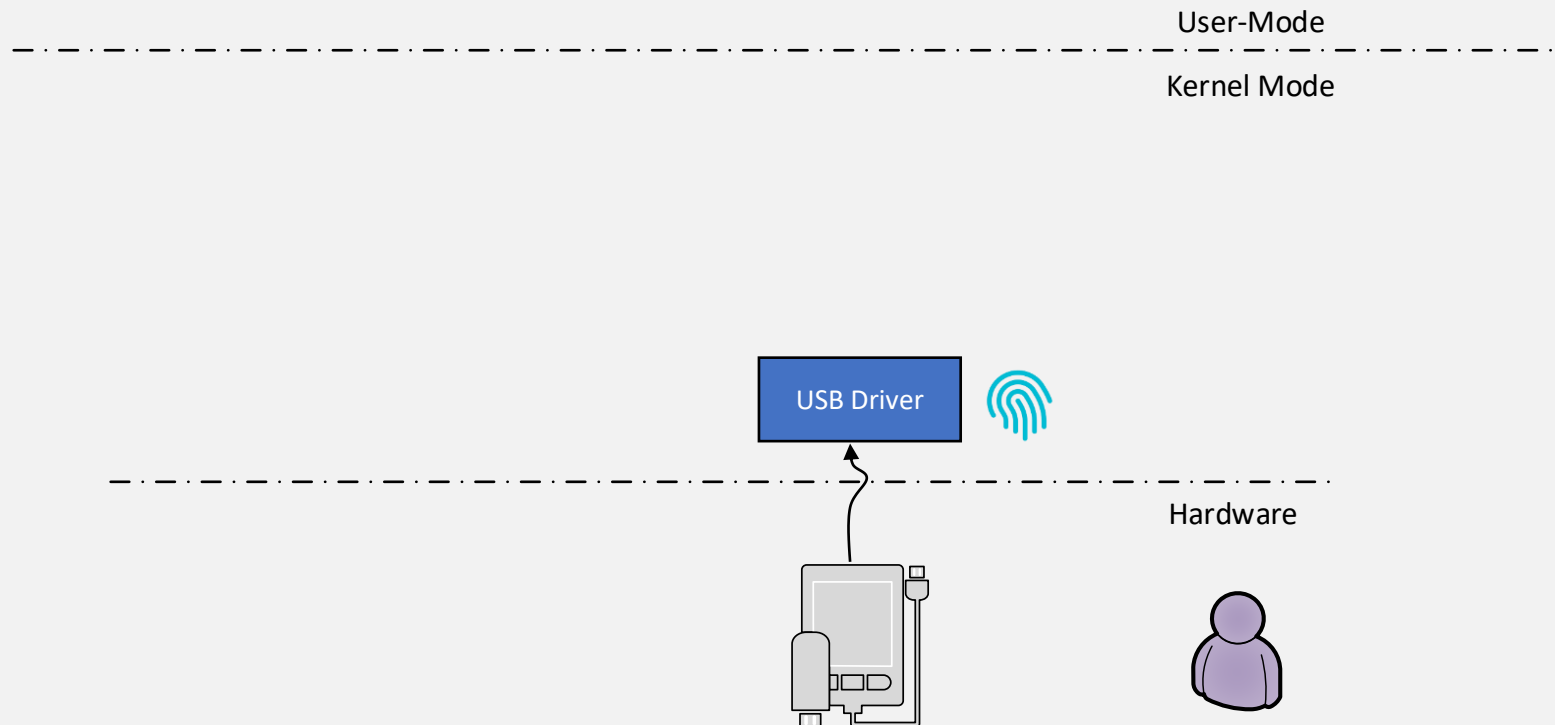
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



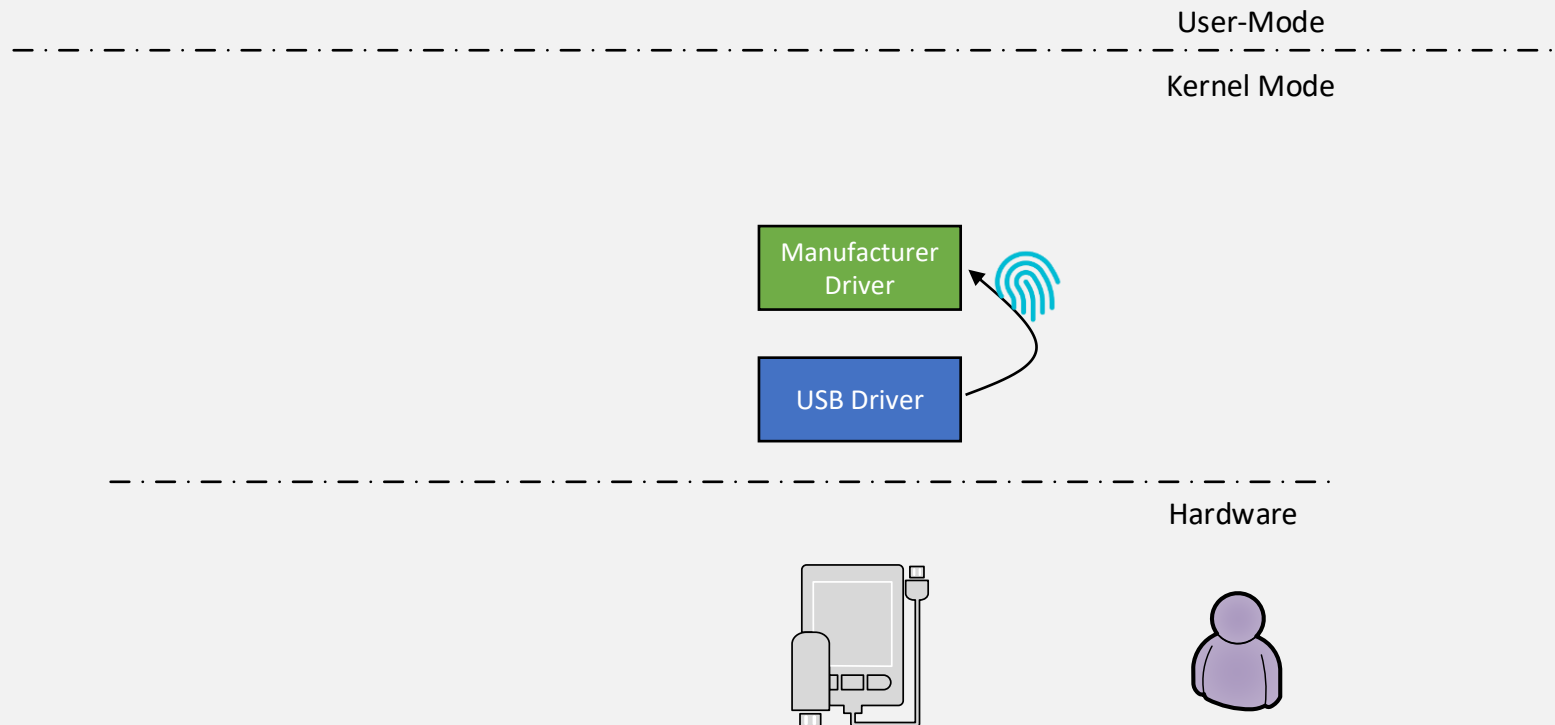
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



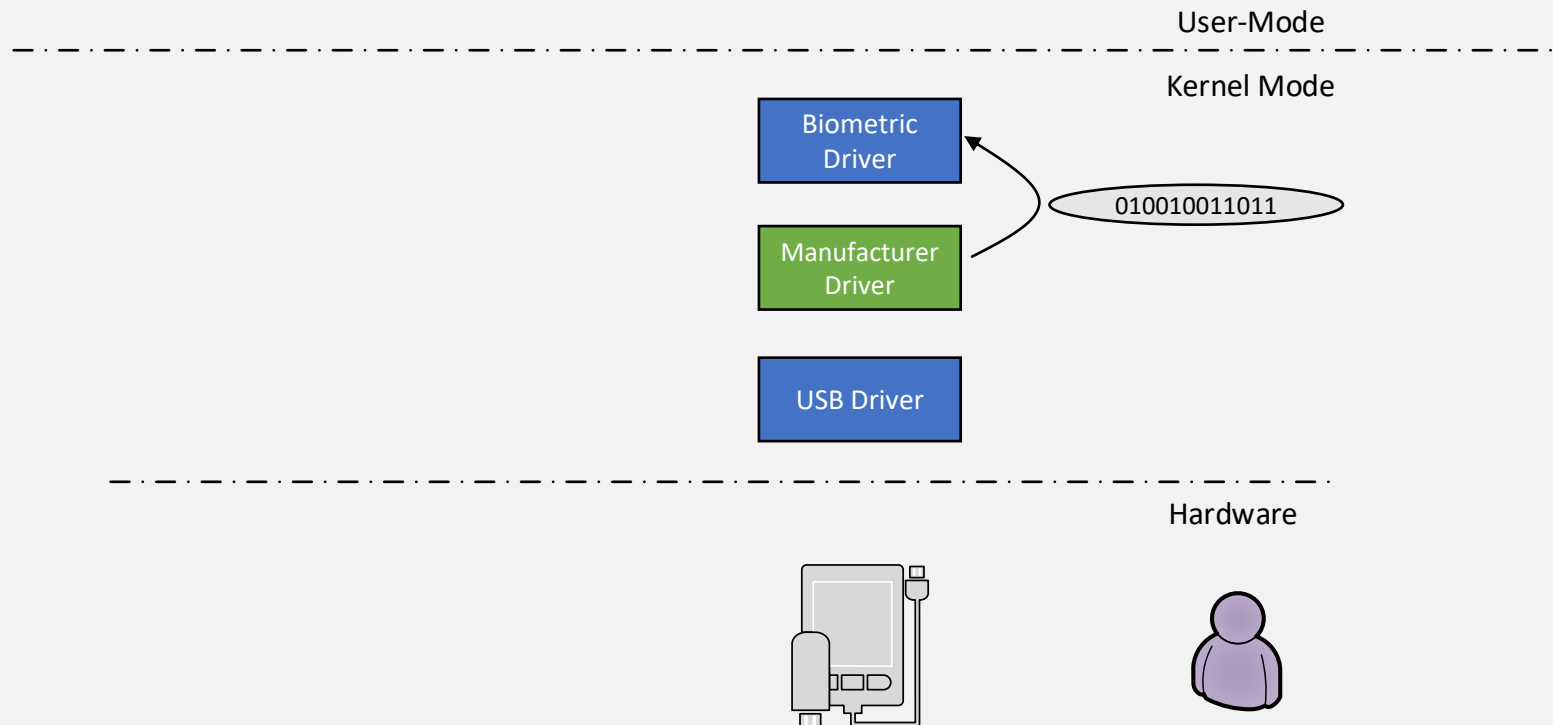
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



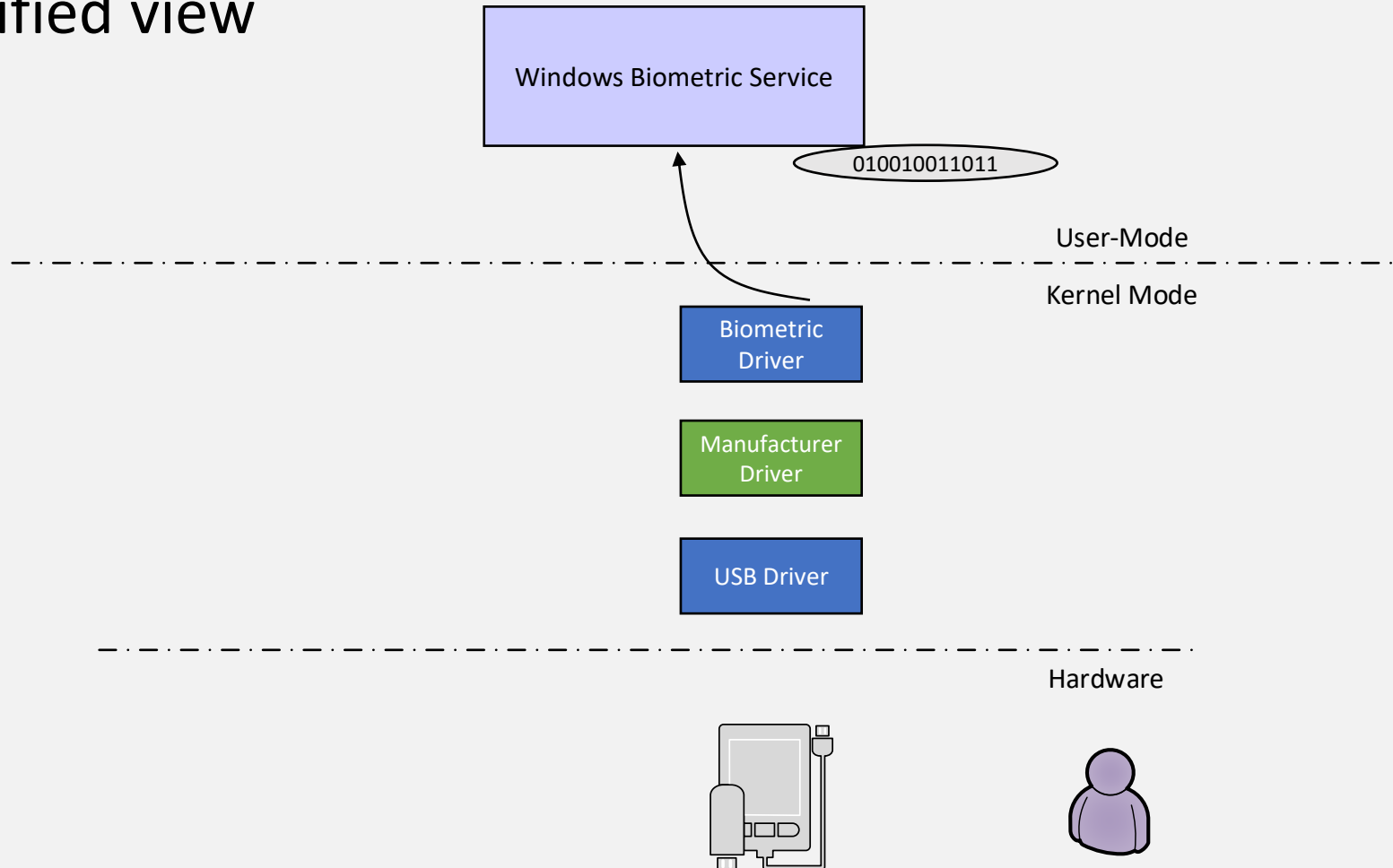
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



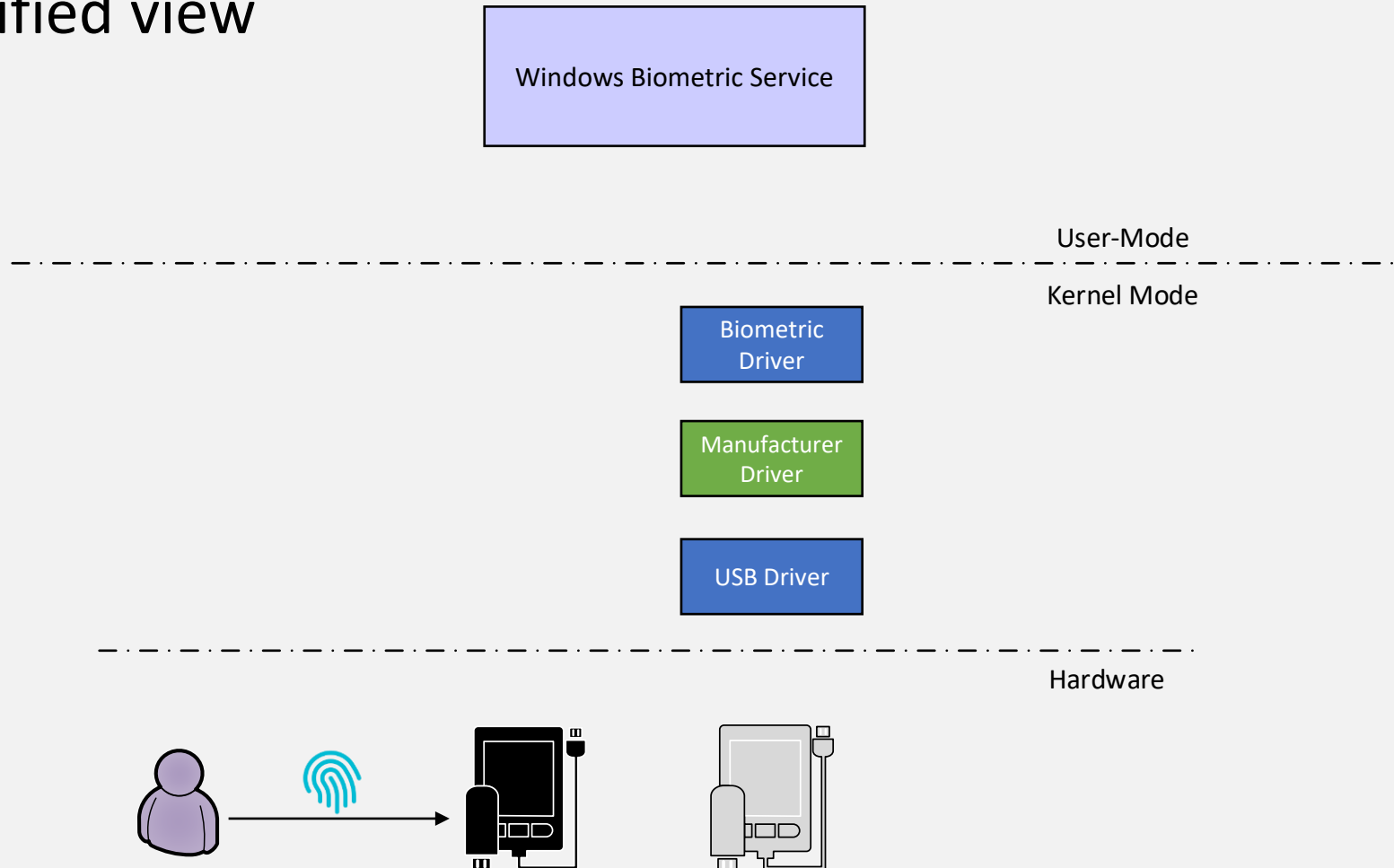
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



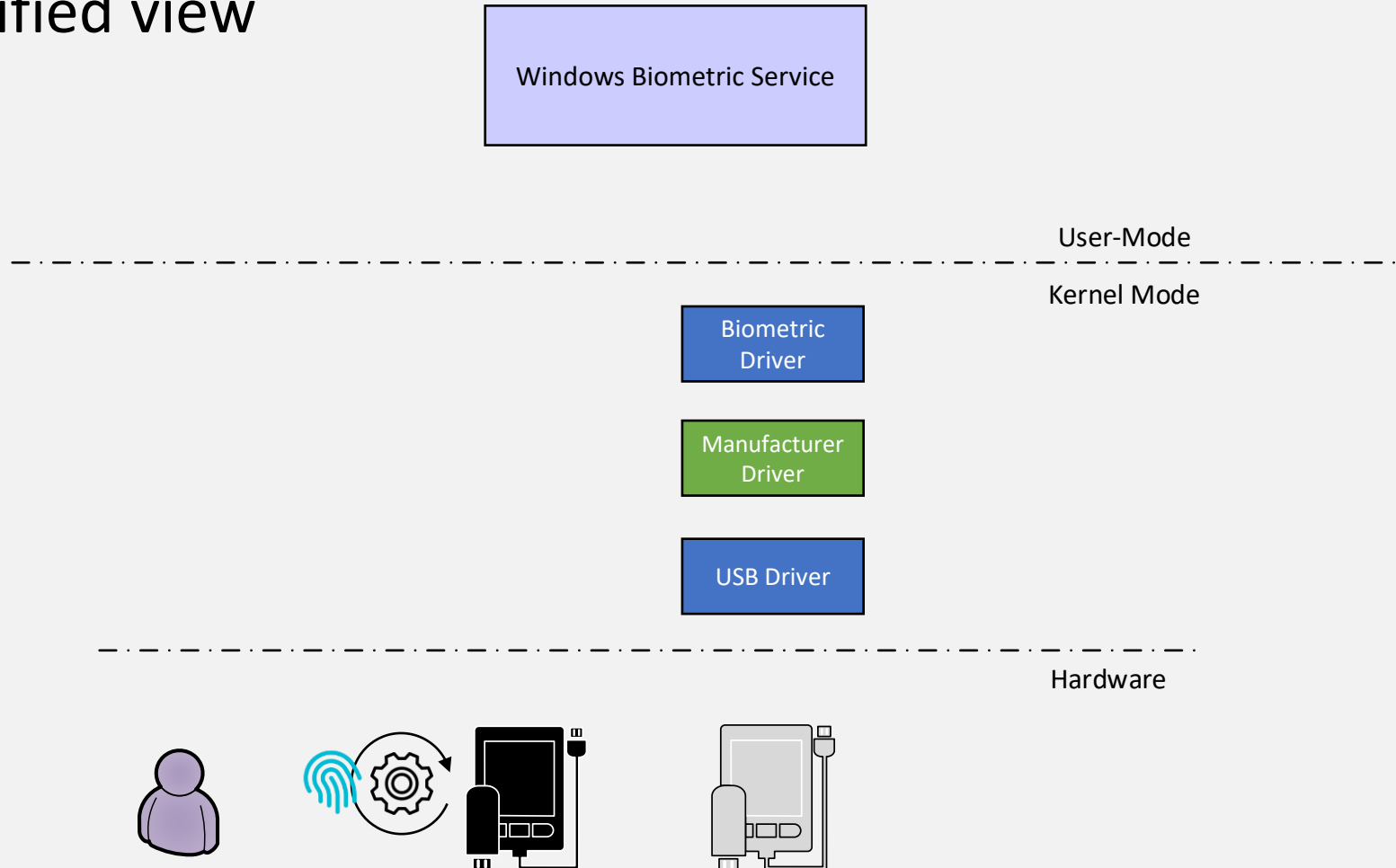
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



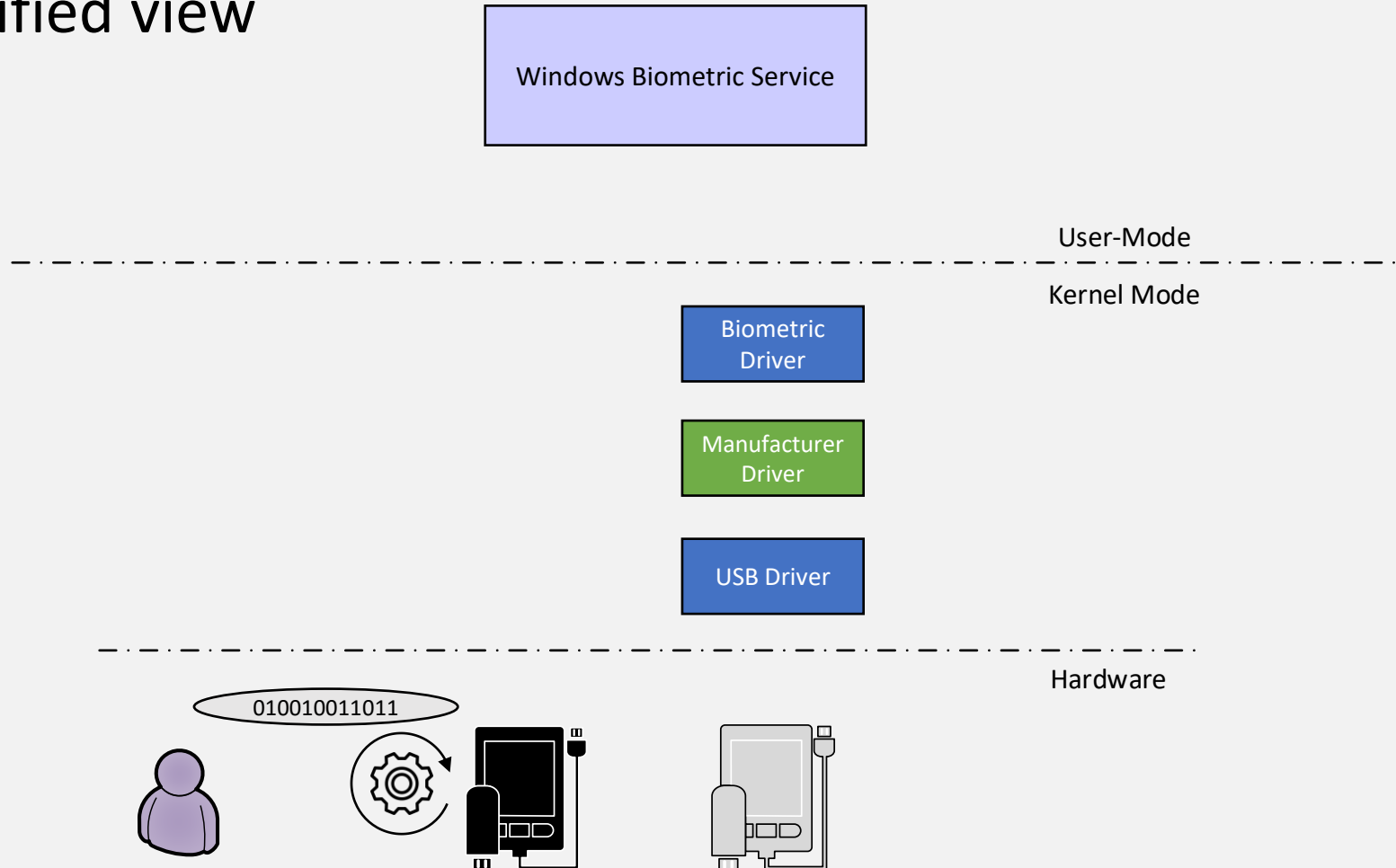
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



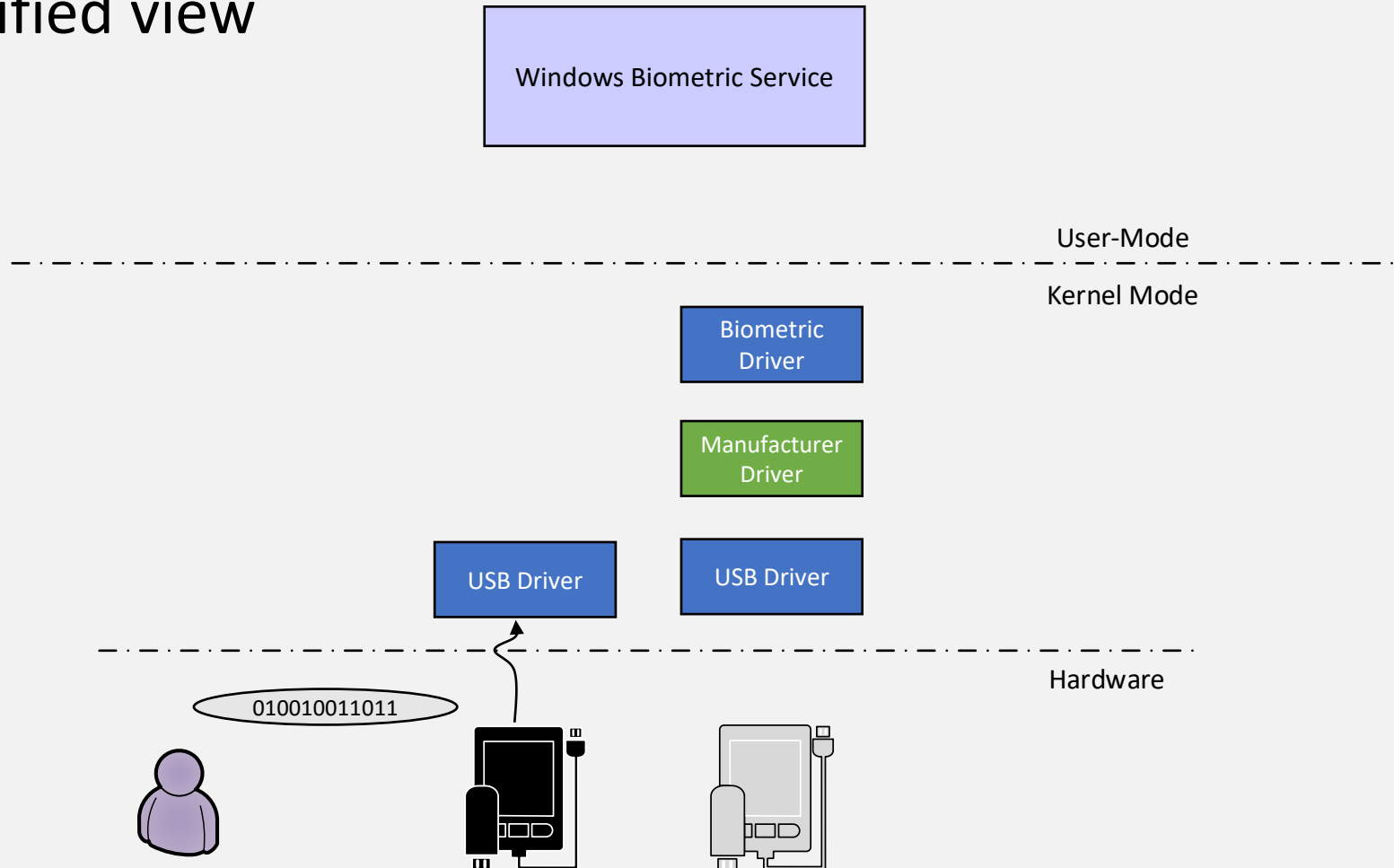
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



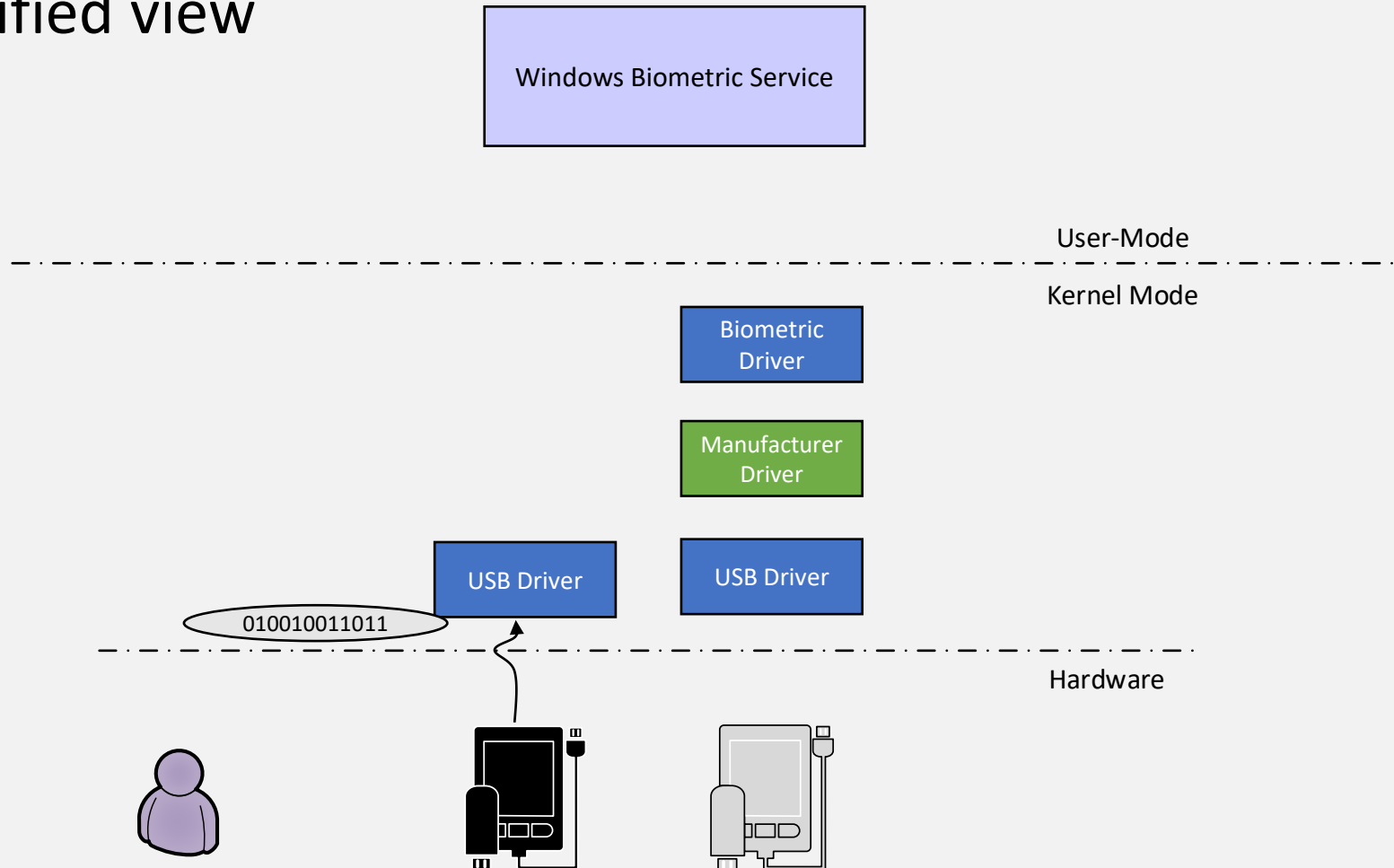
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



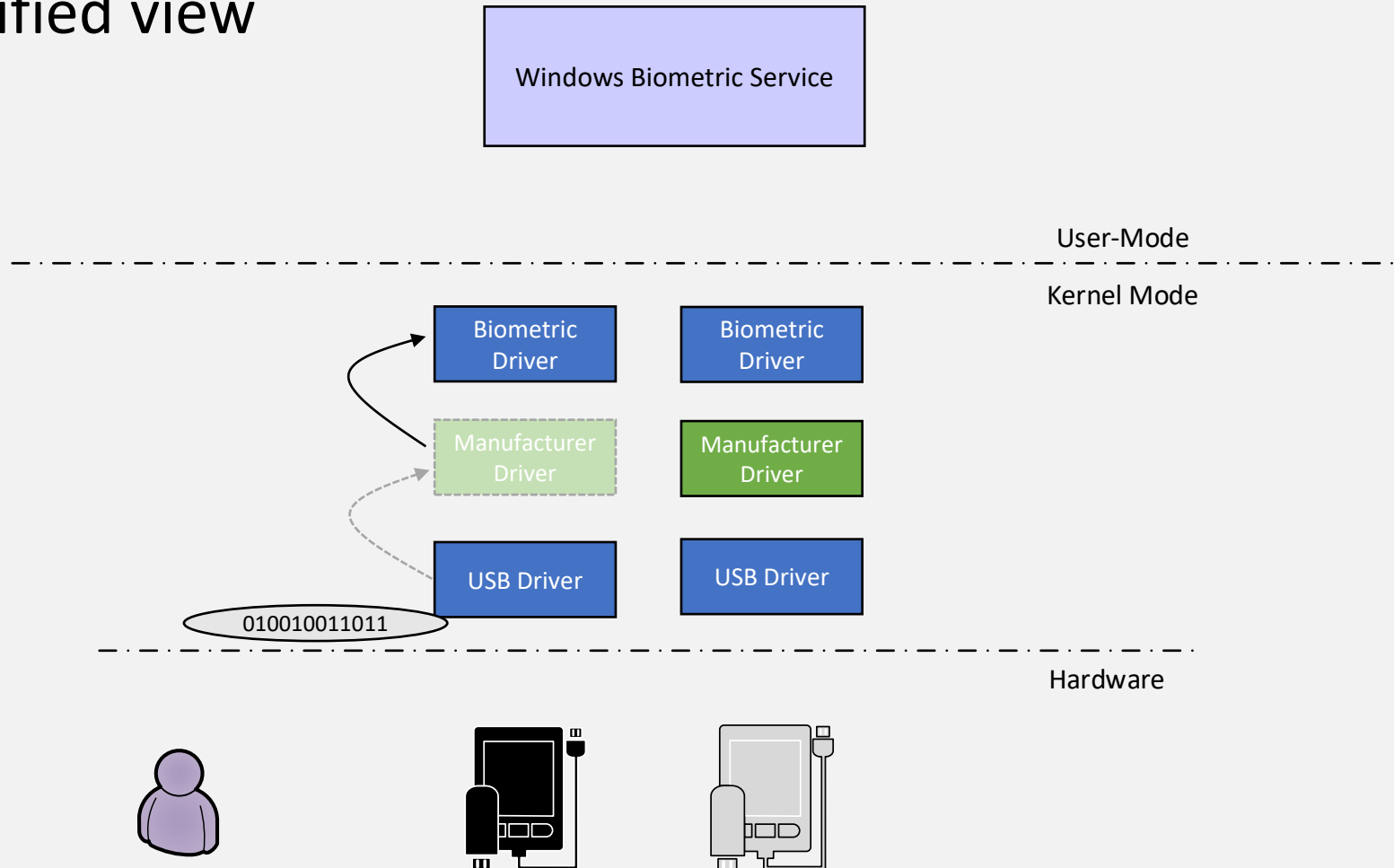
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



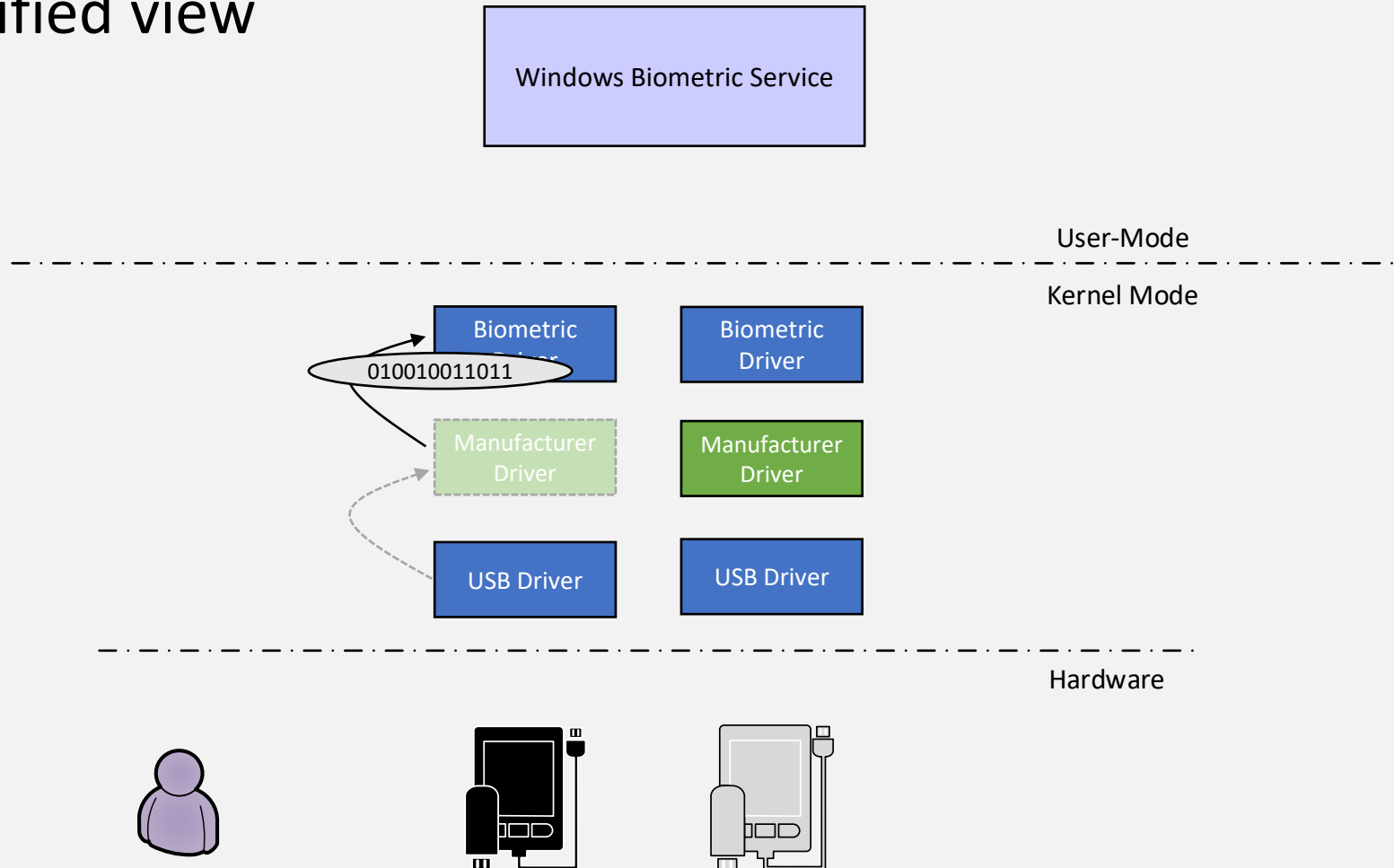
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



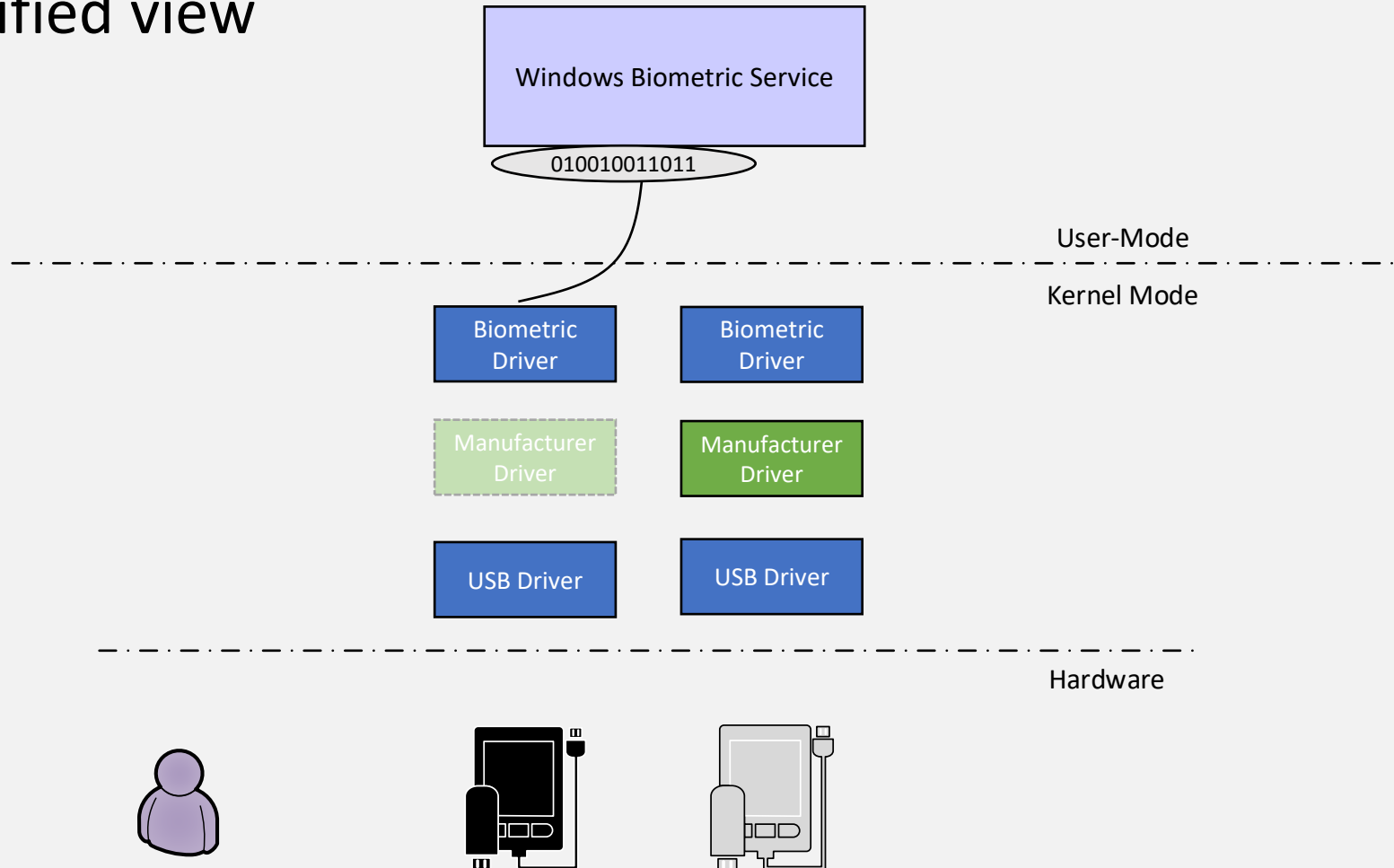
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



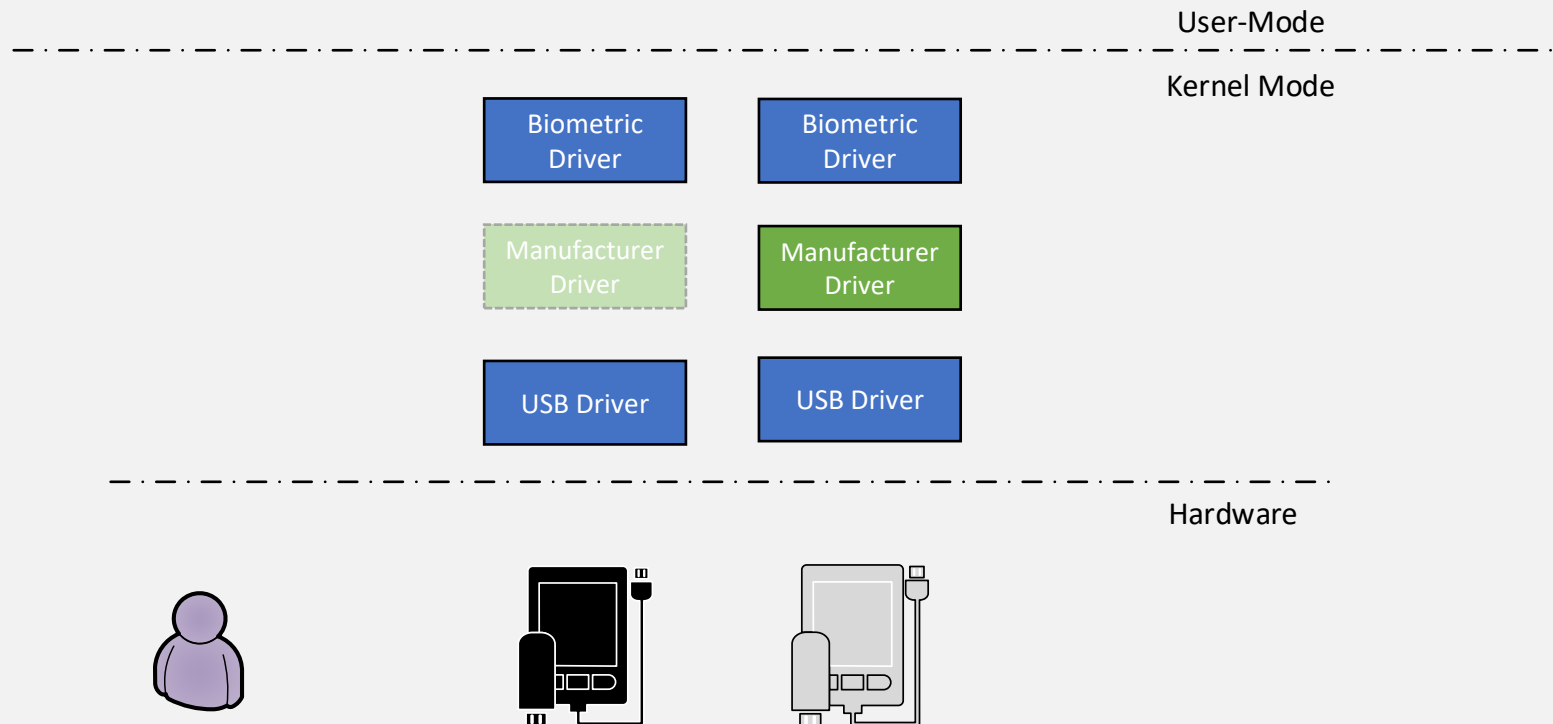
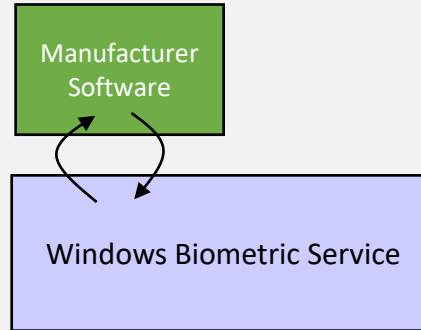
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



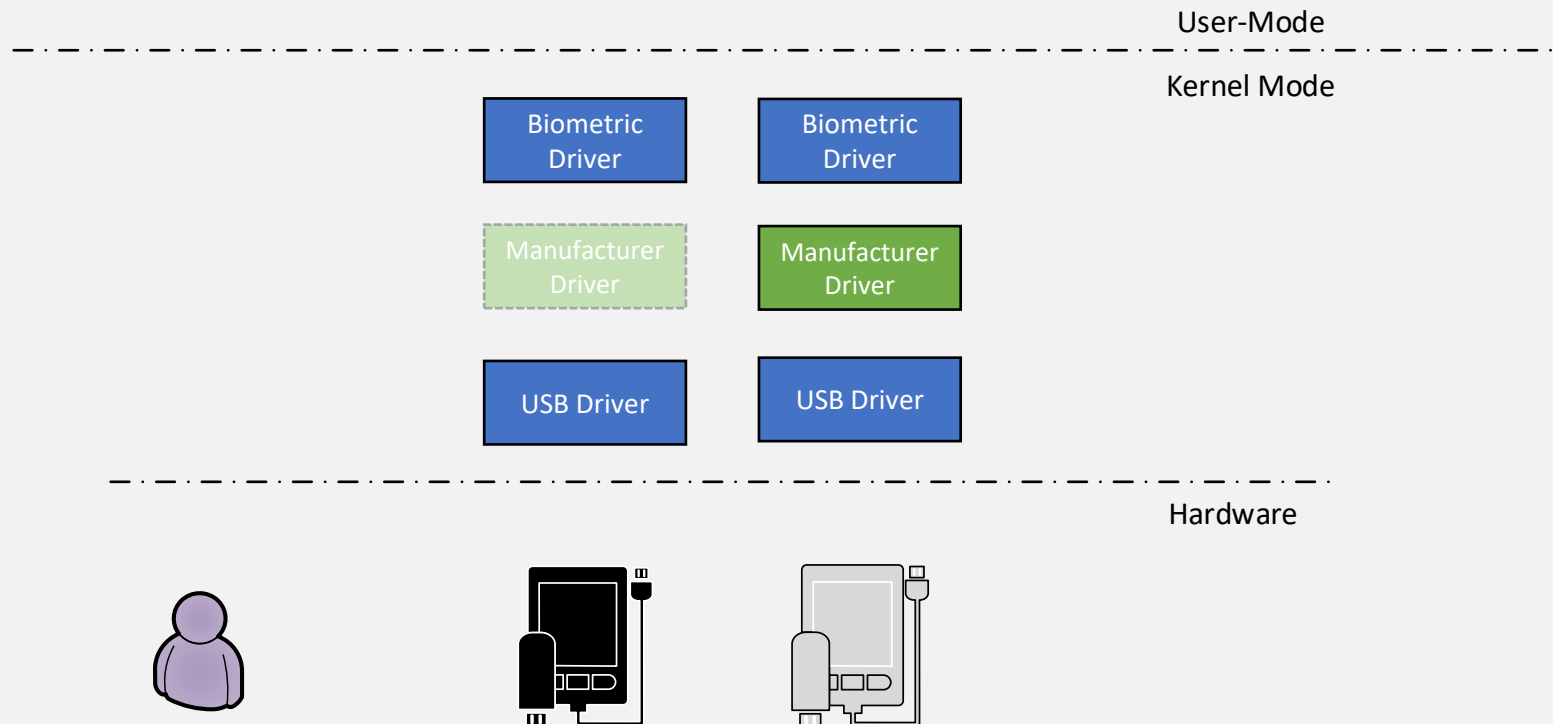
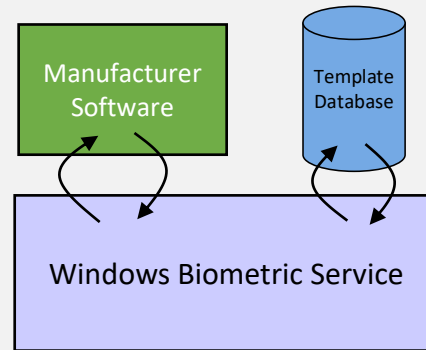
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



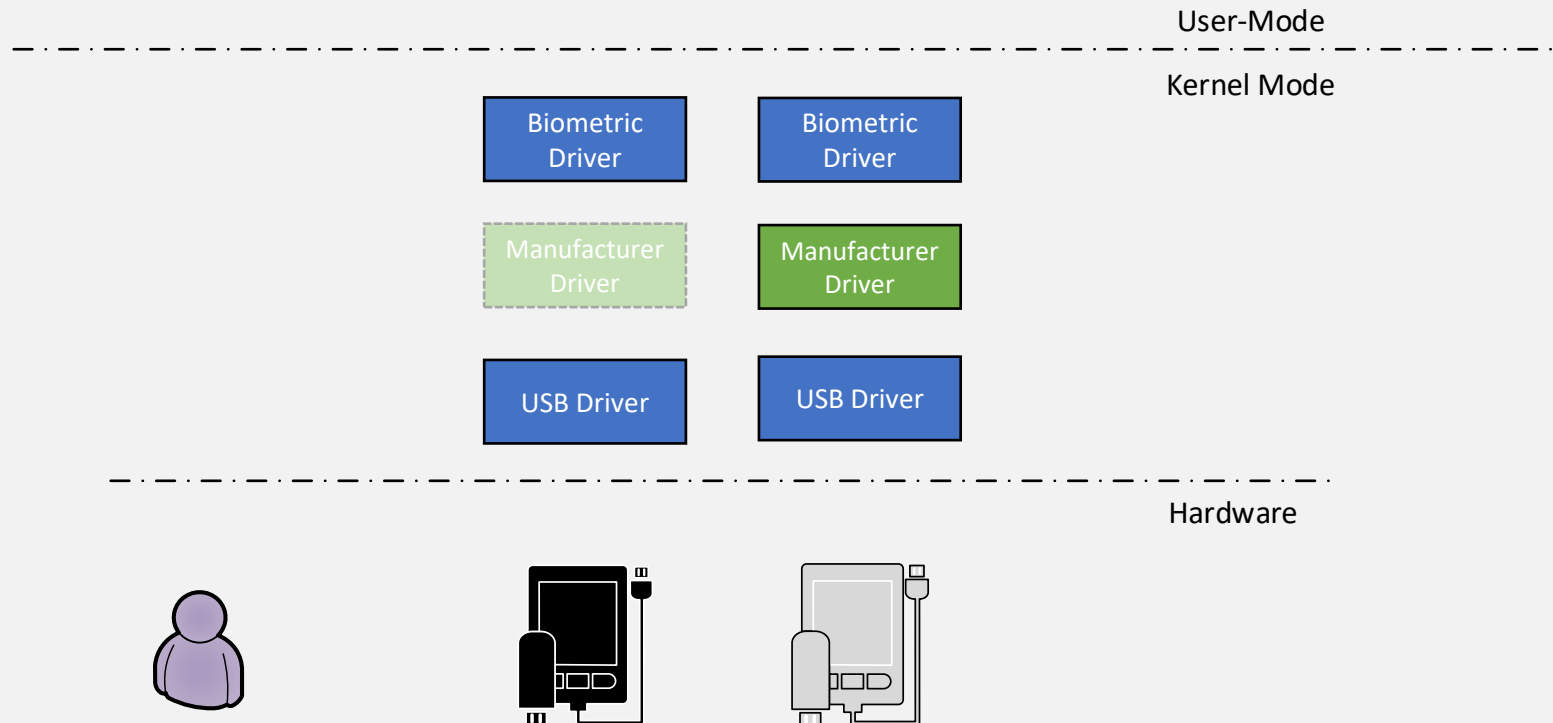
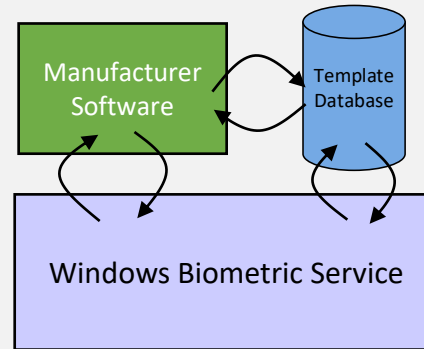
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



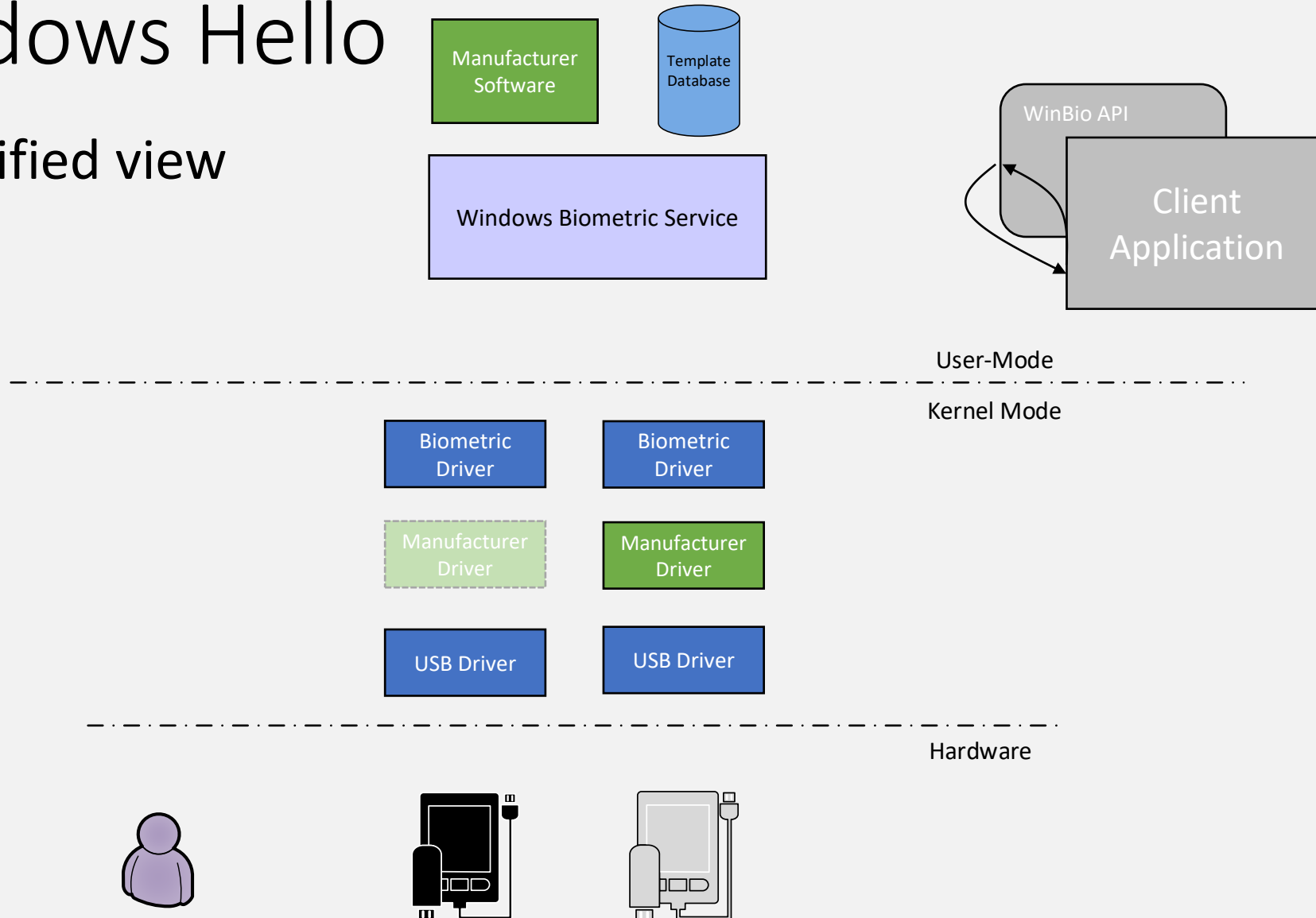
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



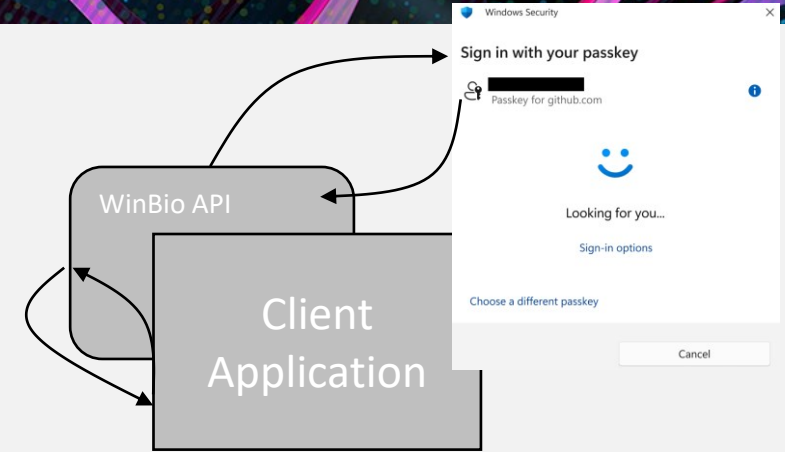
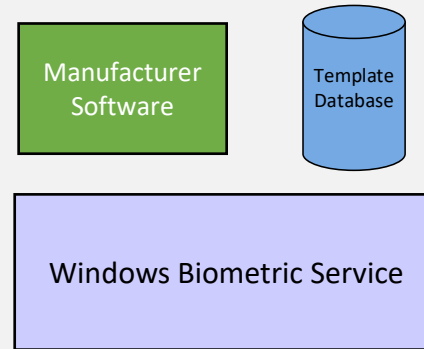
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



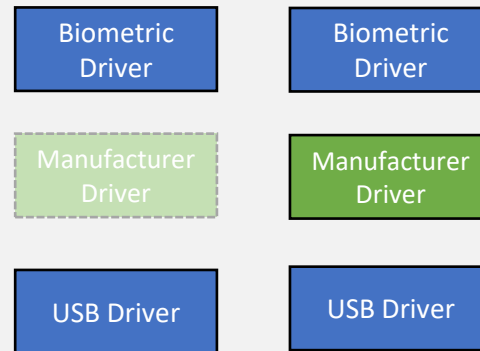
Windows Hello

- Simplified view

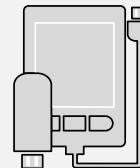
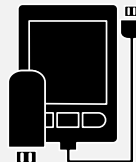


User-Mode

Kernel Mode

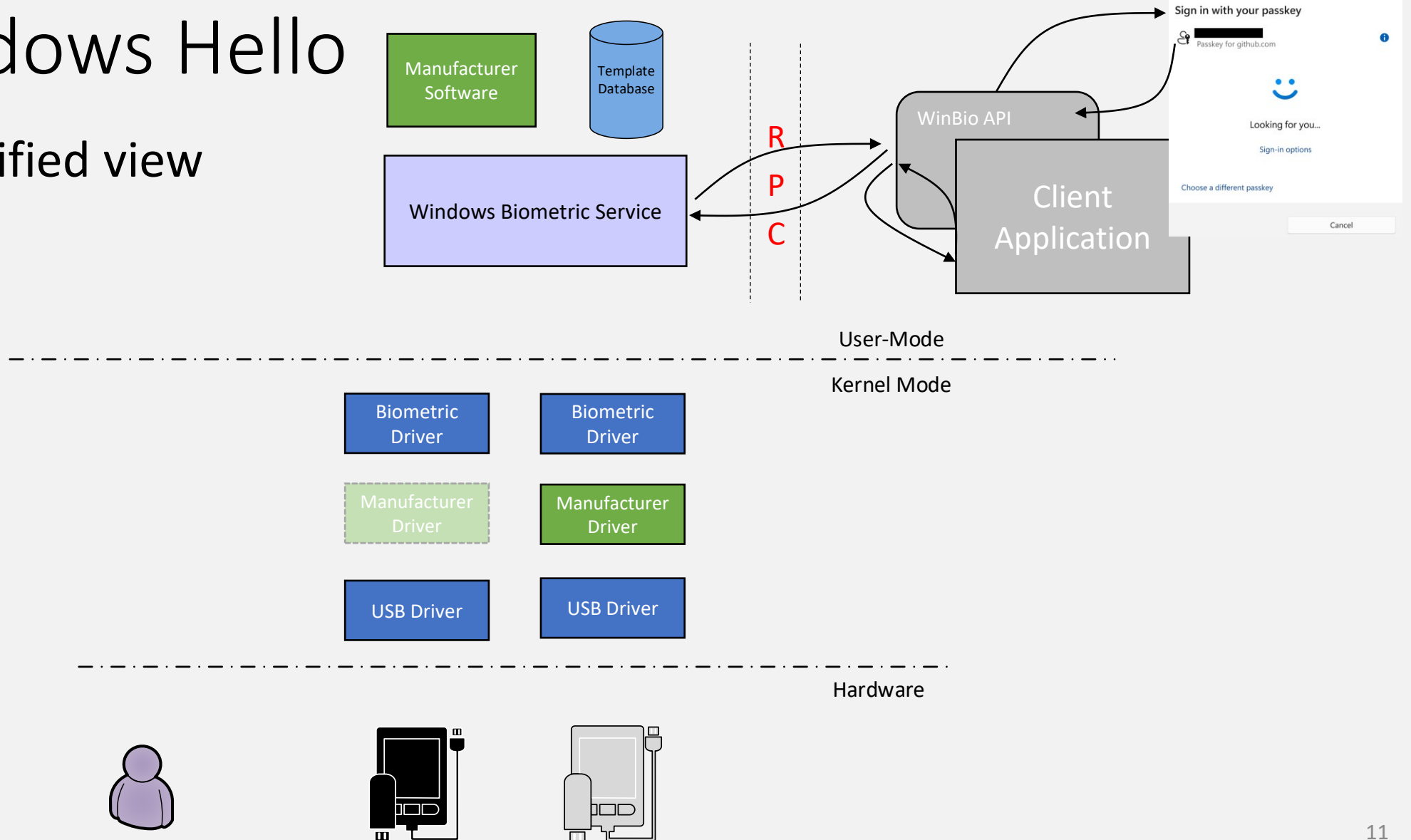


Hardware



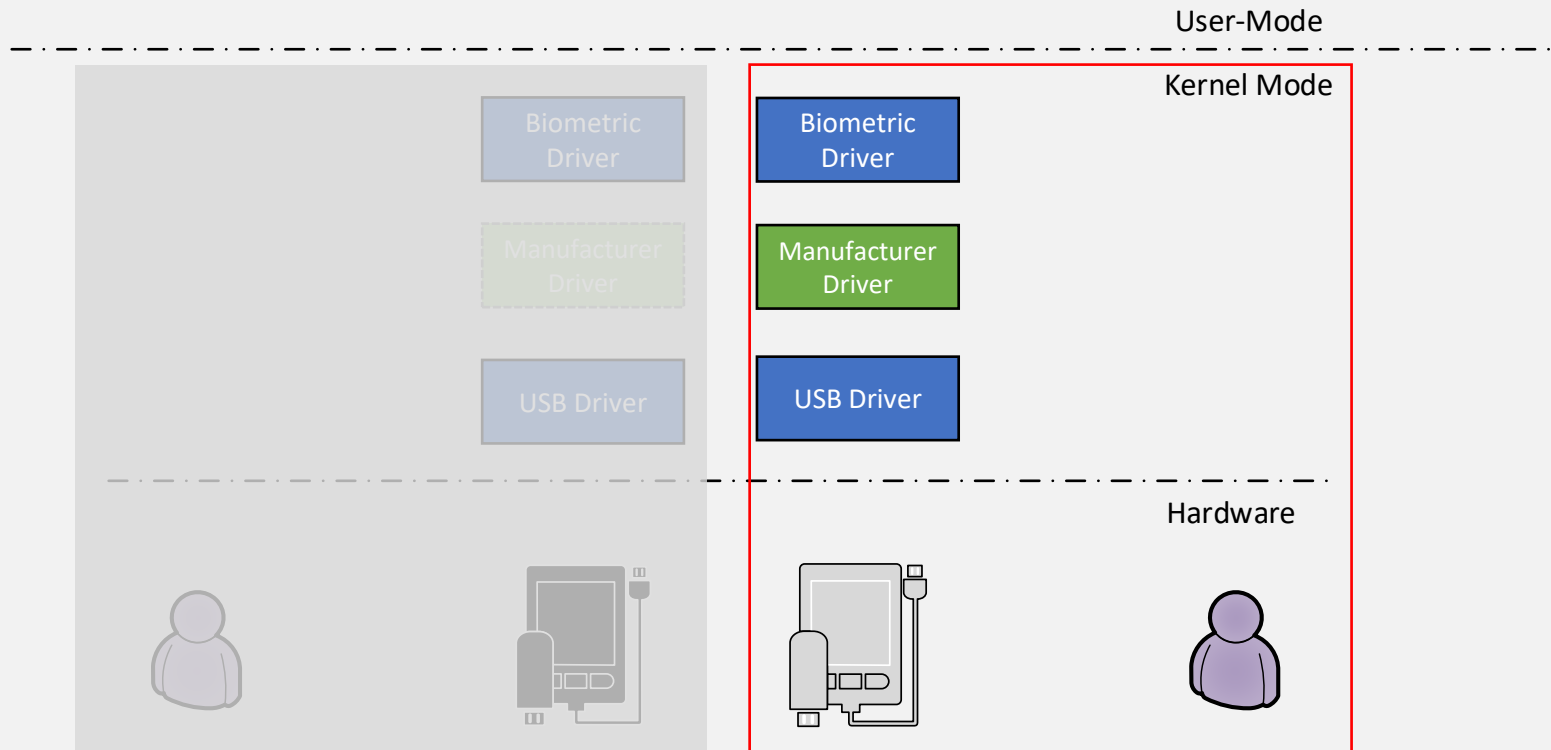
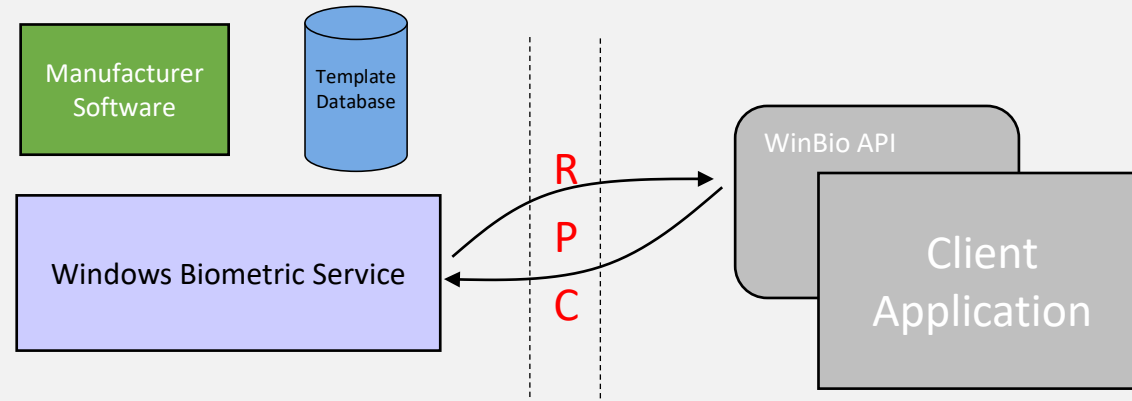
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



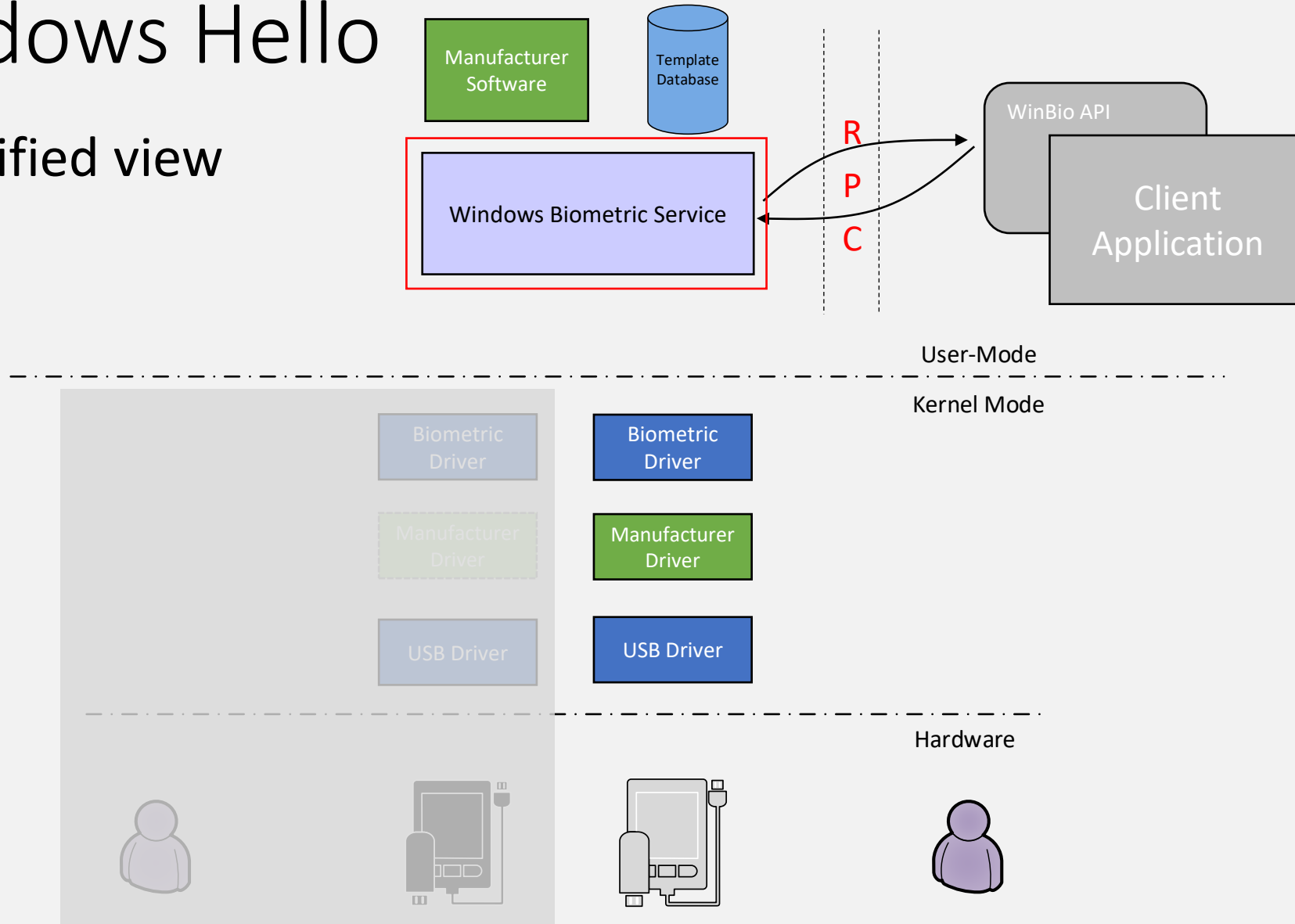
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



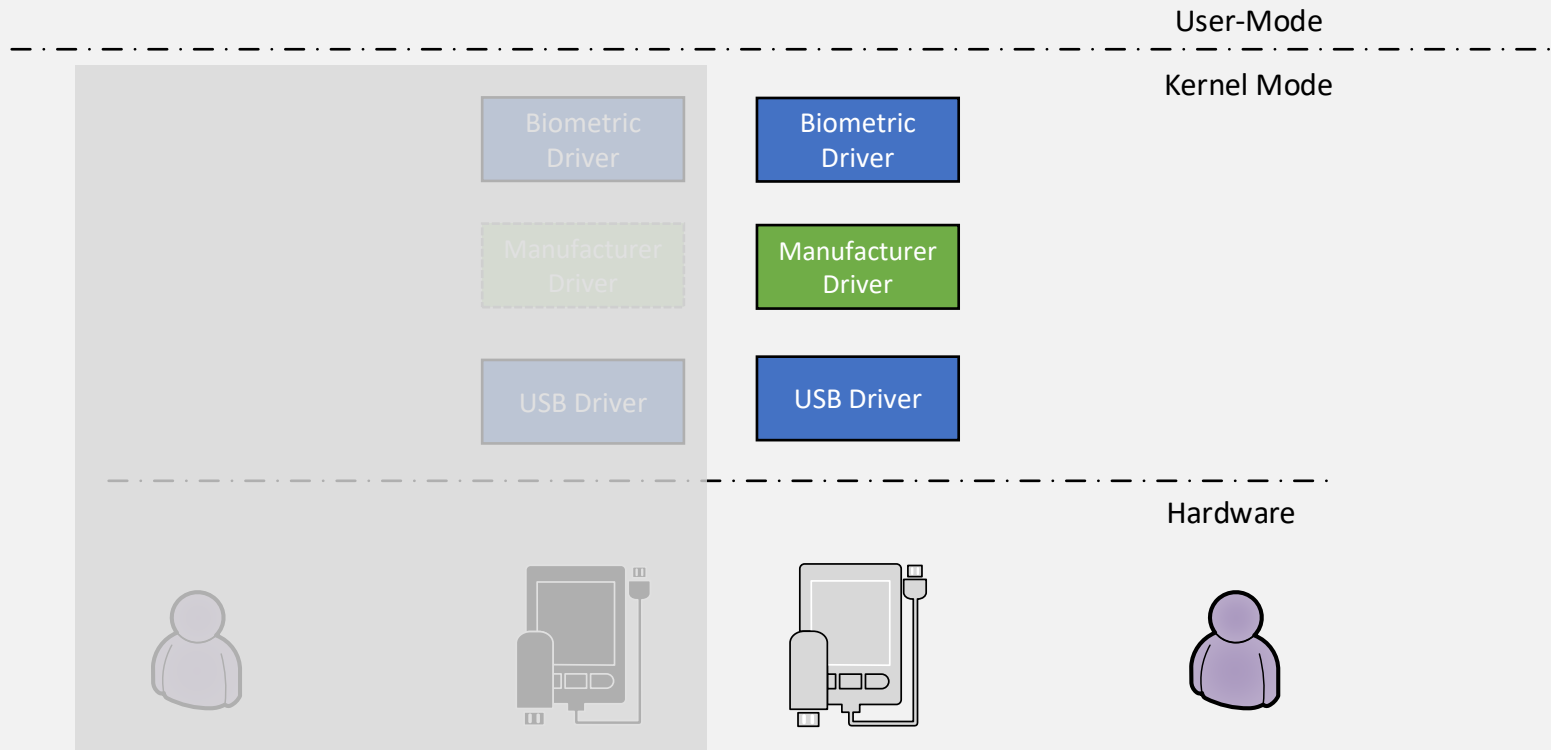
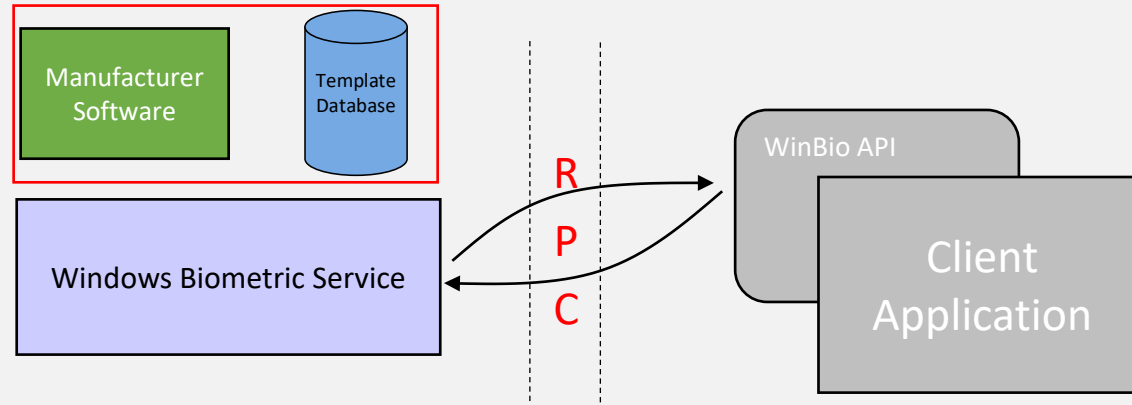
Windows Hello

- Simplified view



Windows Hello

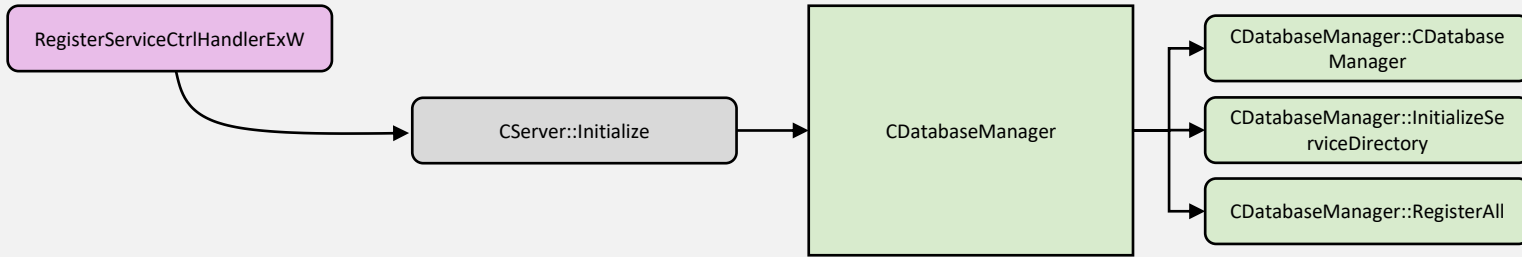
- Simplified view



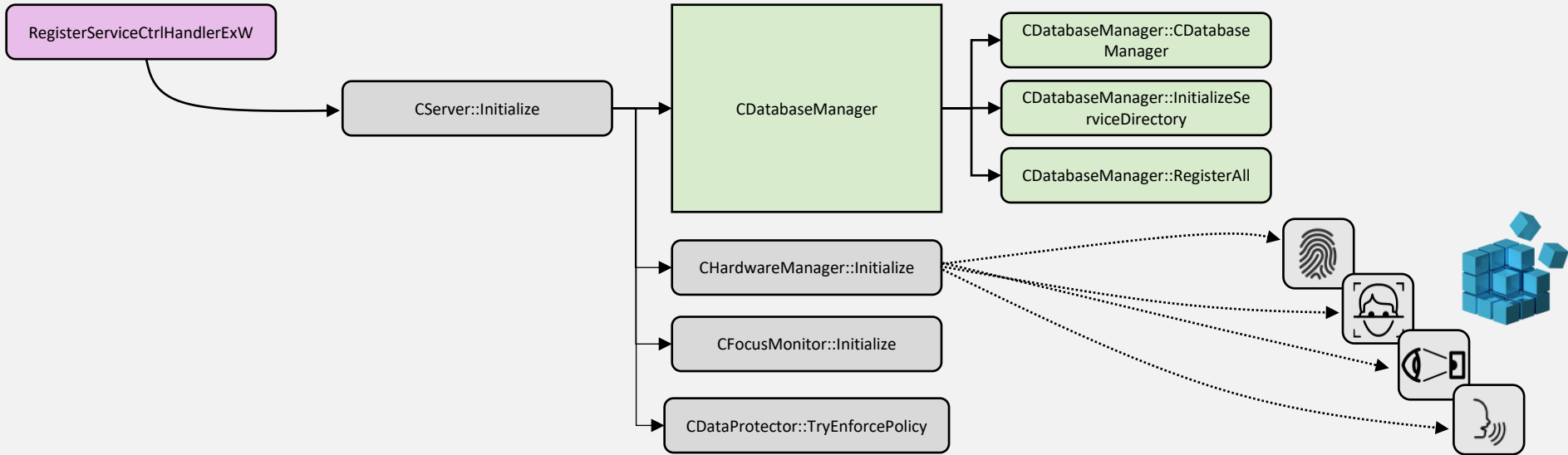
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization

RegisterServiceCtrlHandlerExW

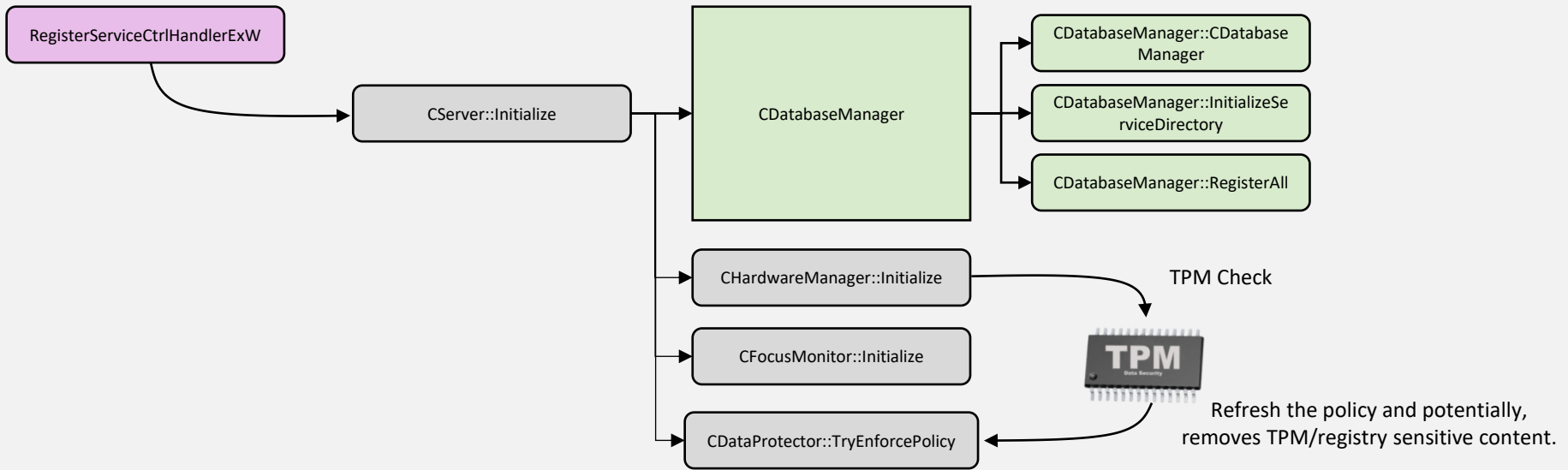
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



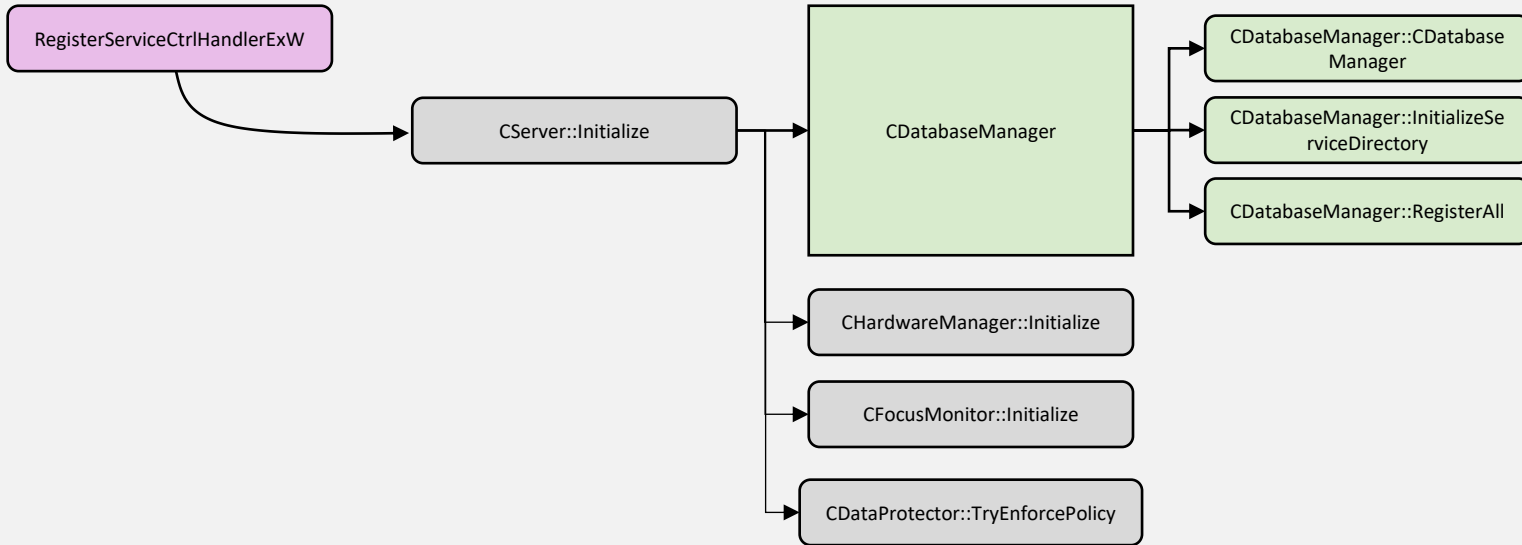
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



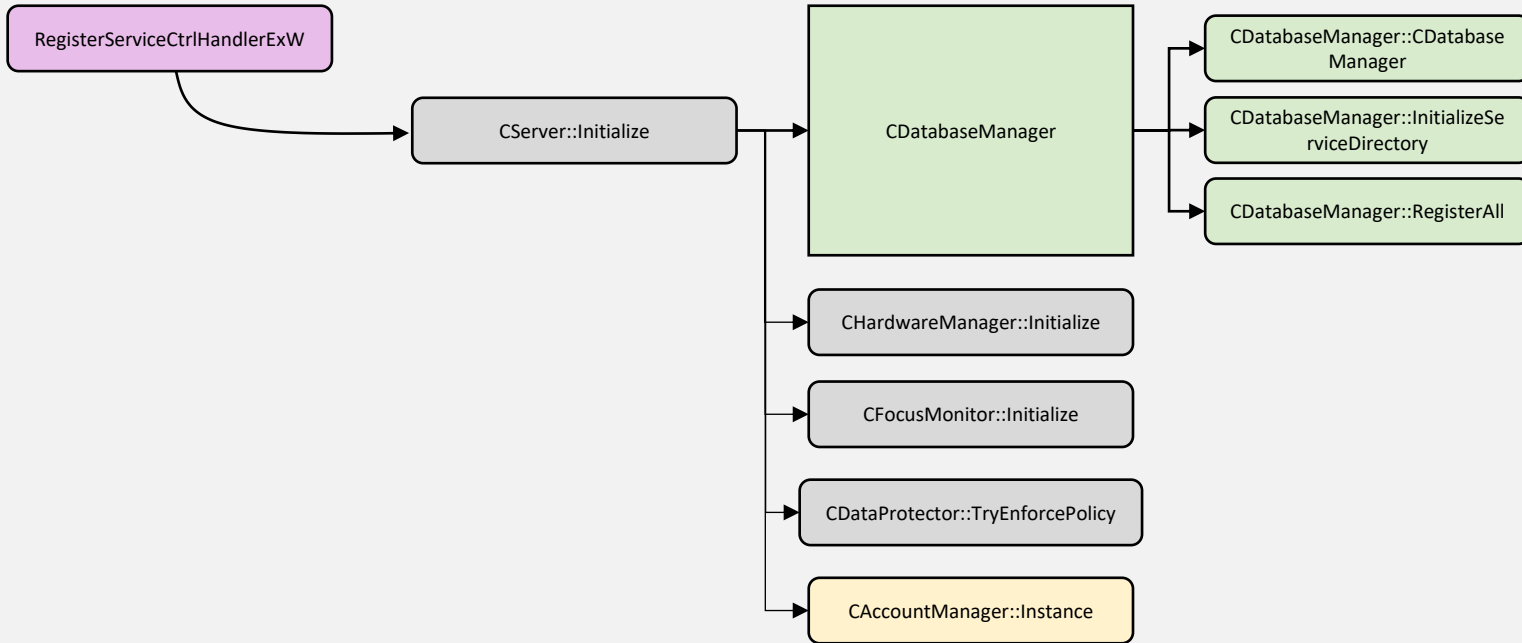
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



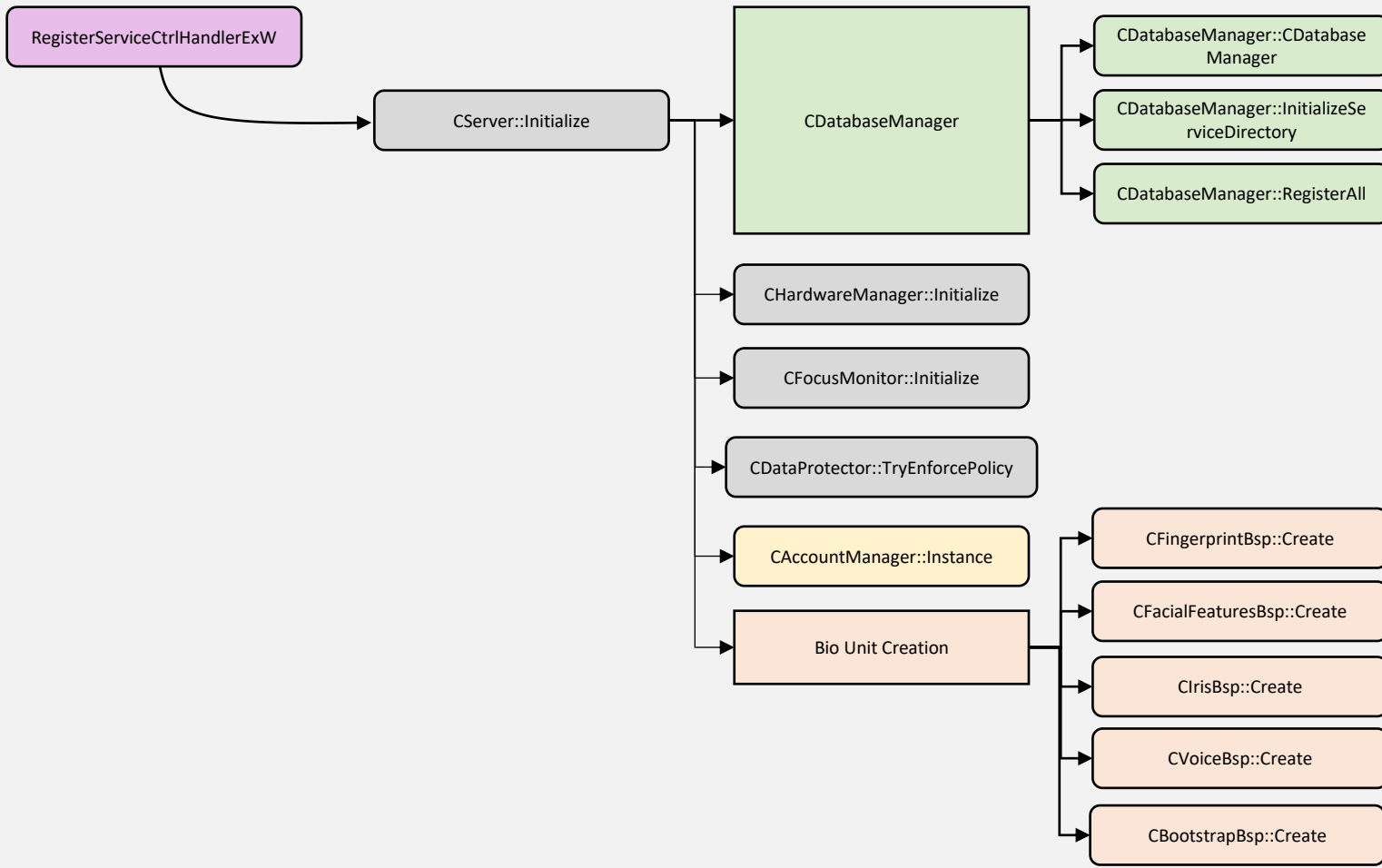
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



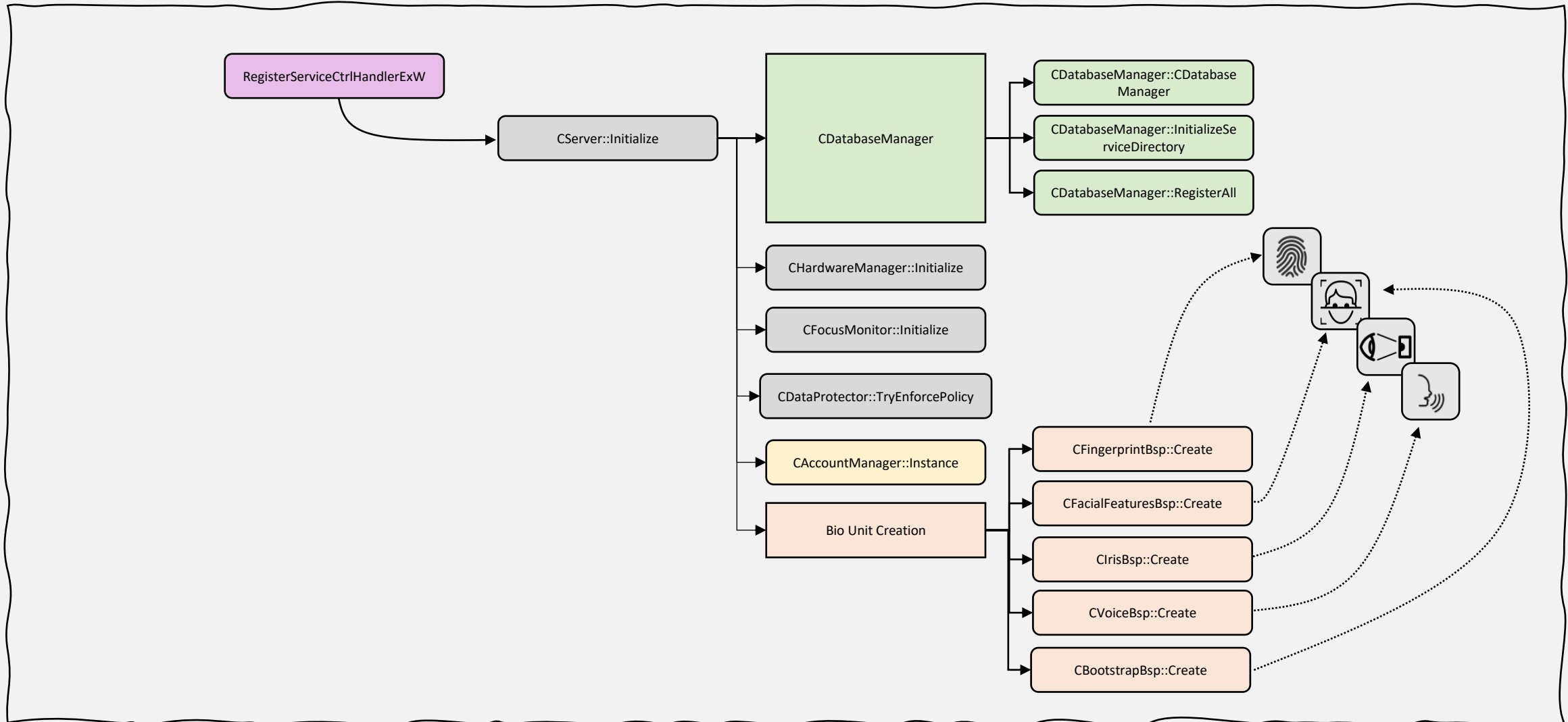
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



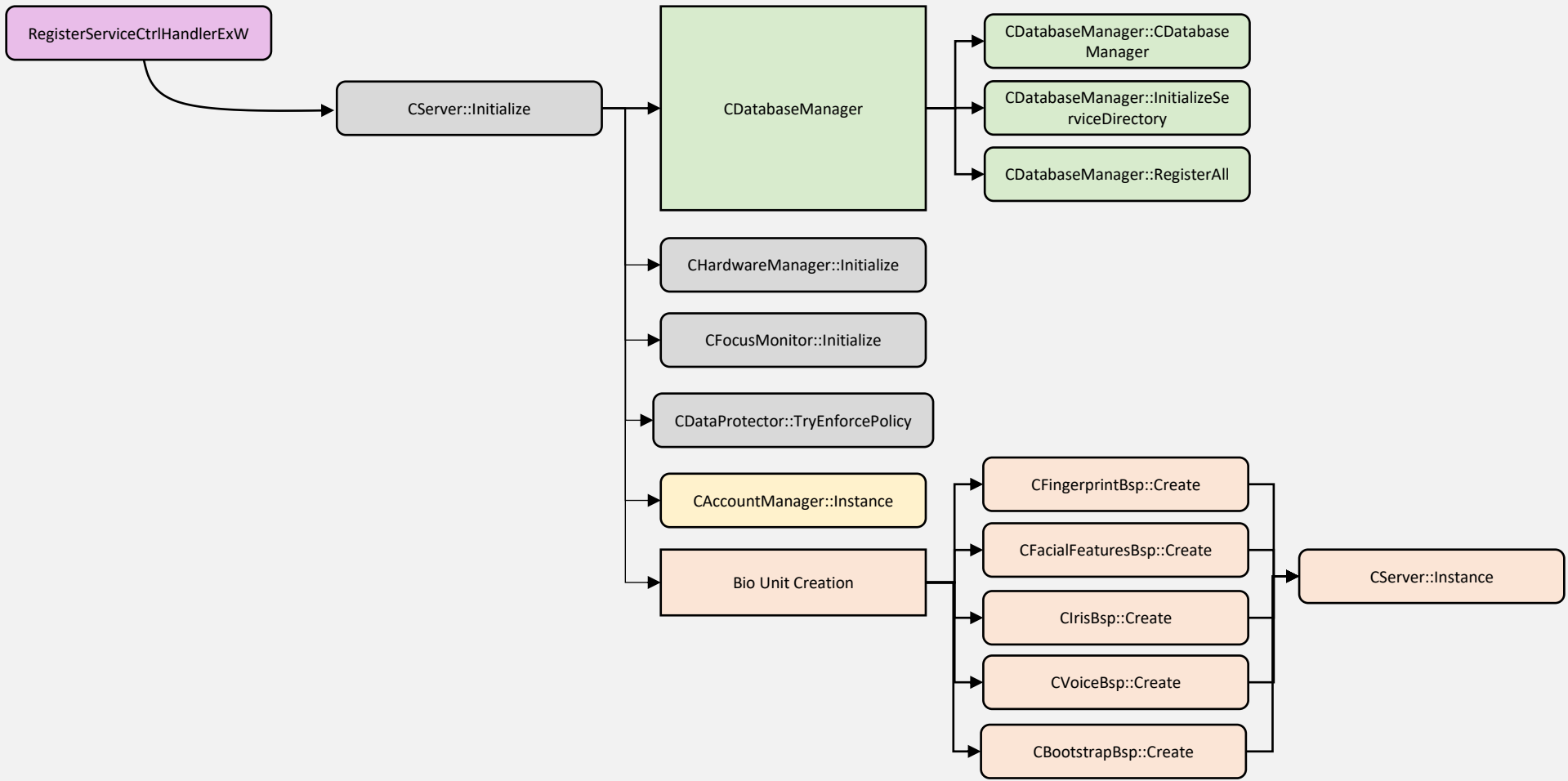
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



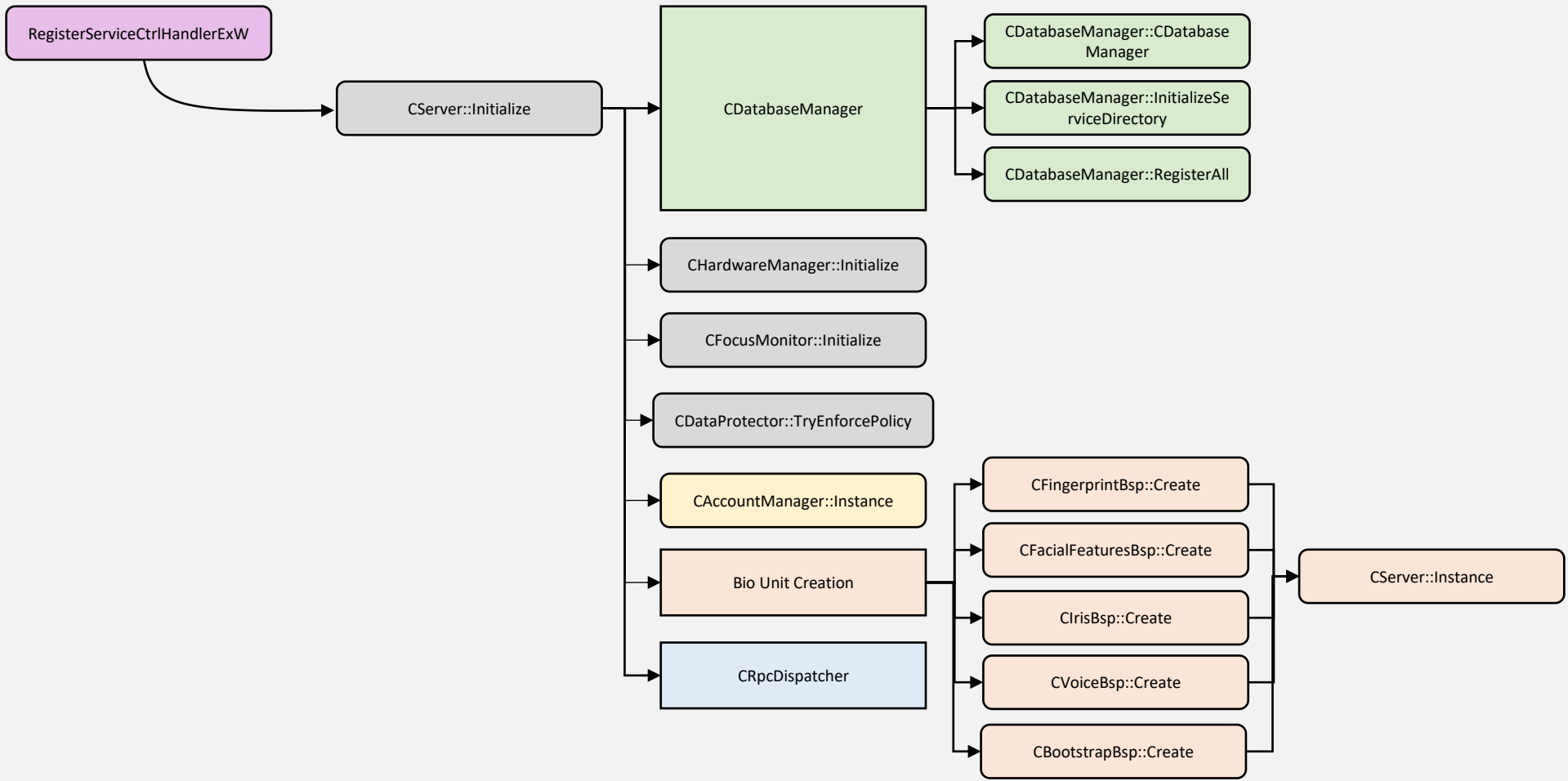
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



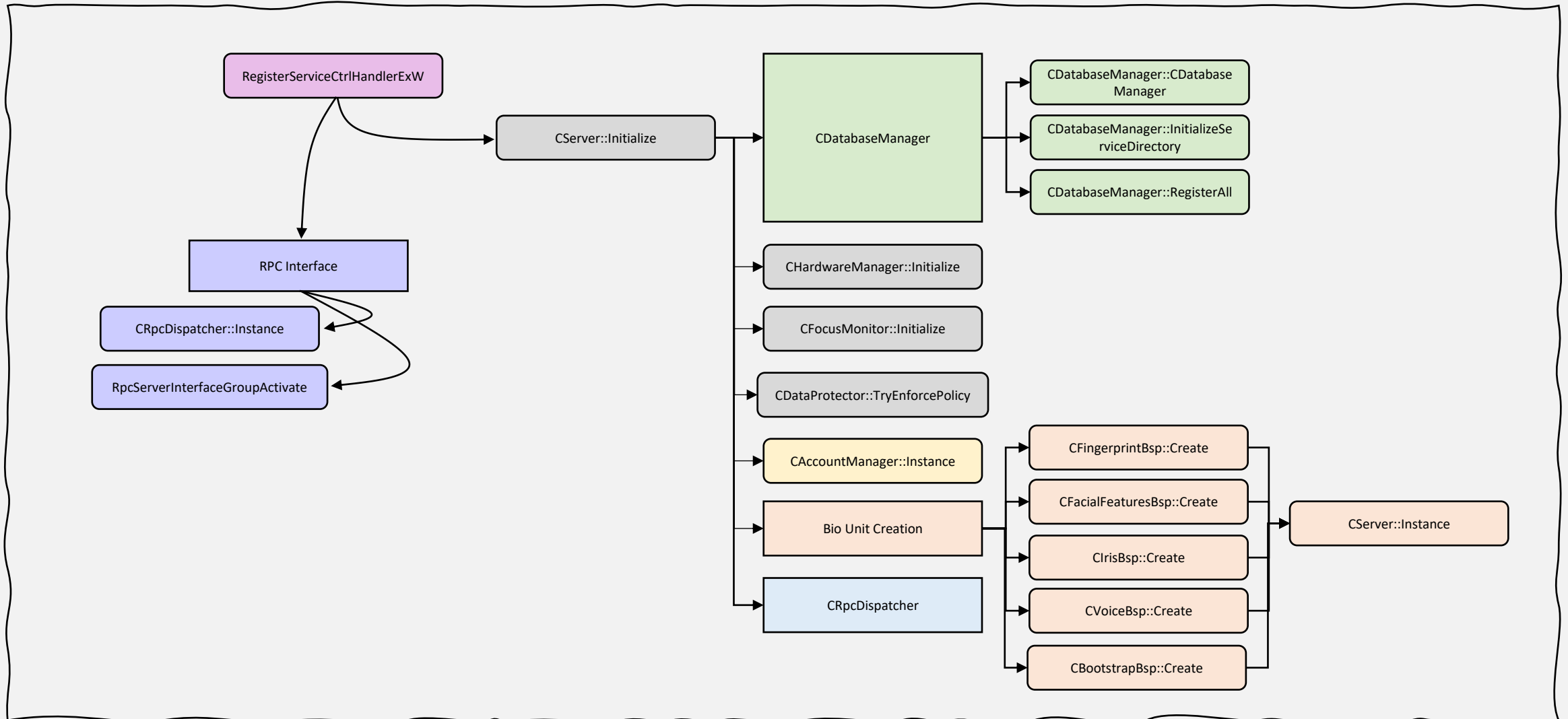
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



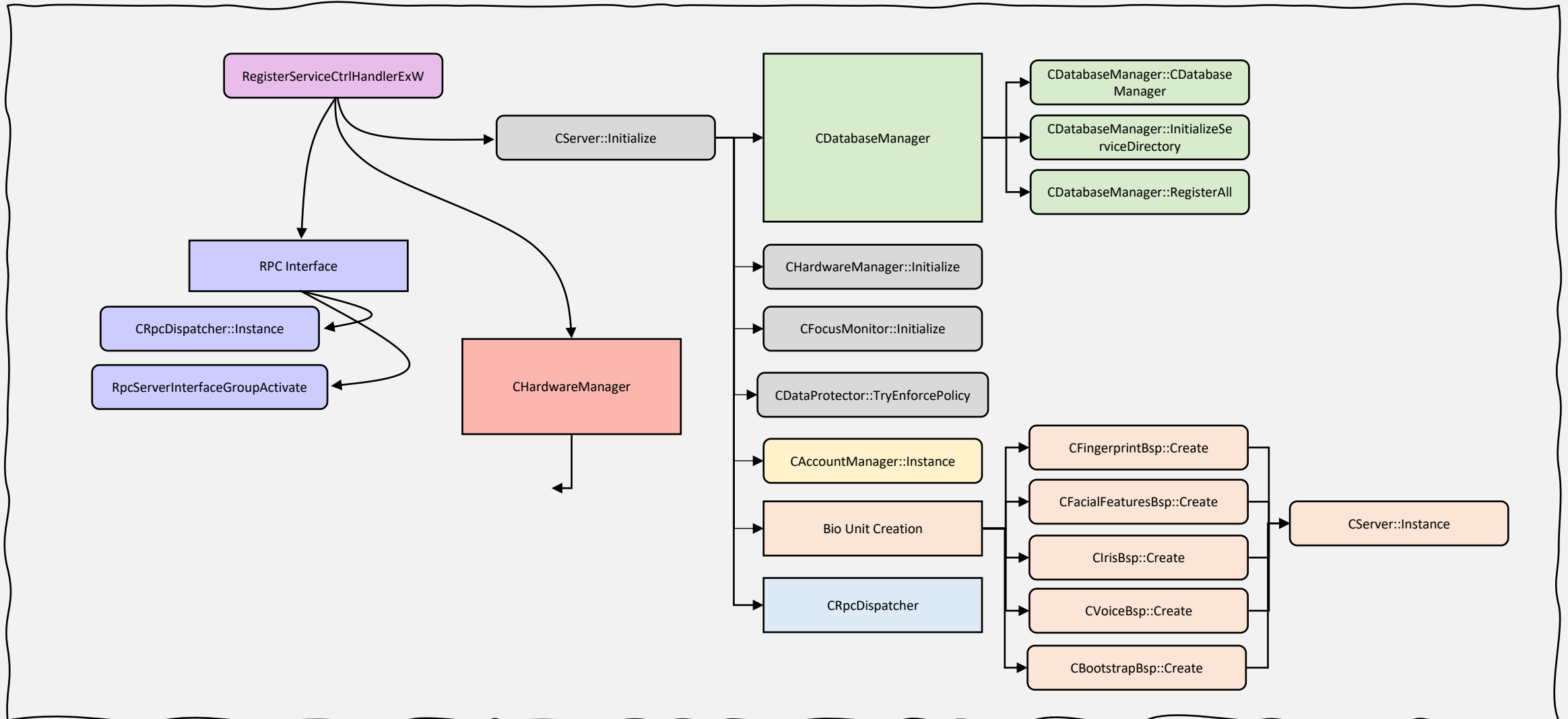
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



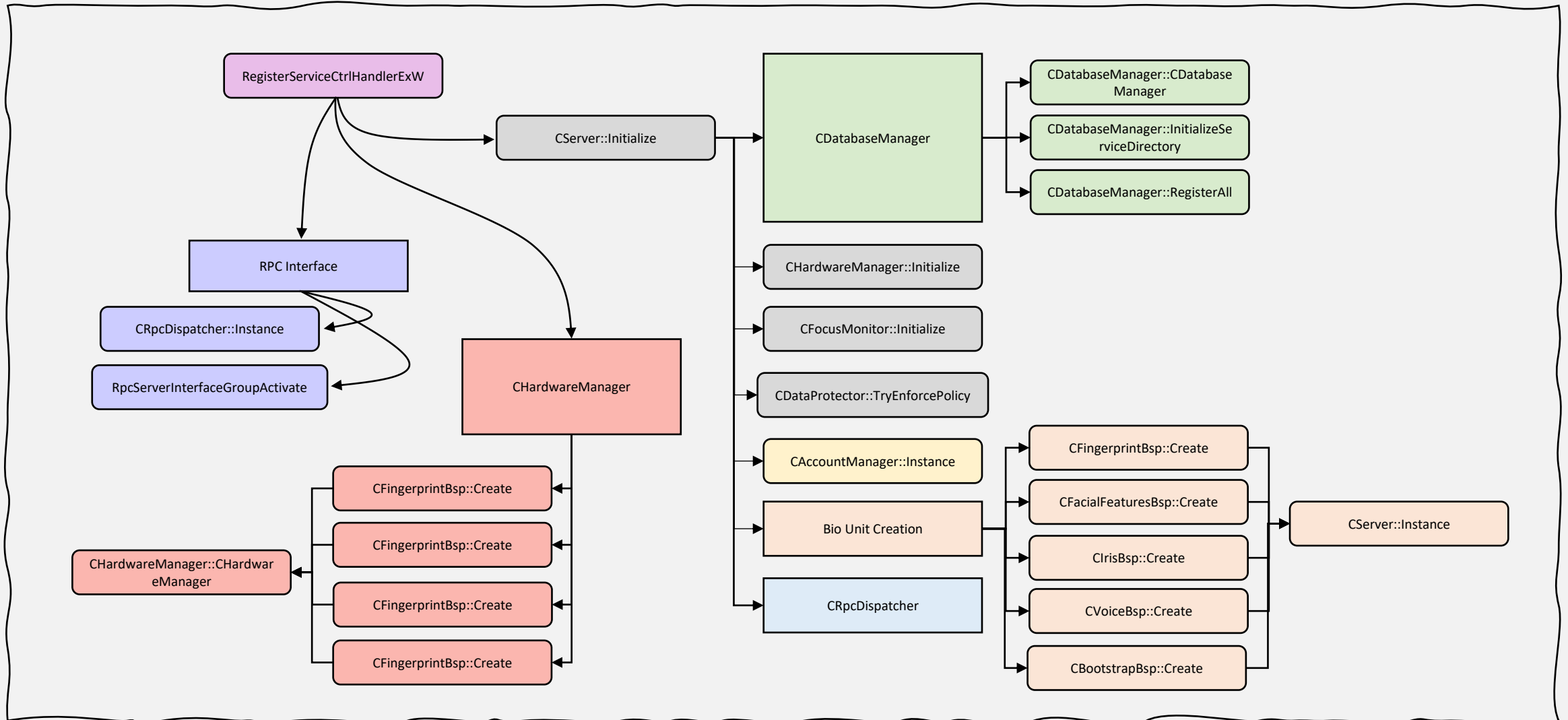
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



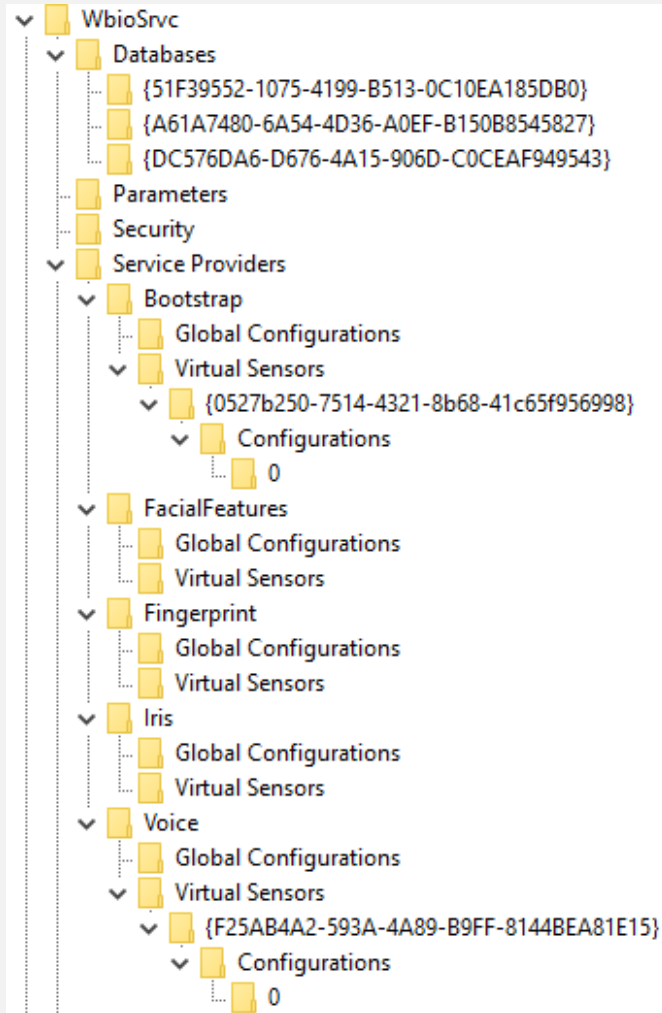
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



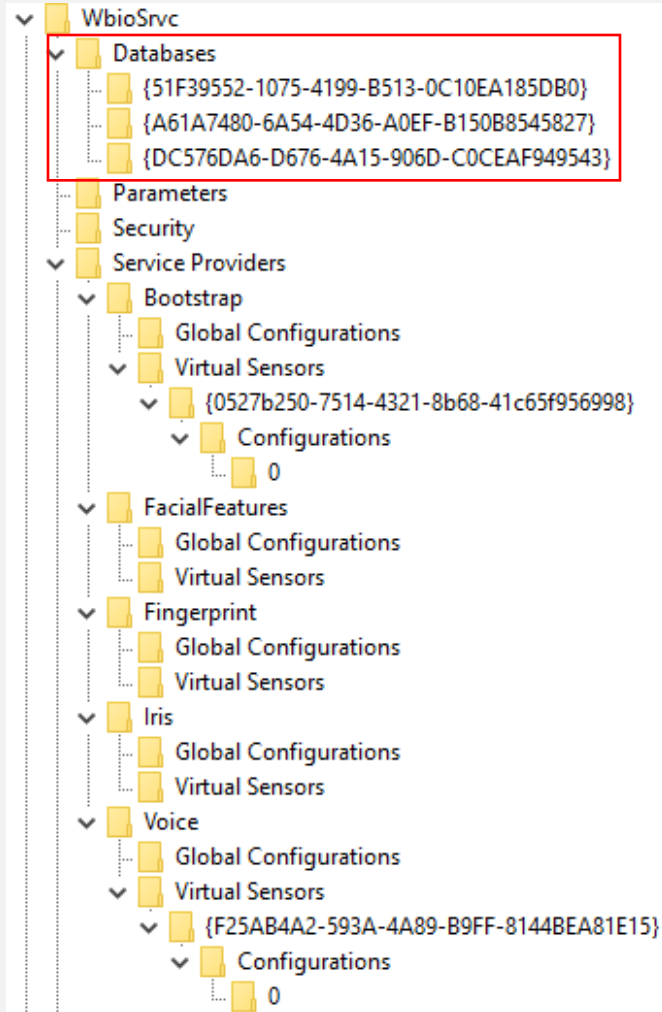
Windows Biometric Service – Initialization



Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



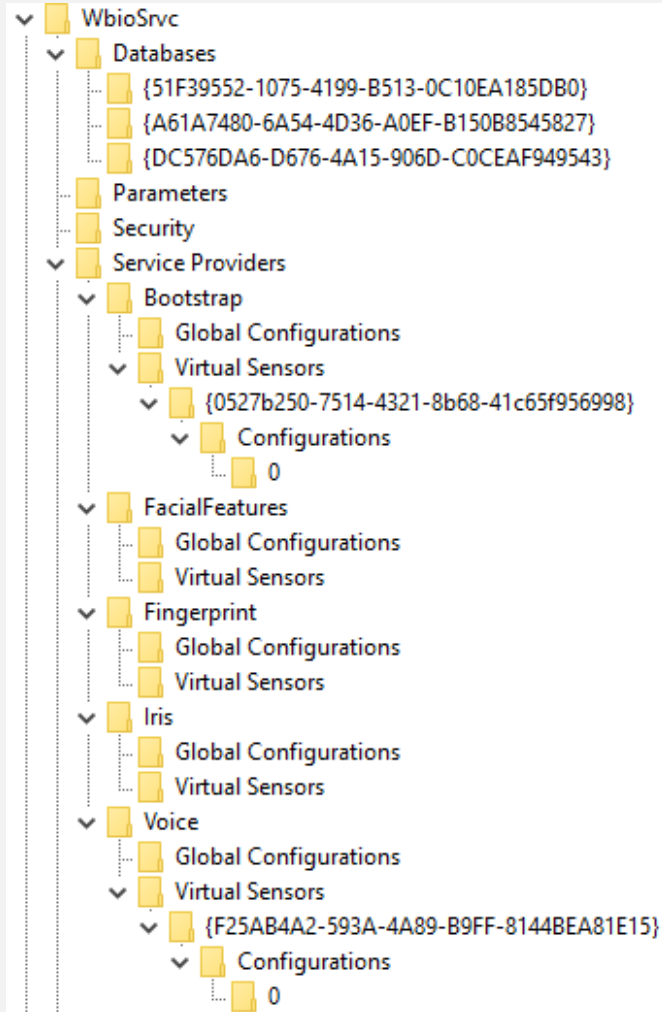
Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSvc\Databases\{DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543}

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Attributes	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
AutoCreate	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
AutoName	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
BiometricType	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)
ConnectionString	REG_SZ	
FilePath	REG_SZ	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\WINBIODATABASE\DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543.DAT
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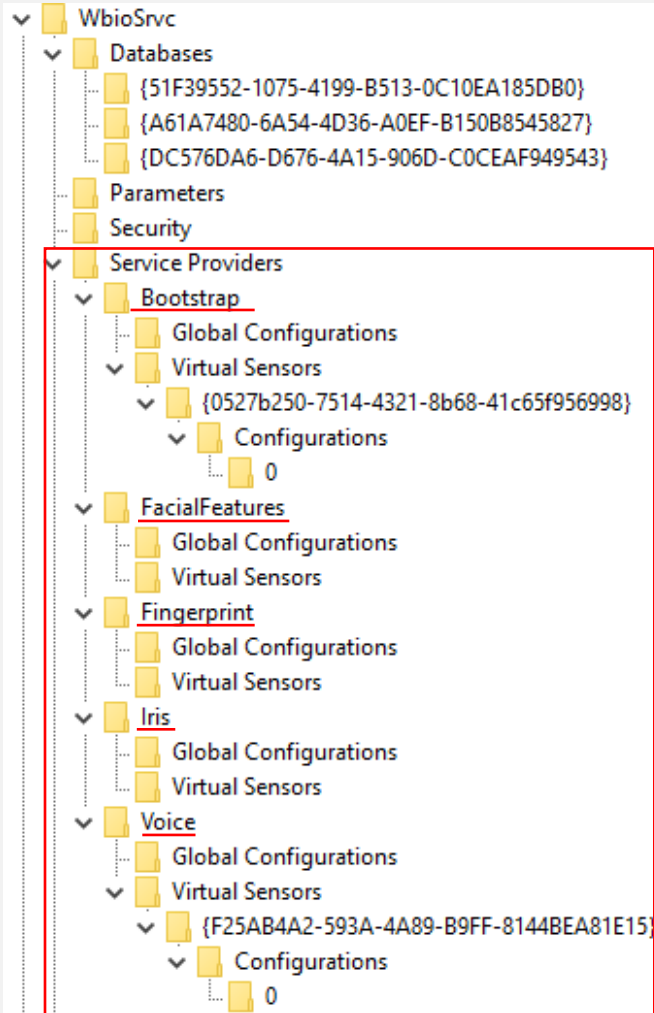
Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



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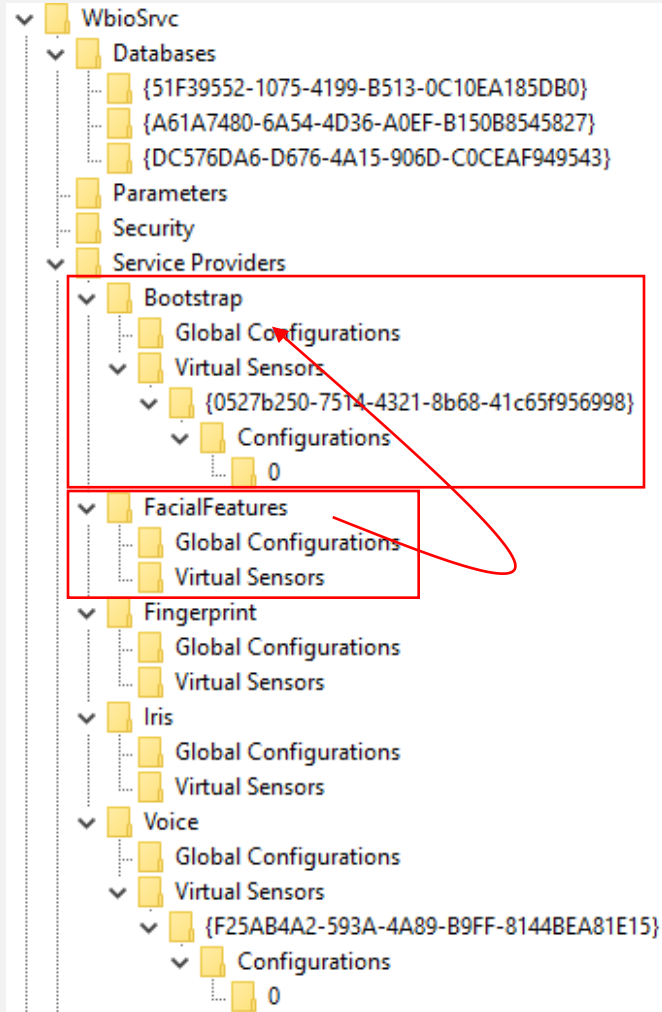
Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



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AutoName	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
BiometricType	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)
ConnectionString	REG_SZ	
FilePath	REG_SZ	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\WINBIODATABASE\DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543.DAT
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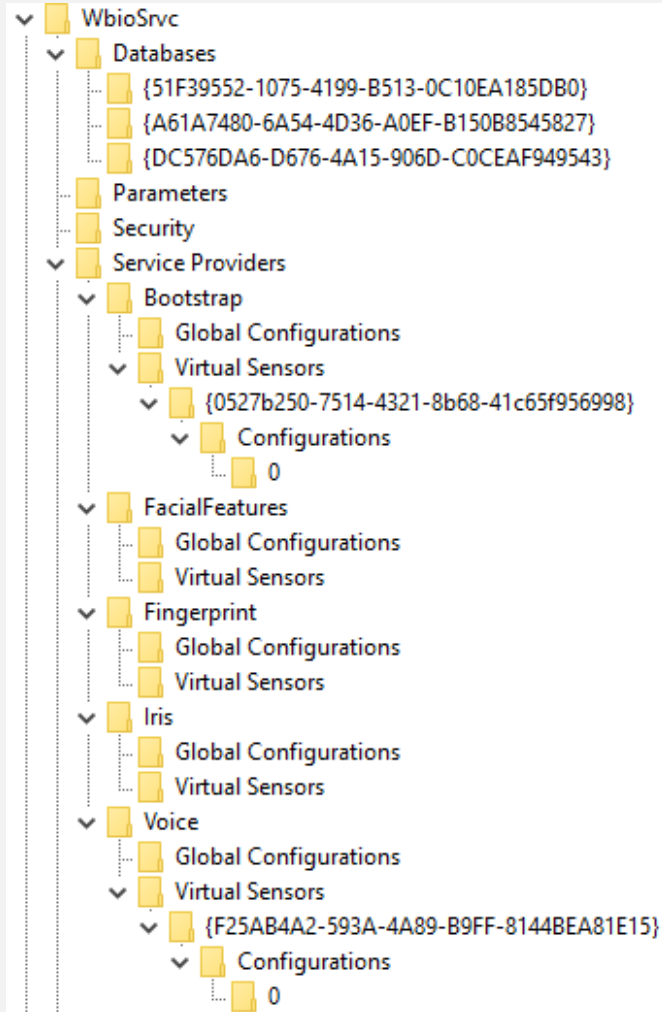
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BiometricType	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)
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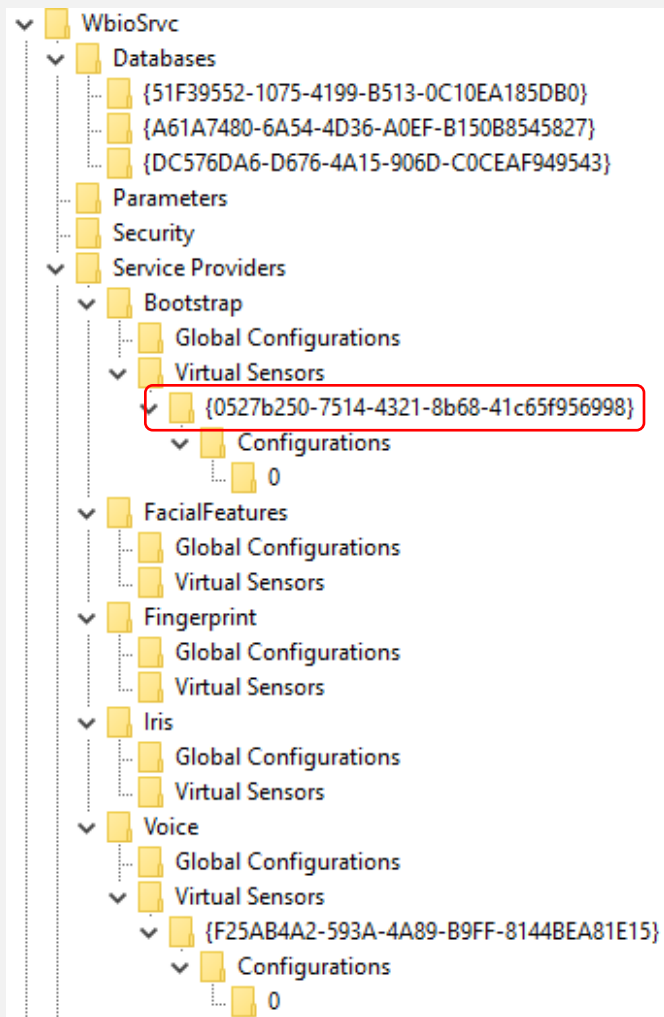
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Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



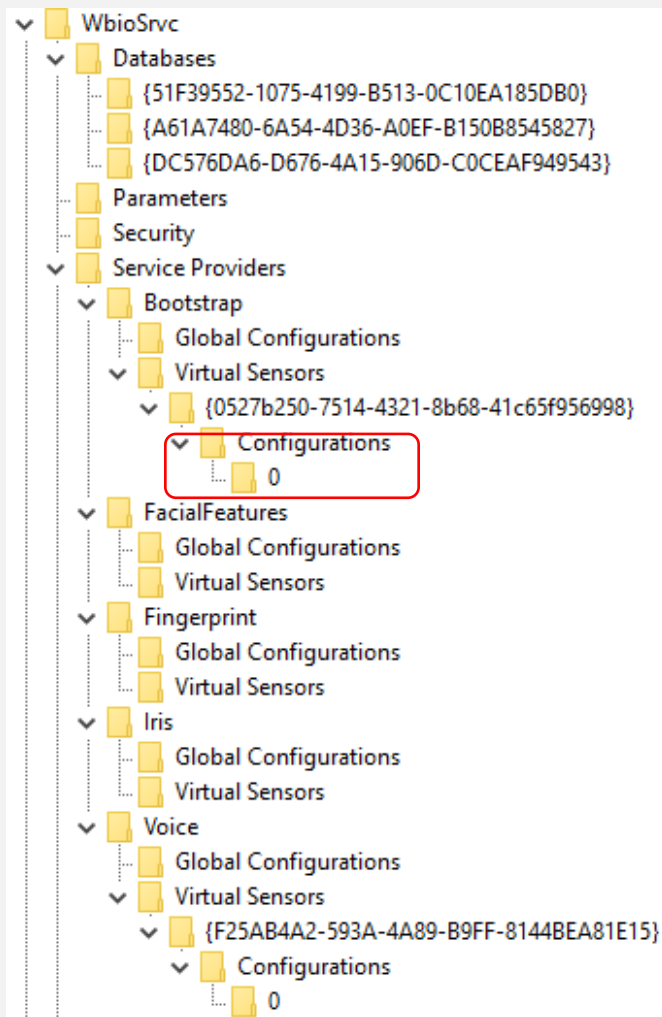
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Format	REG_SZ	5B3FBA54-792B-40C7-8822-2EFC0A255F78
InitialSize	REG_DWORD	0x00000020 (32)

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSvc\Service Providers\Bootstrap\Virtual Sensors\{0527b250-7514-4321-8b68-41c65f956998}

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Capabilities	REG_DWORD	0x00000080 (128)
DeviceDescription	REG_SZ	Windows Hello Face Virtual Software Device
Manufacturer	REG_SZ	Microsoft Corporation
ModelName	REG_SZ	Windows Hello Face Virtual Sensor
SerialNumber	REG_SZ	000000000
SubType	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
Version	REG_QWORD	0x200000001000000 (144115188092633088)

Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSrv\Databases\{DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543}

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Attributes	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
AutoCreate	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
AutoName	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
BiometricType	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)
ConnectionString	REG_SZ	
FilePath	REG_SZ	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\WINBIODATABASE\DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543.DAT
Format	REG_SZ	5B3FBA54-792B-40C7-8822-2EFC0A255F78
InitialSize	REG_DWORD	0x00000020 (32)

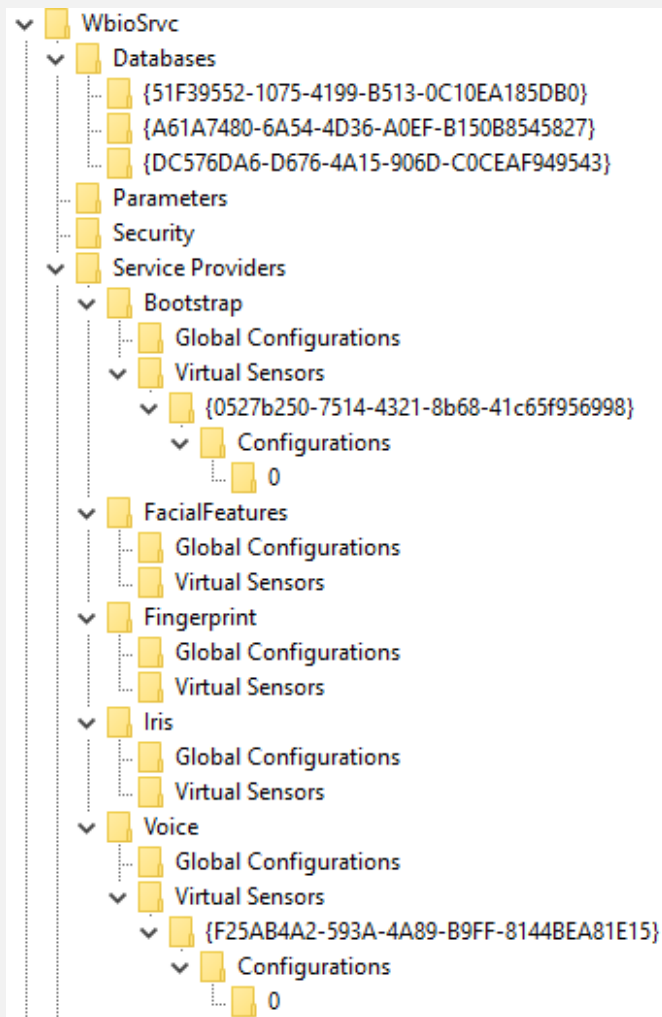
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSrv\Service Providers\Bootstrap\Virtual Sensors\{0527b250-7514-4321-8b68-41c65f956998}

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Capabilities	REG_DWORD	0x00000080 (128)
DeviceDescription	REG_SZ	Windows Hello Face Virtual Software Device
Manufacturer	REG_SZ	Microsoft Corporation
ModelName	REG_SZ	Windows Hello Face Virtual Sensor
SerialNumber	REG_SZ	000000000
SubType	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
Version	REG_QWORD	0x200000001000000 (144115188092633088)

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSrv\Service Providers\Bootstrap\Virtual Sensors\{0527b250-7514-4321-8b68-41c65f956998}\Configurations\0

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Databased	REG_SZ	DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543
EngineAdapterBinary	REG_SZ	FaceBootstrapAdapter.dll
SensorAdapterBinary	REG_SZ	FaceBootstrapAdapter.dll
SensorMode	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
StorageAdapterBinary	REG_SZ	FaceBootstrapAdapter.dll
SystemSensor	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)

Windows Biometric Service – Configuration



HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSvc\Databases\{DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543}

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Attributes	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
AutoCreate	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
AutoName	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
BiometricType	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)
ConnectionString	REG_SZ	
FilePath	REG_SZ	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\WINBIODATABASE\DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543.DAT
Format	REG_SZ	5B3FBA54-792B-40C7-8822-2EFC0A255F78
InitialSize	REG_DWORD	0x00000020 (32)

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSvc\Service Providers\Bootstrap\Virtual Sensors\{0527b250-7514-4321-8b68-41c65f956998}

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
Capabilities	REG_DWORD	0x00000080 (128)
DeviceDescription	REG_SZ	Windows Hello Face Virtual Software Device
Manufacturer	REG_SZ	Microsoft Corporation
ModelName	REG_SZ	Windows Hello Face Virtual Sensor
SerialNumber	REG_SZ	000000000
SubType	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
Version	REG_QWORD	0x200000001000000 (144115188092633088)

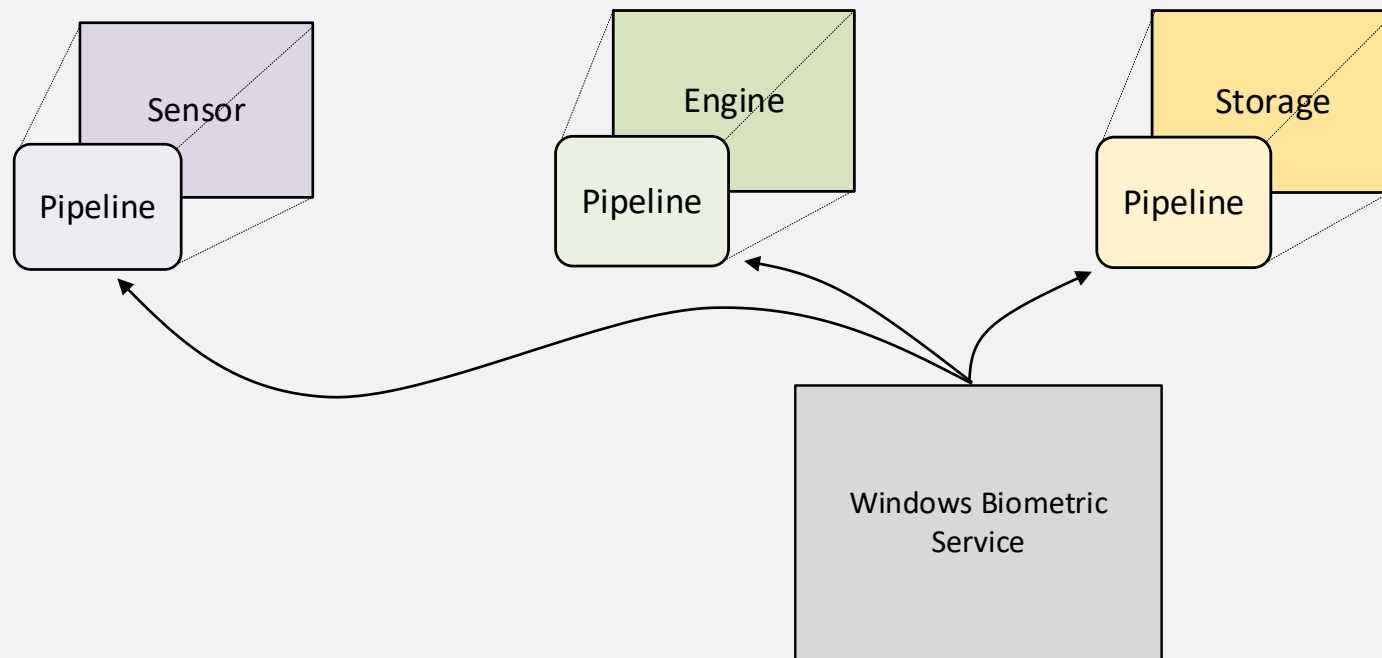
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\WbioSvc\Service Providers\Bootstrap\Virtual Sensors\{0527b250-7514-4321-8b68-41c65f956998}\Configurations\0

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DatabasedId	REG_SZ	DC576DA6-D676-4A15-906D-C0CEAF949543
EngineAdapterBinary	REG_SZ	FaceBootstrapAdapter.dll
SensorAdapterBinary	REG_SZ	FaceBootstrapAdapter.dll
SensorMode	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
StorageAdapterBinary	REG_SZ	FaceBootstrapAdapter.dll
SystemSensor	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)

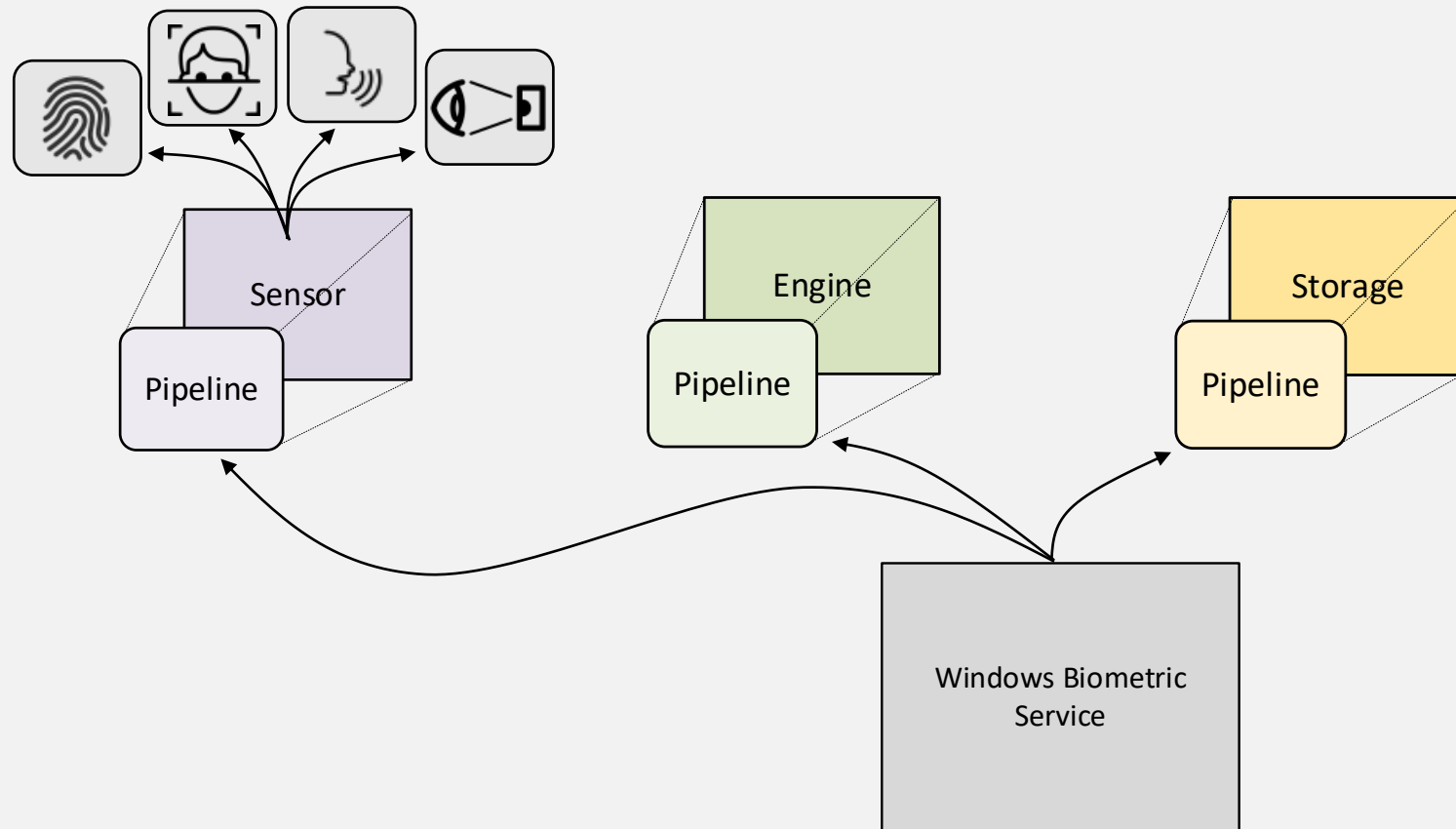
Biometric Unit

Windows Biometric
Service

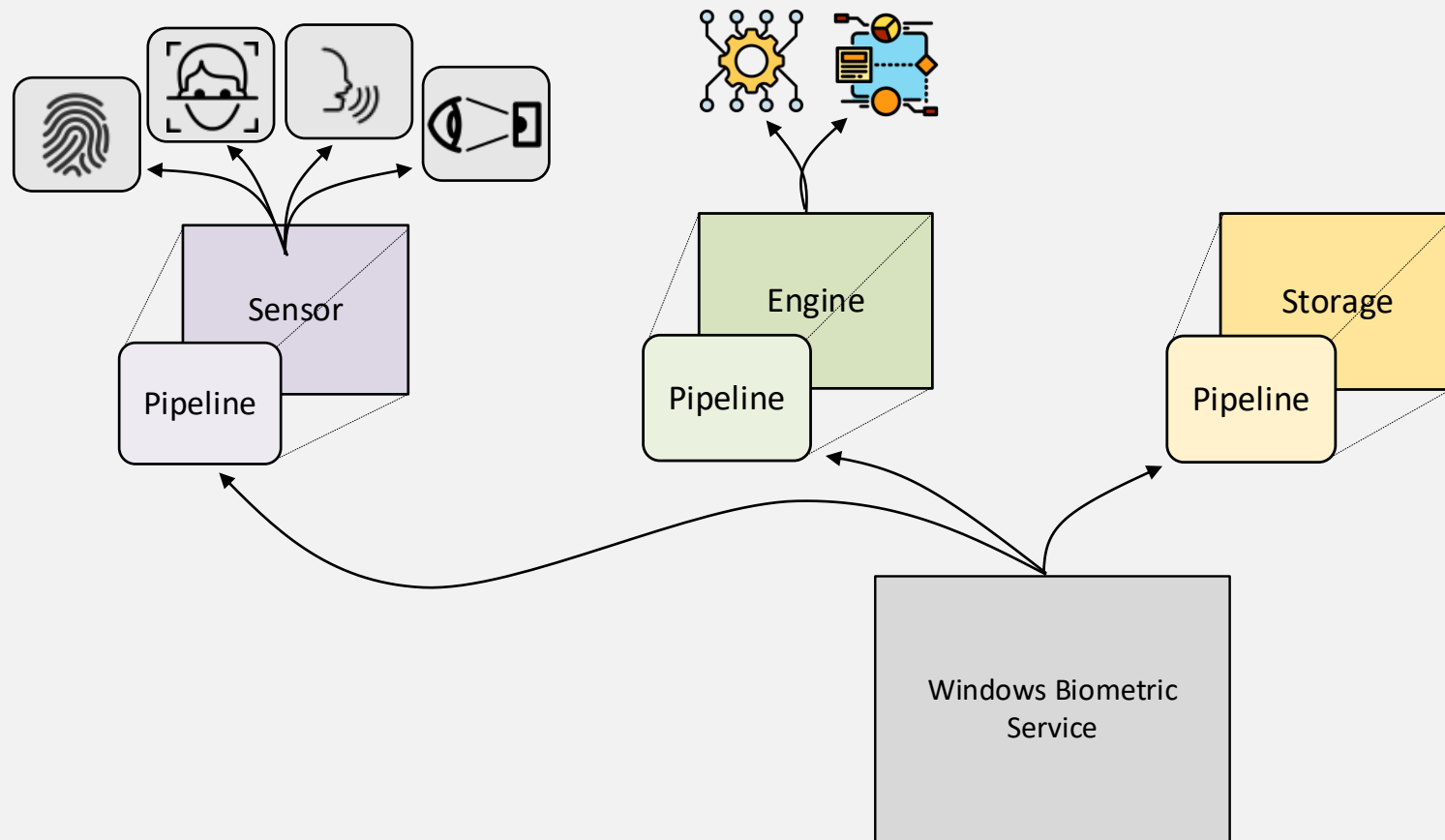
Biometric Unit



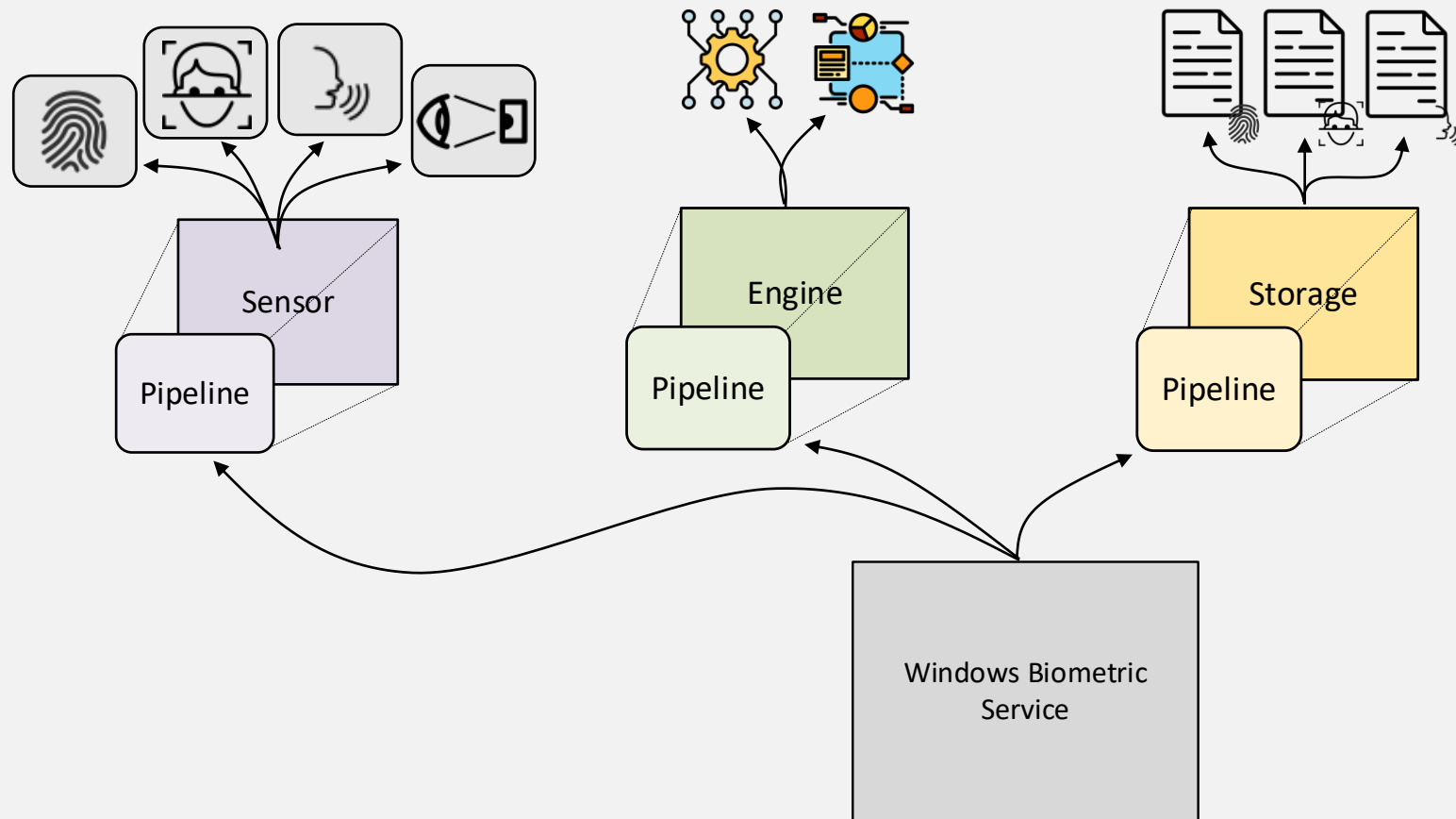
Biometric Unit



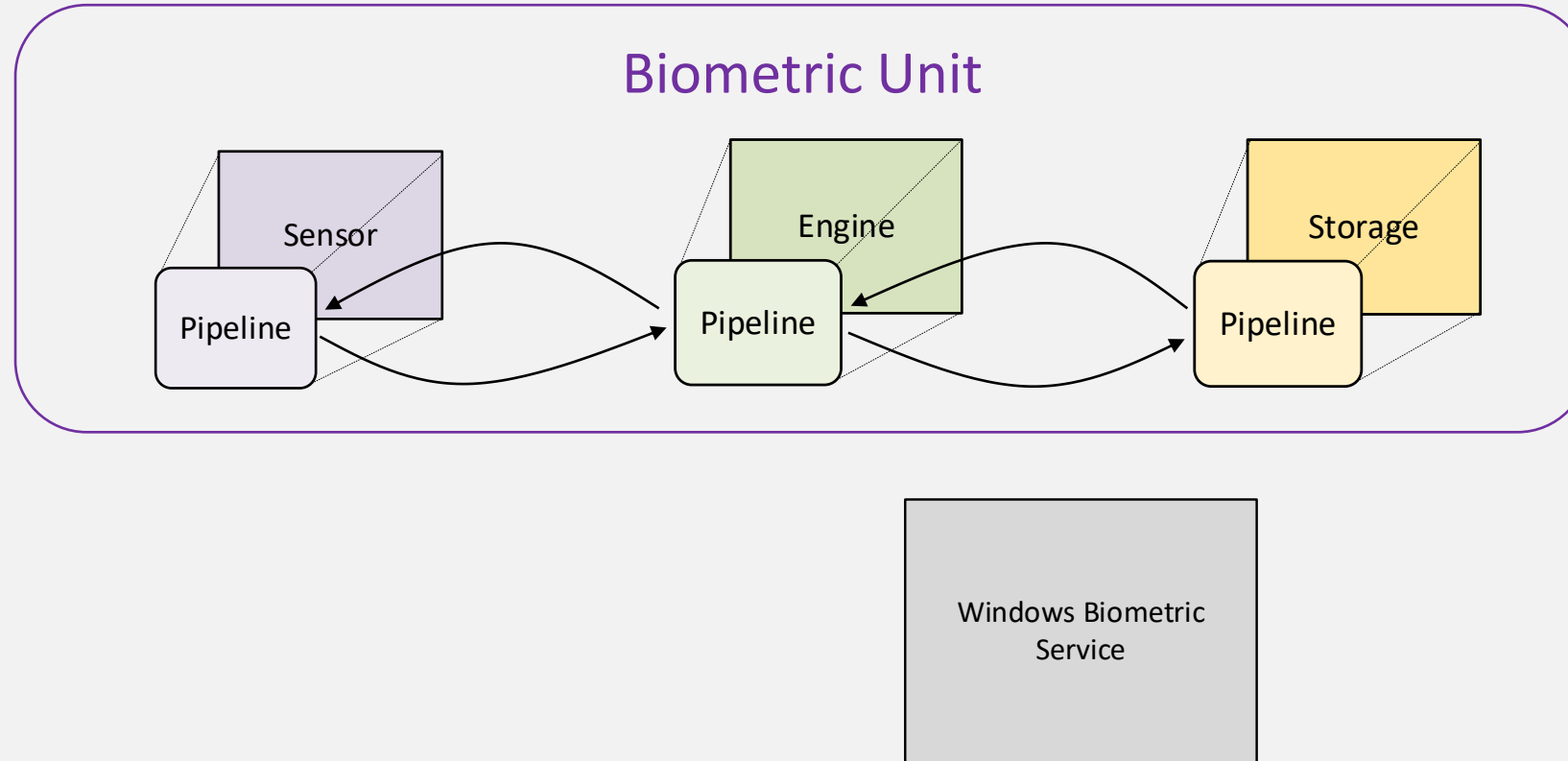
Biometric Unit



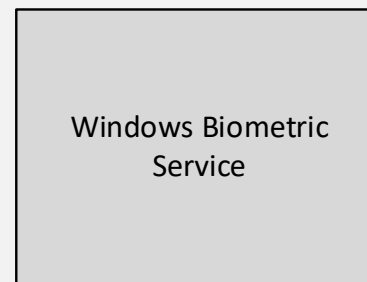
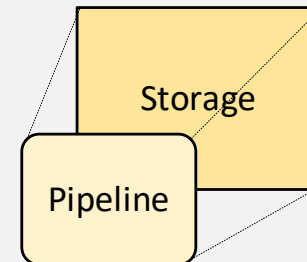
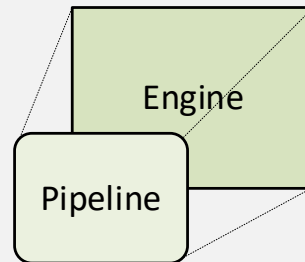
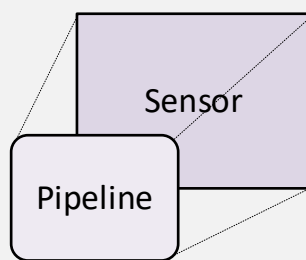
Biometric Unit



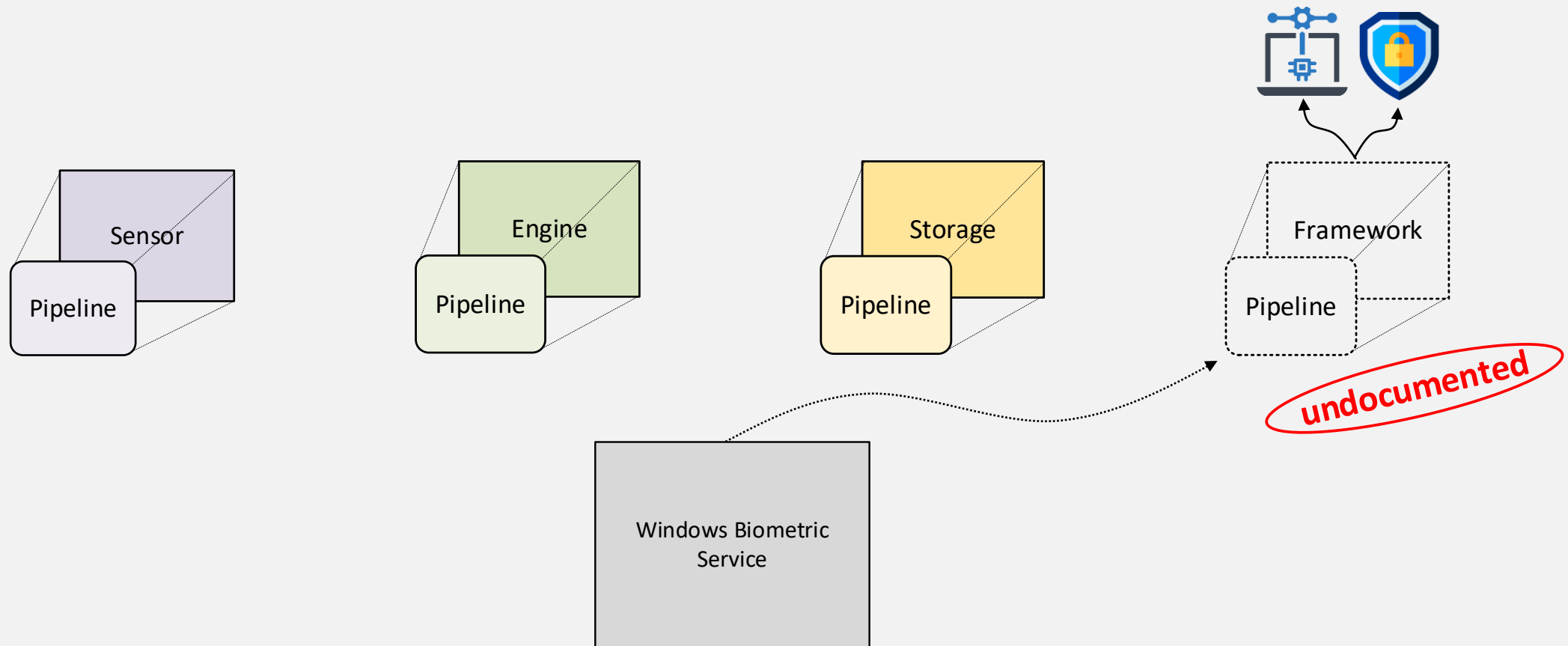
Biometric Unit



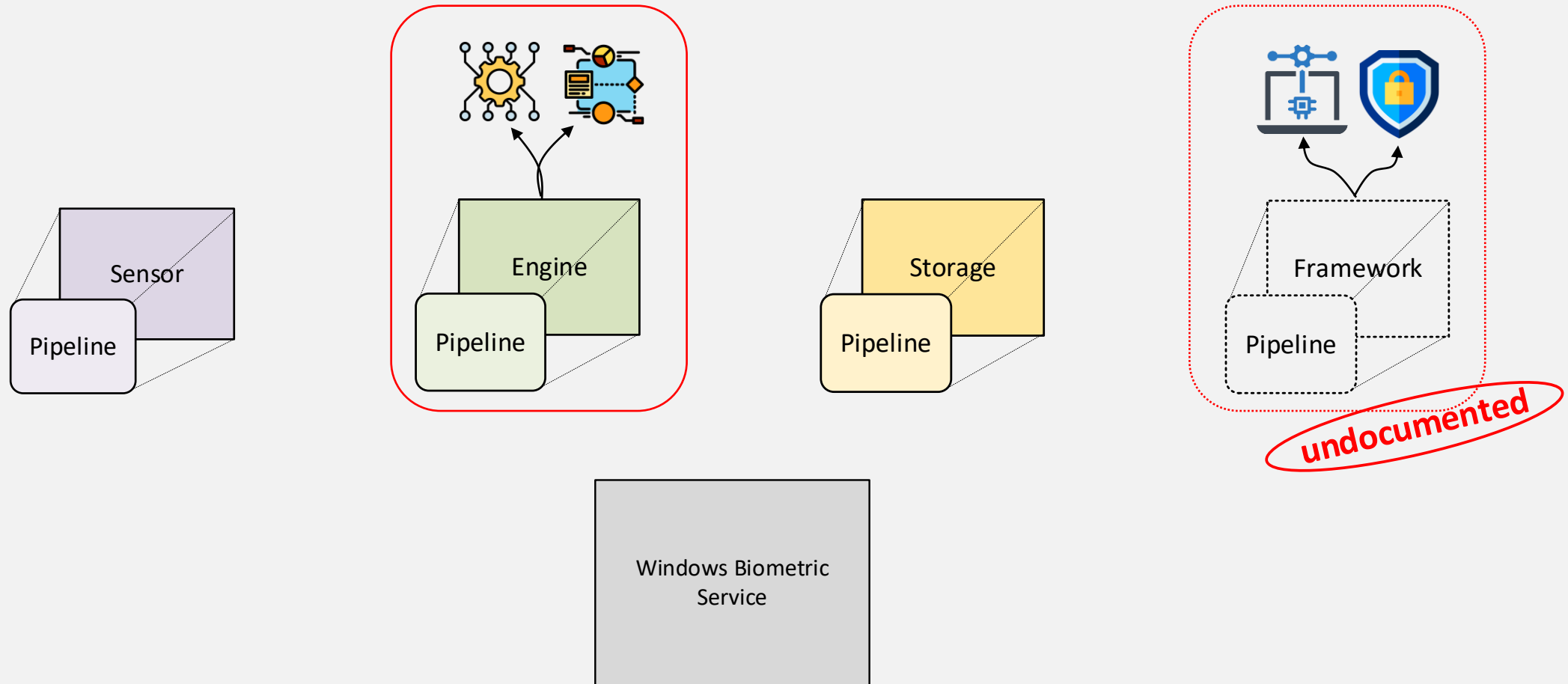
Biometric Unit



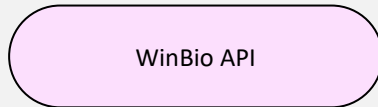
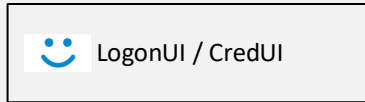
Biometric Unit



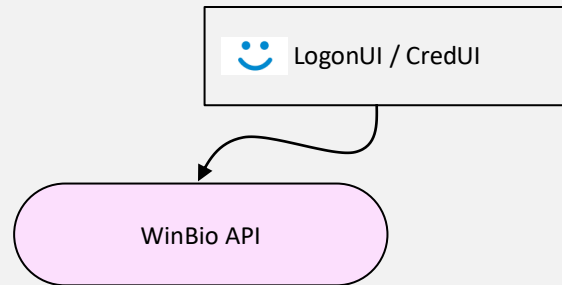
Biometric Unit



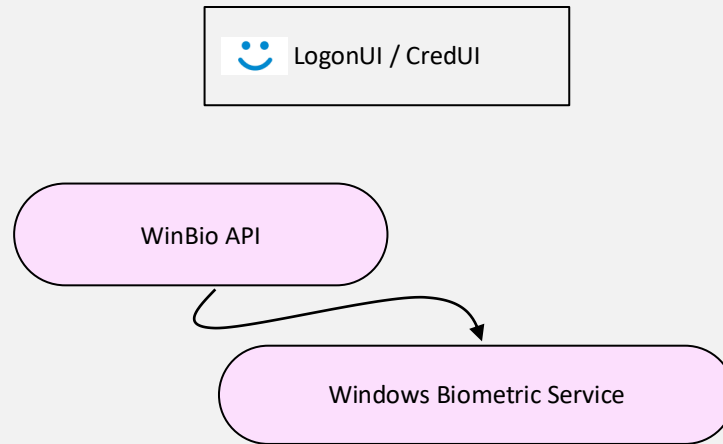
Enhanced Sign-in Security (ESS)



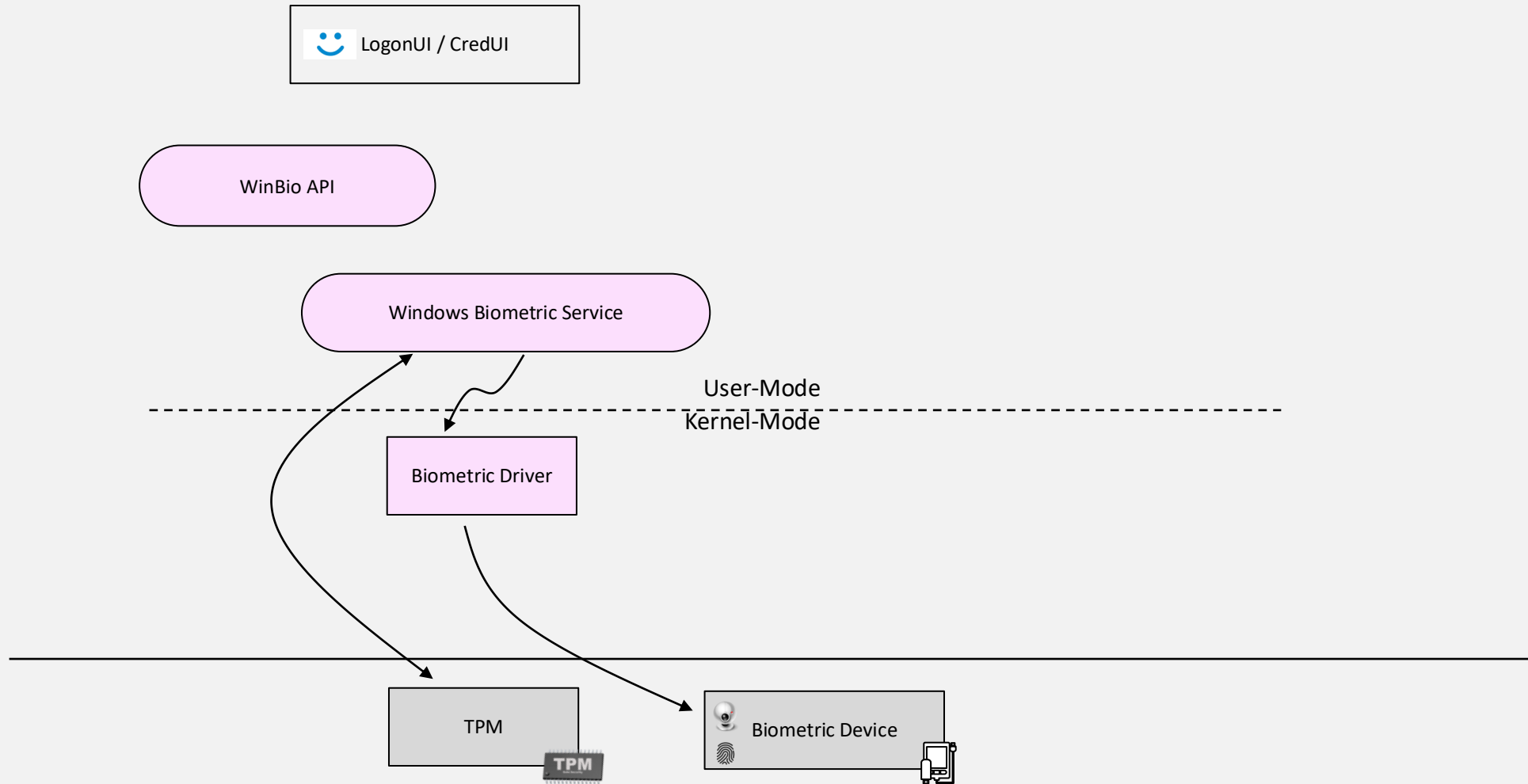
Enhanced Sign-in Security (ESS)



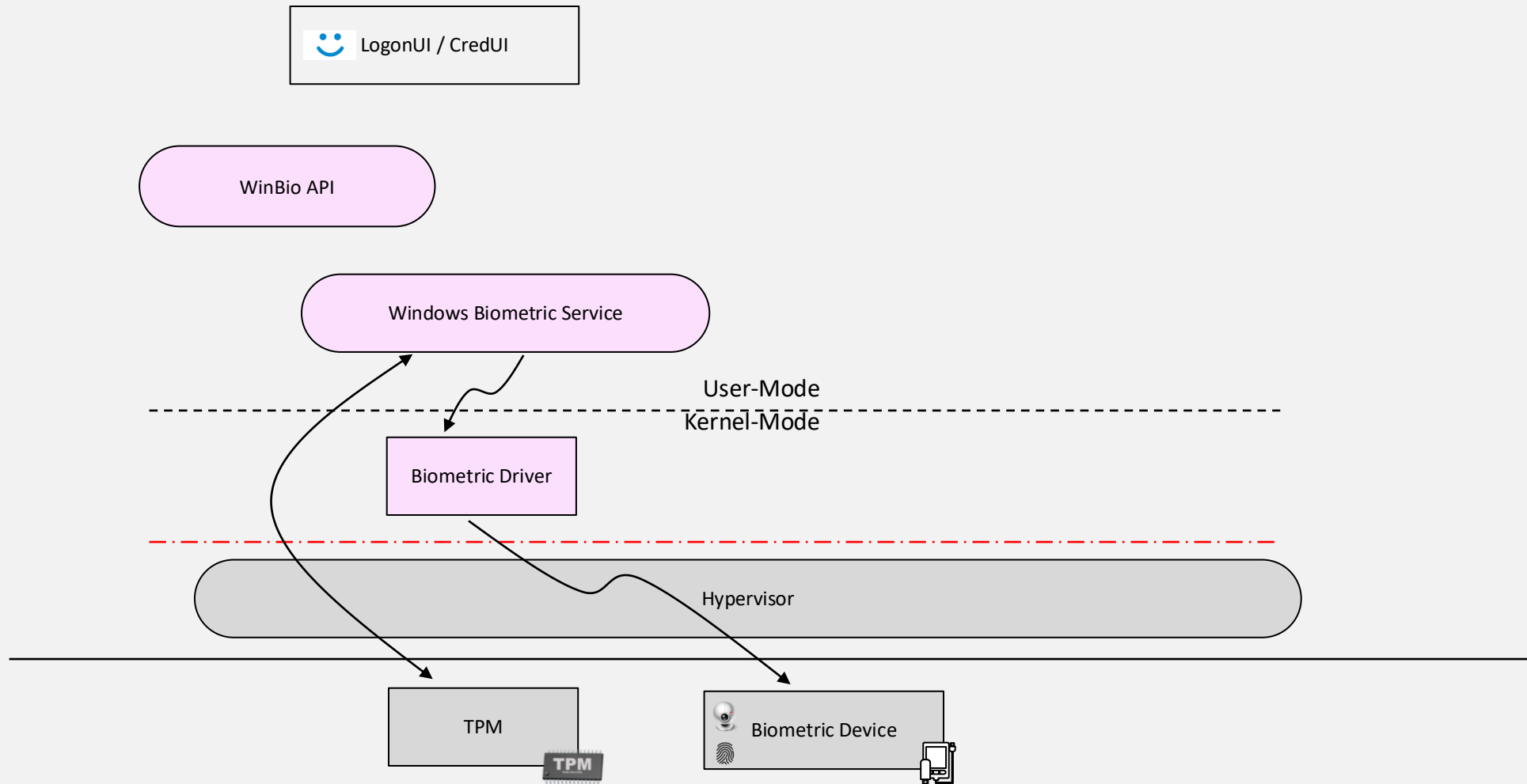
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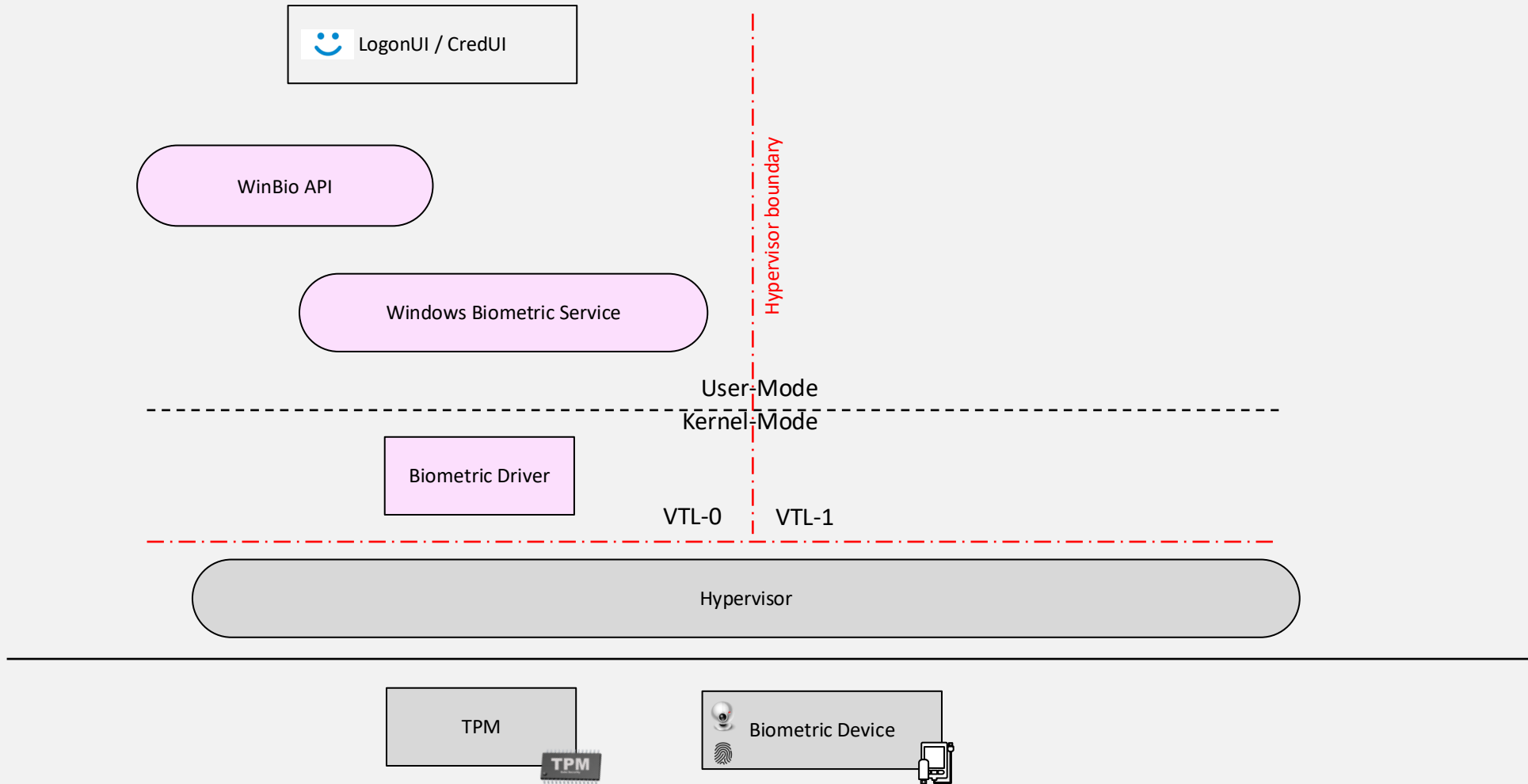
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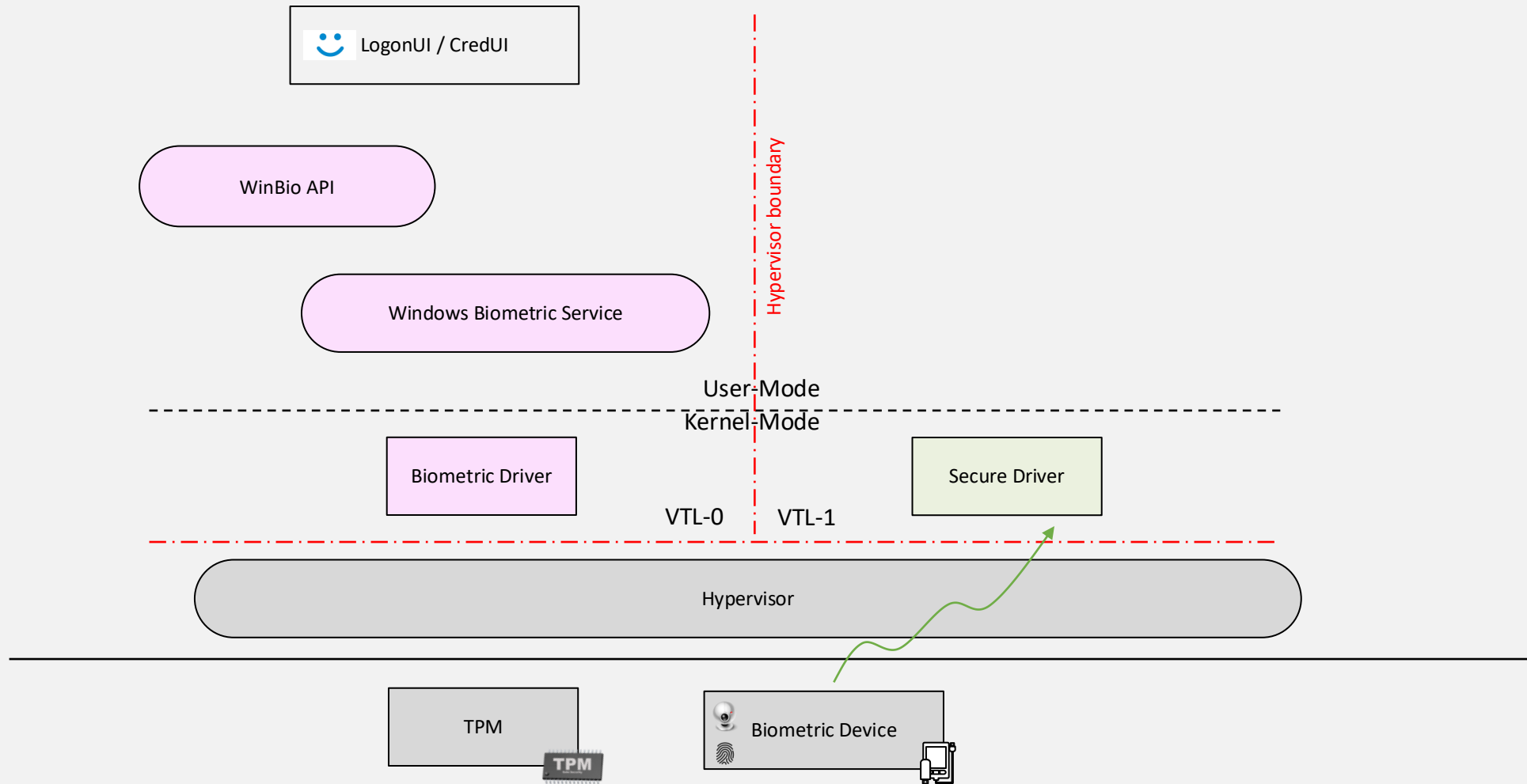
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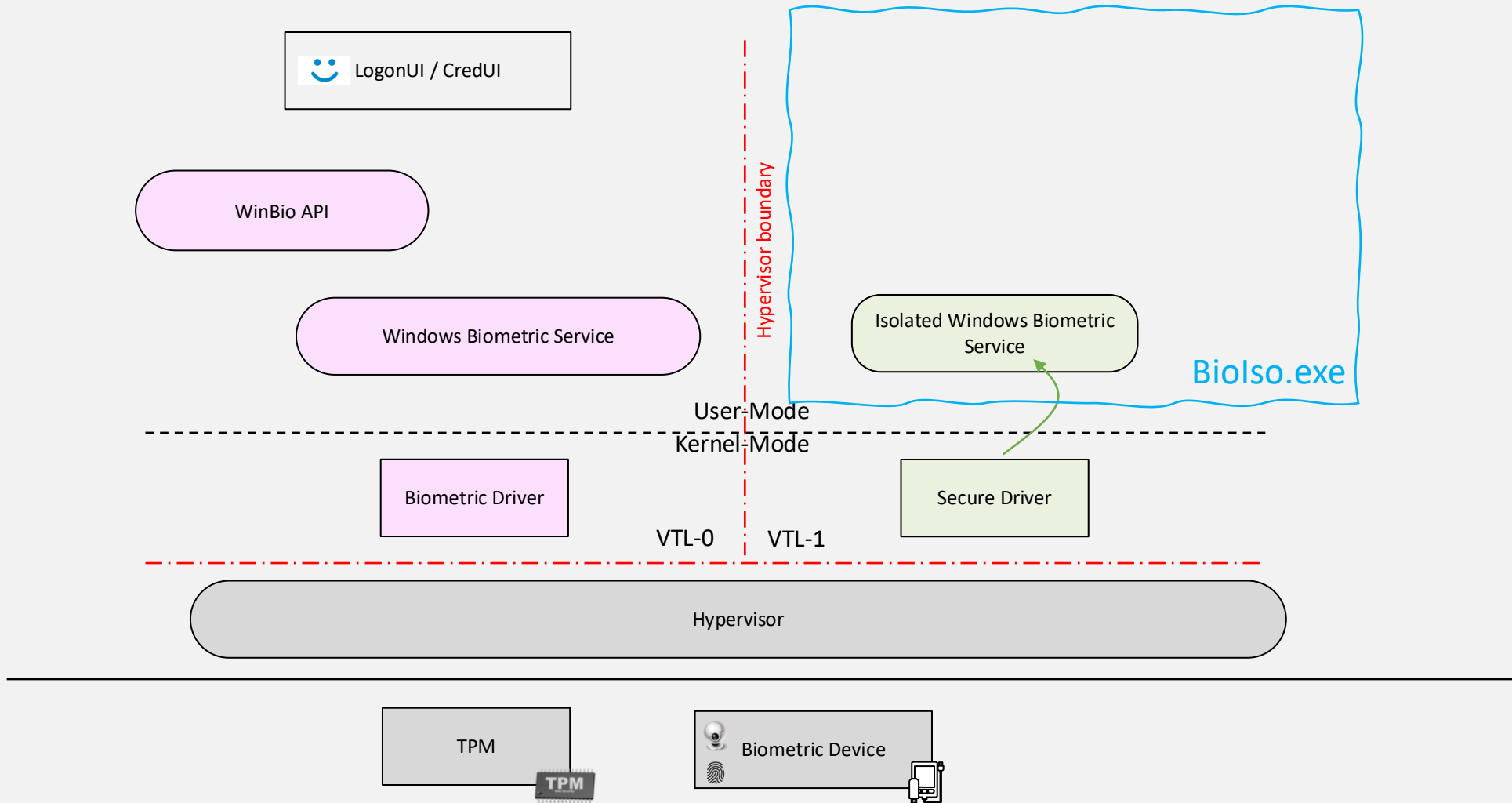
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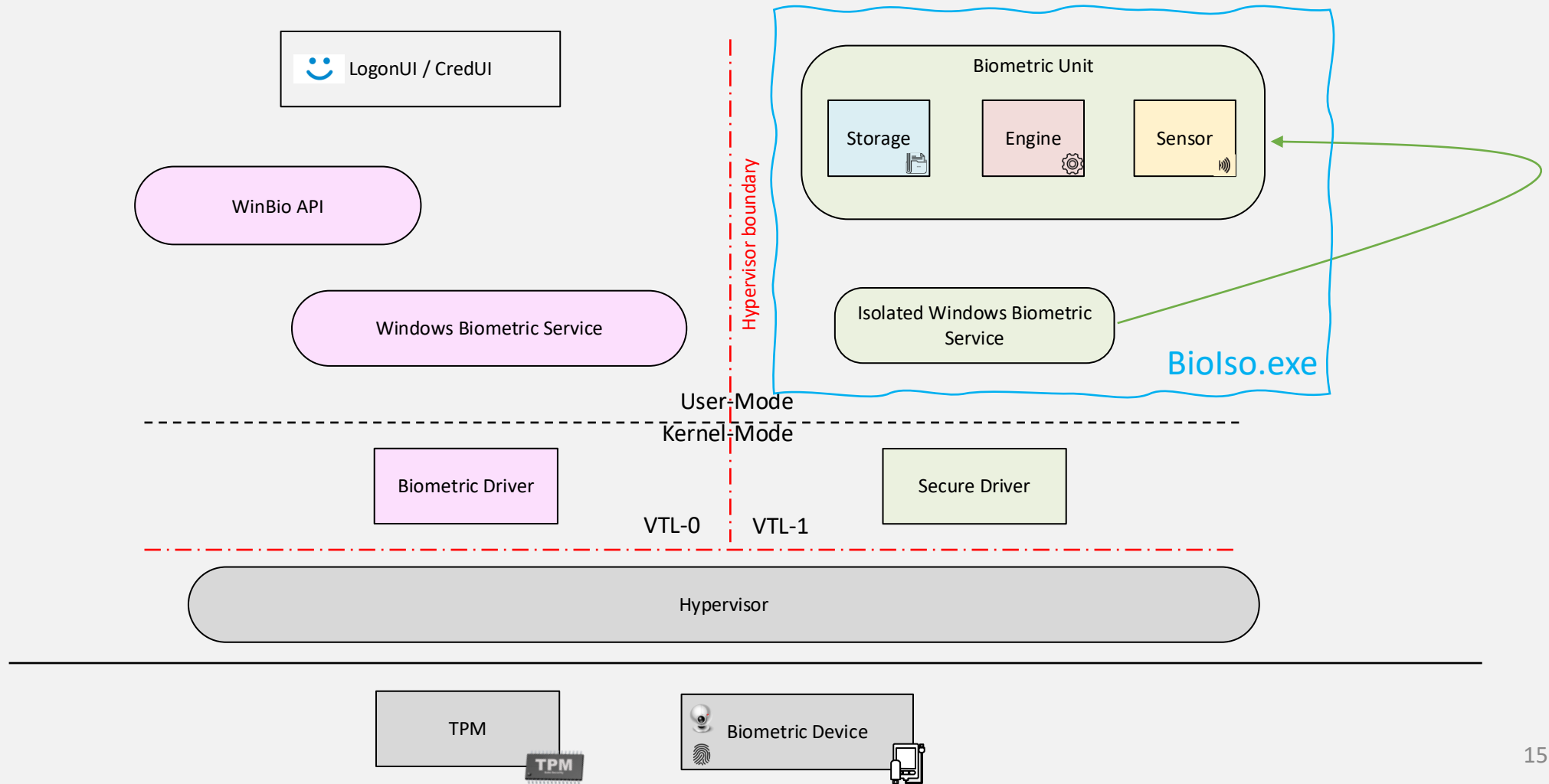
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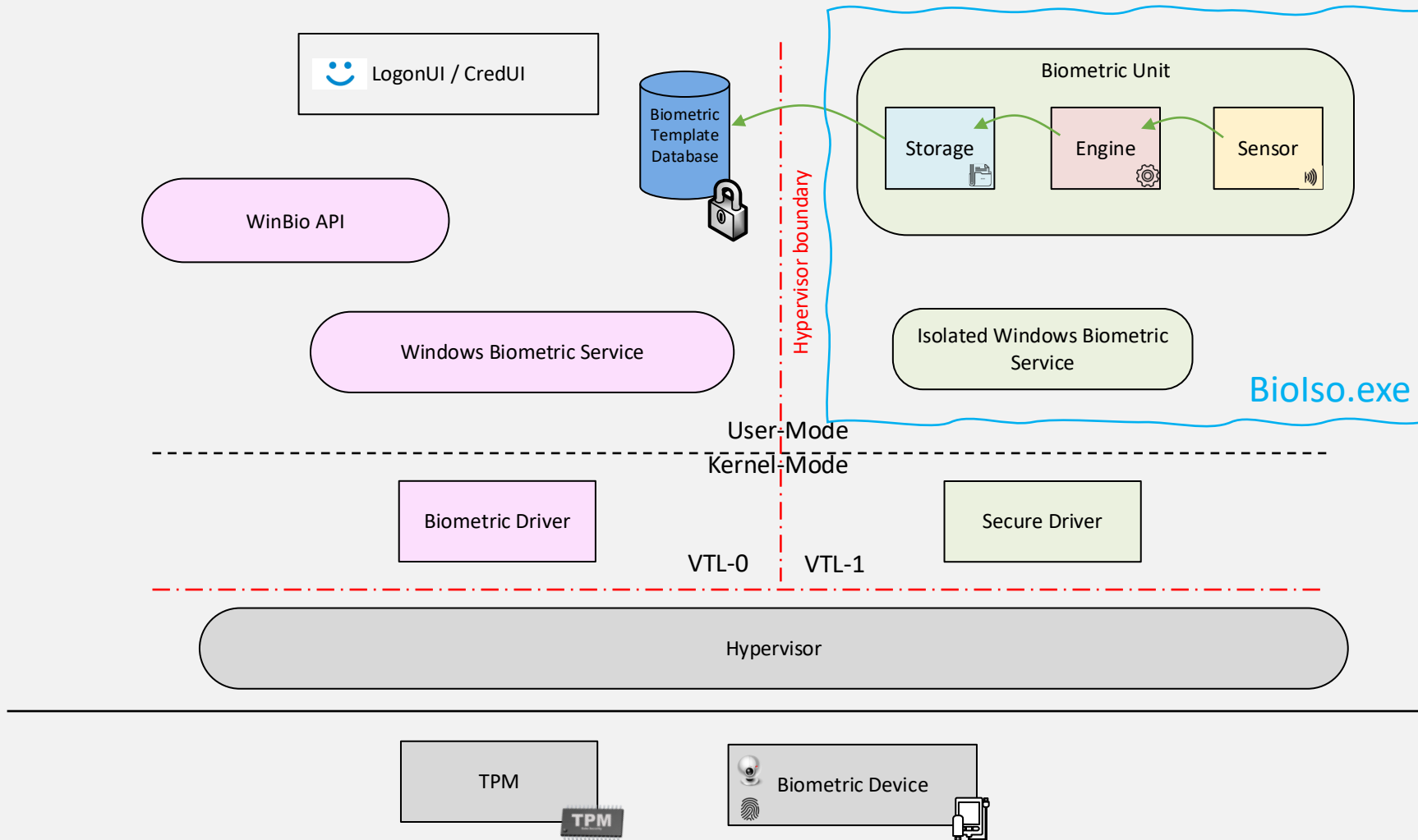
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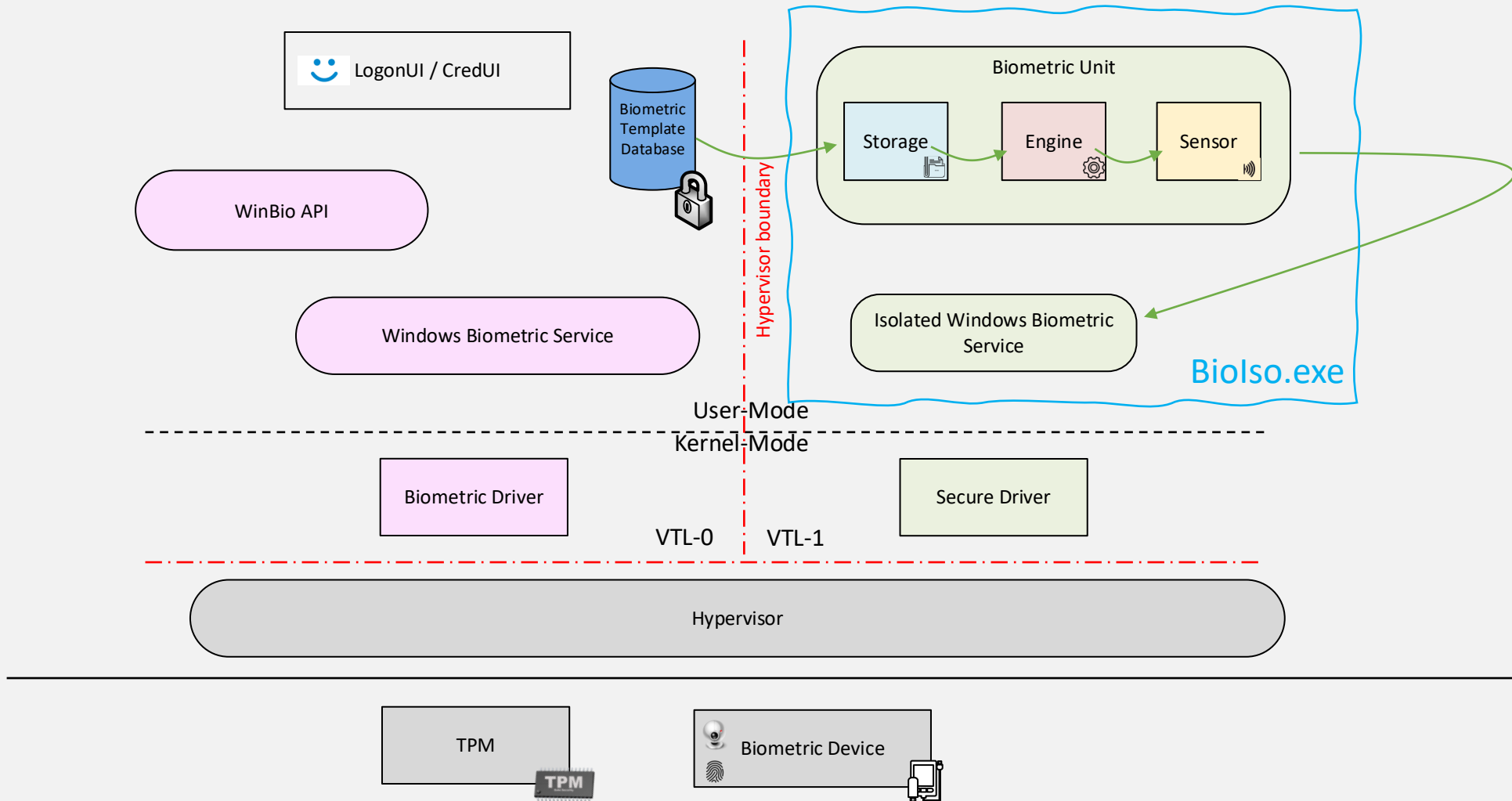
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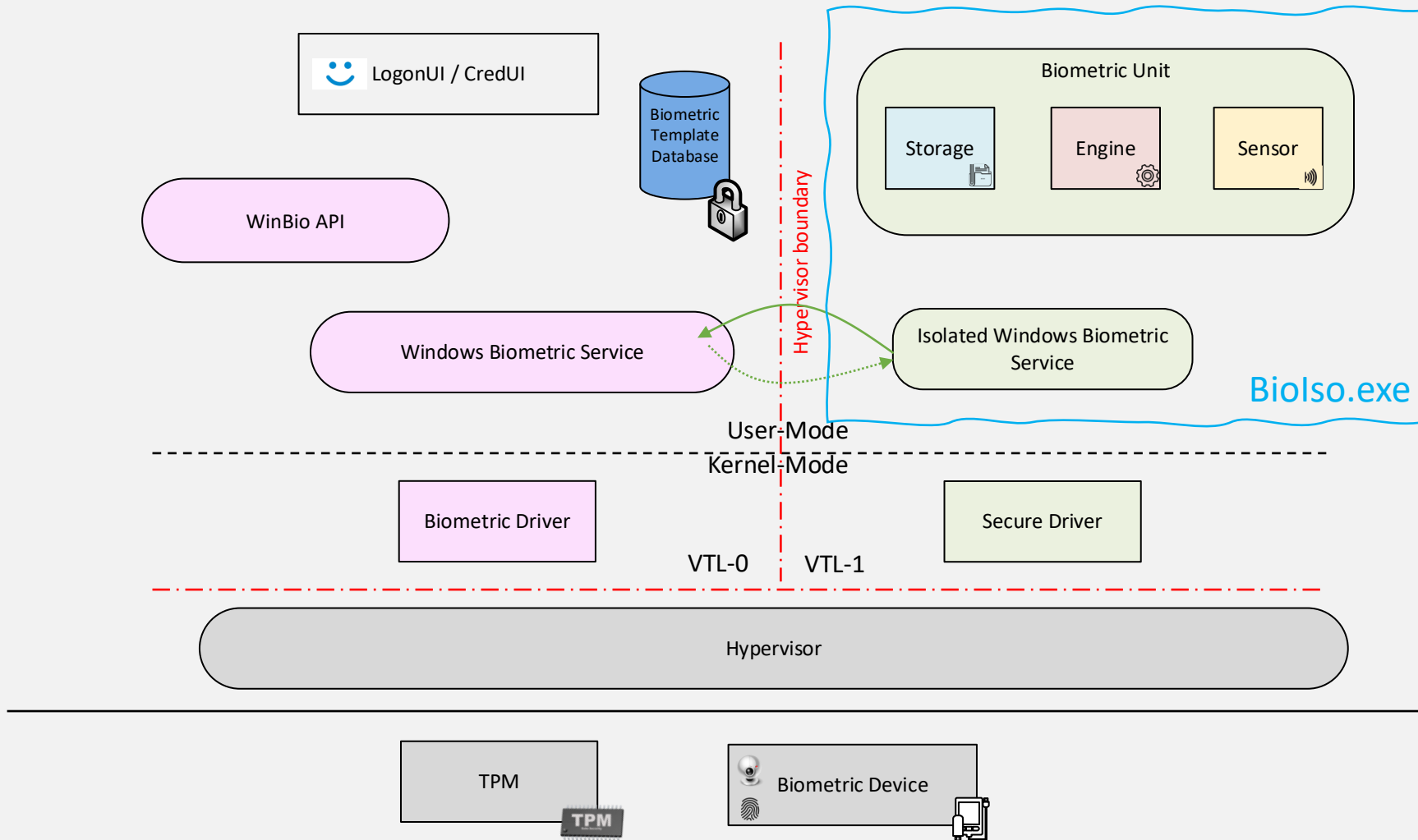
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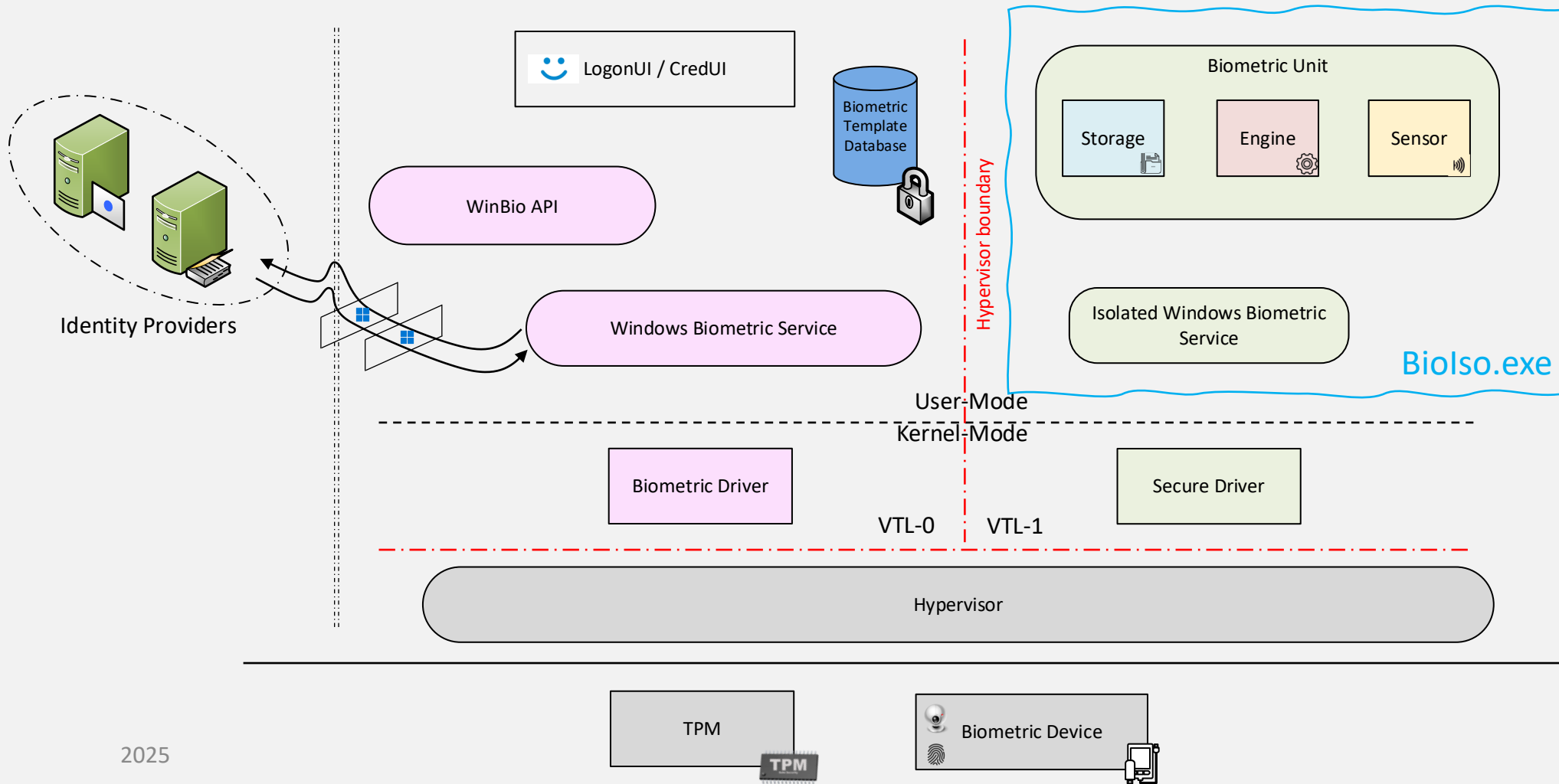
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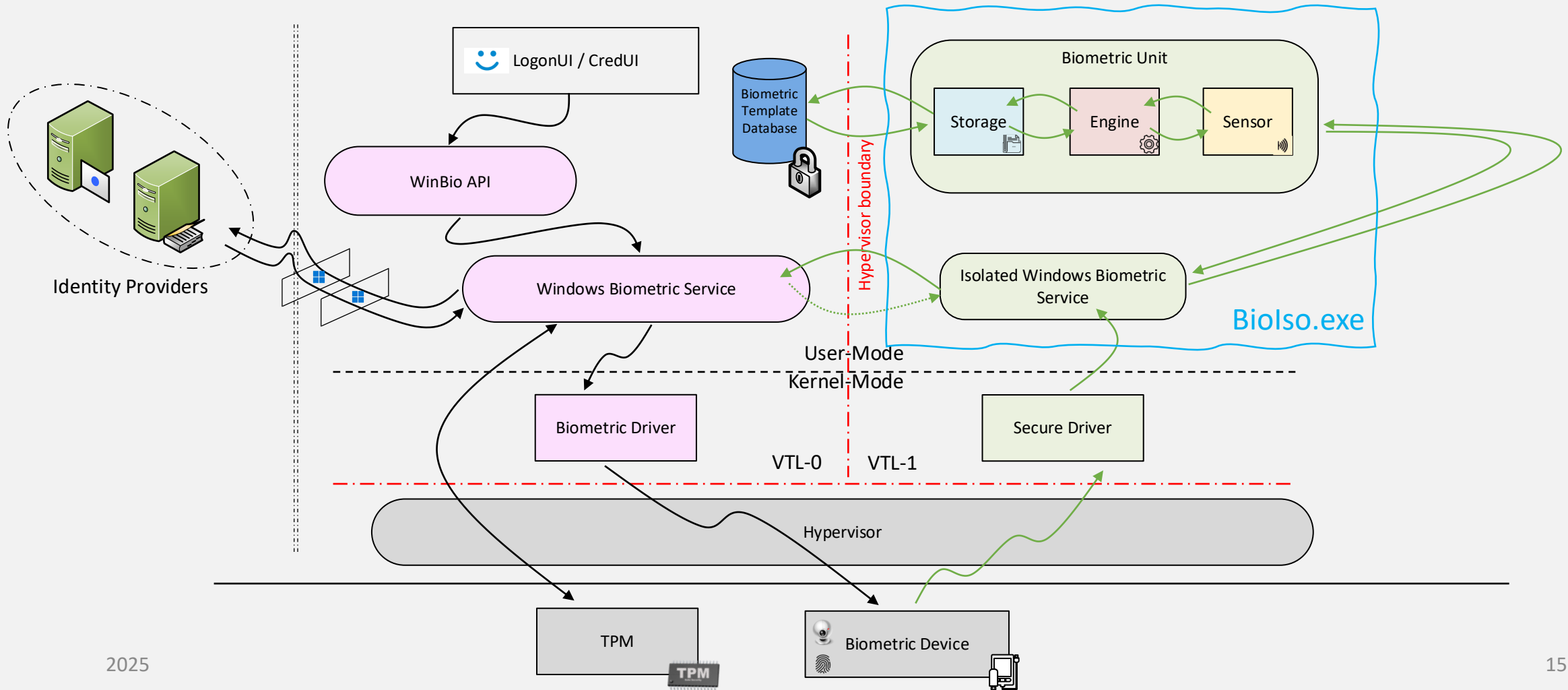
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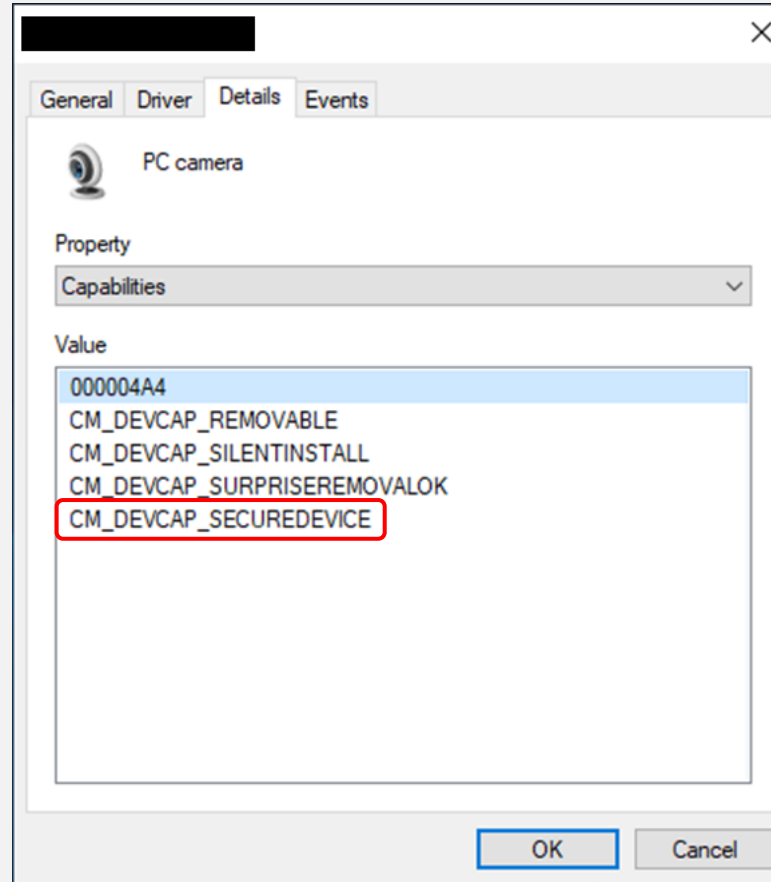
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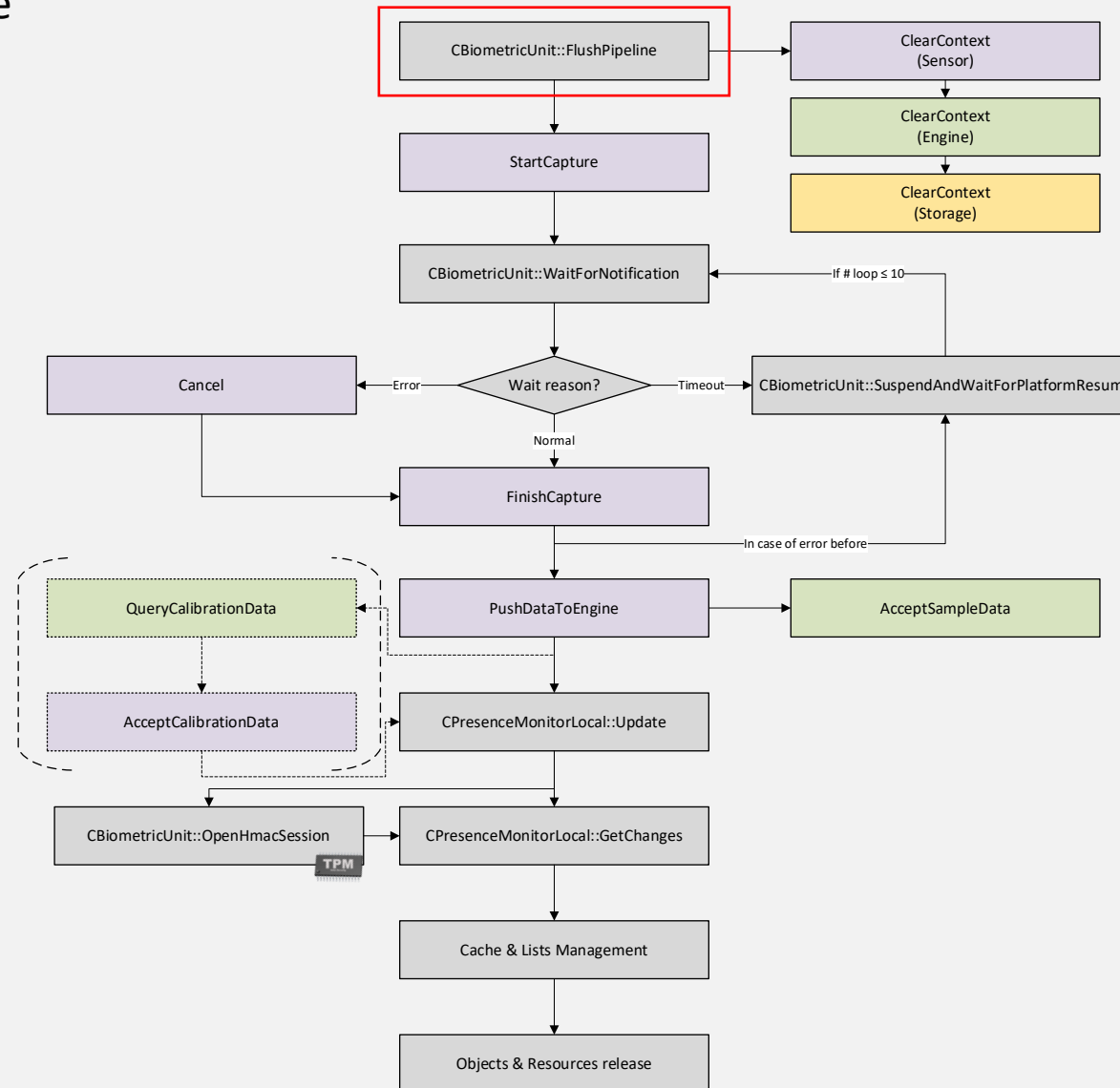
Enhanced Sign-in Security (ESS)



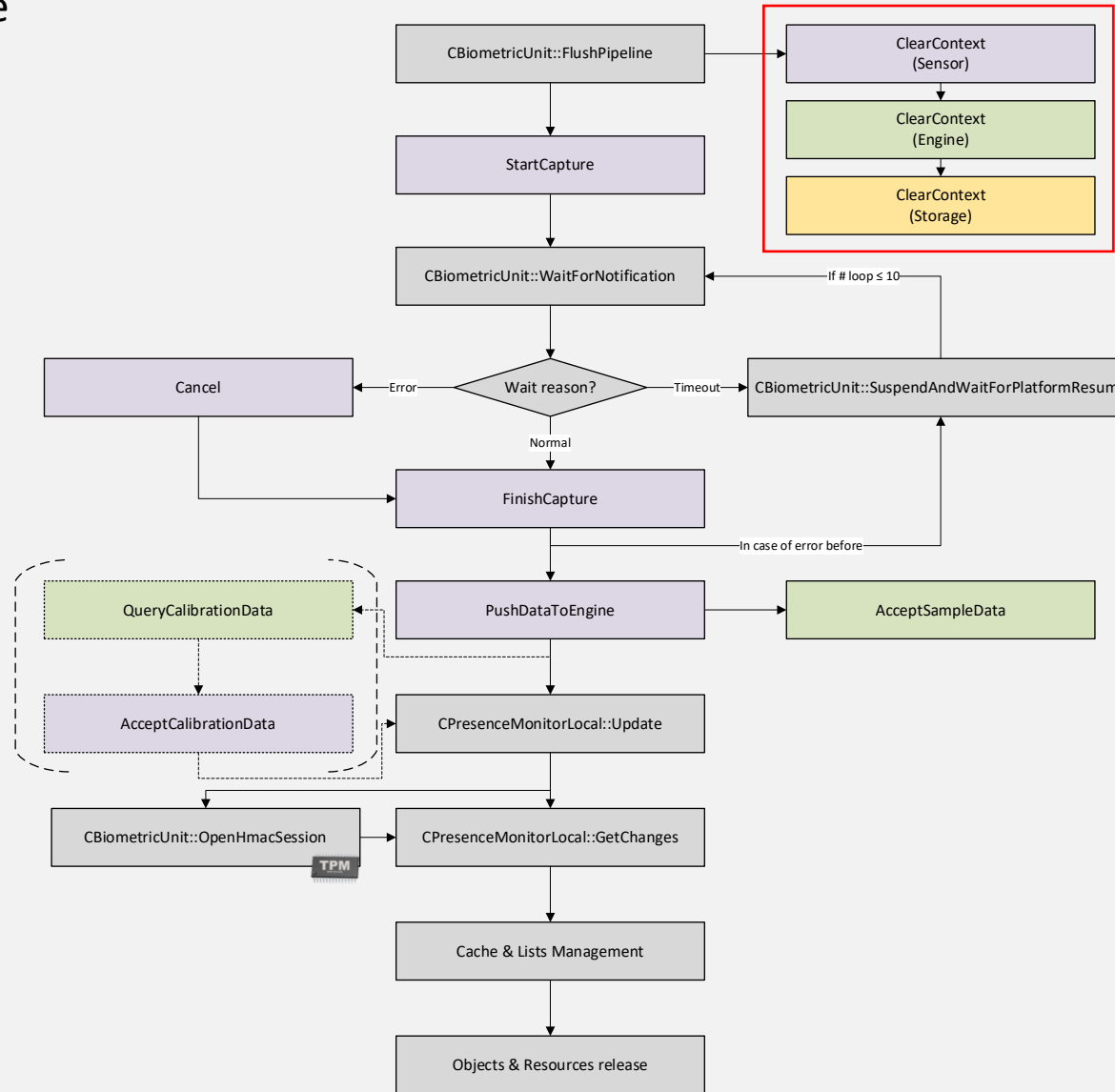
Enhanced Sign-in Security (ESS)



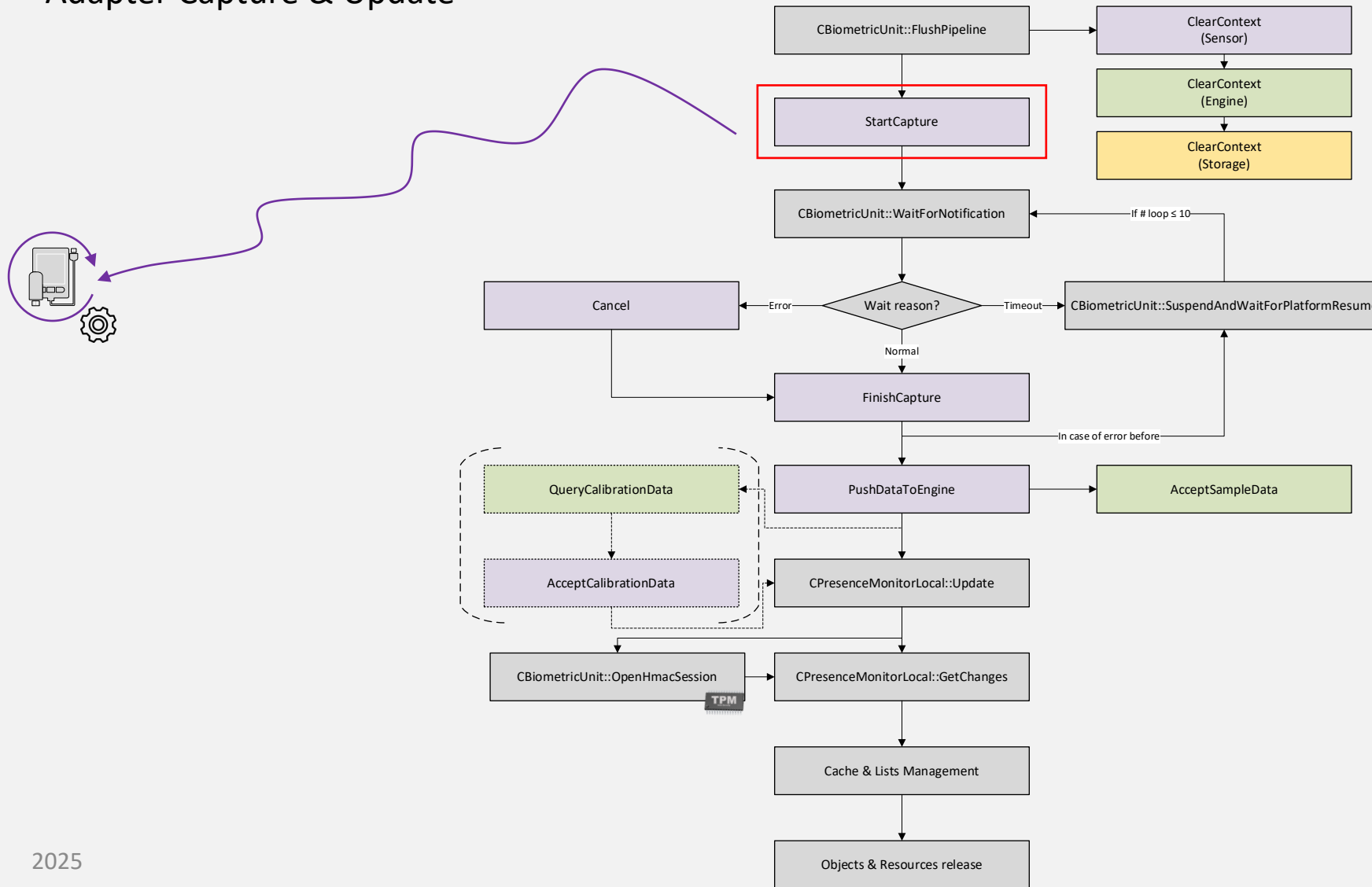
- Adapter Capture & Update



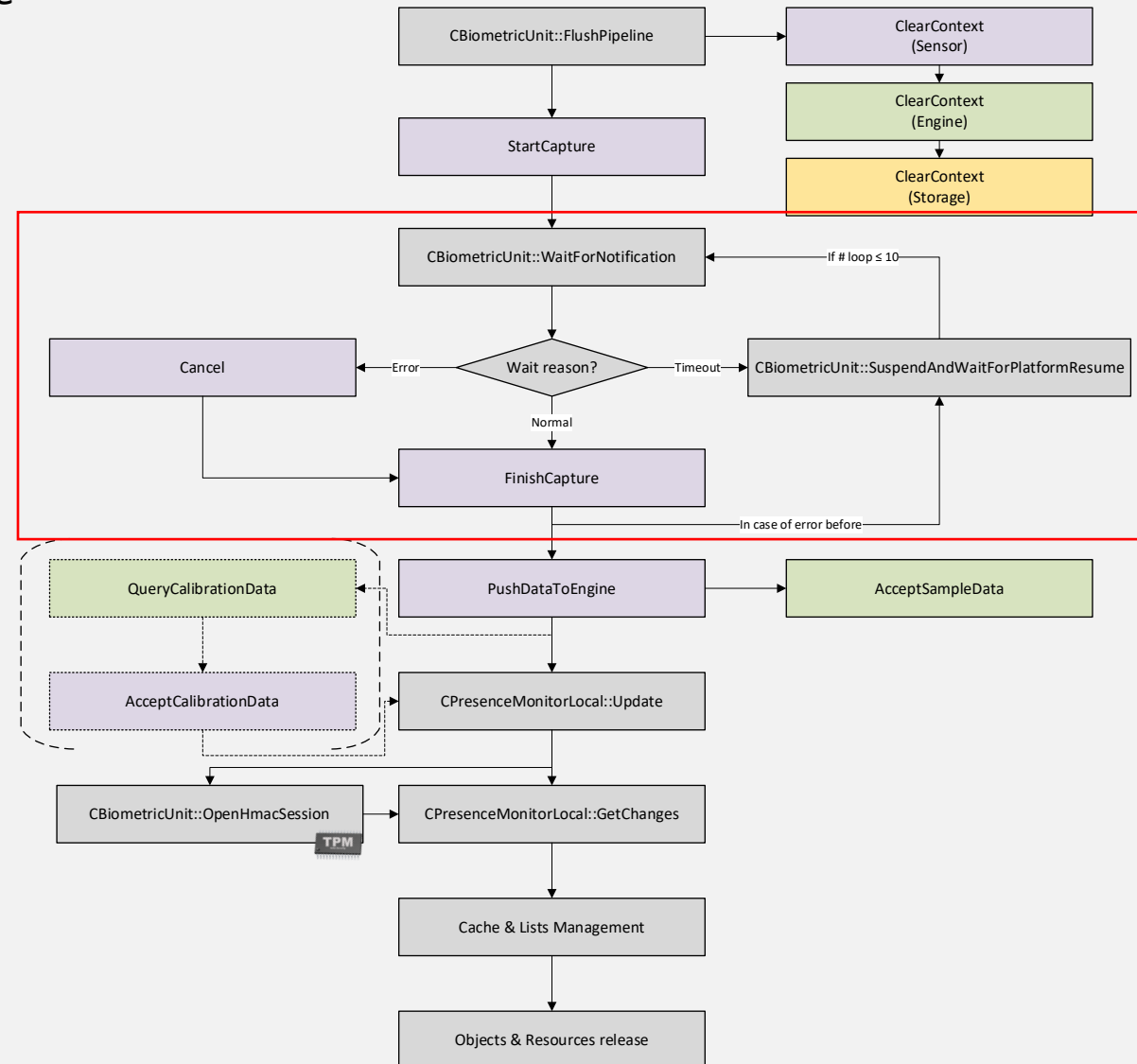
- Adapter Capture & Update



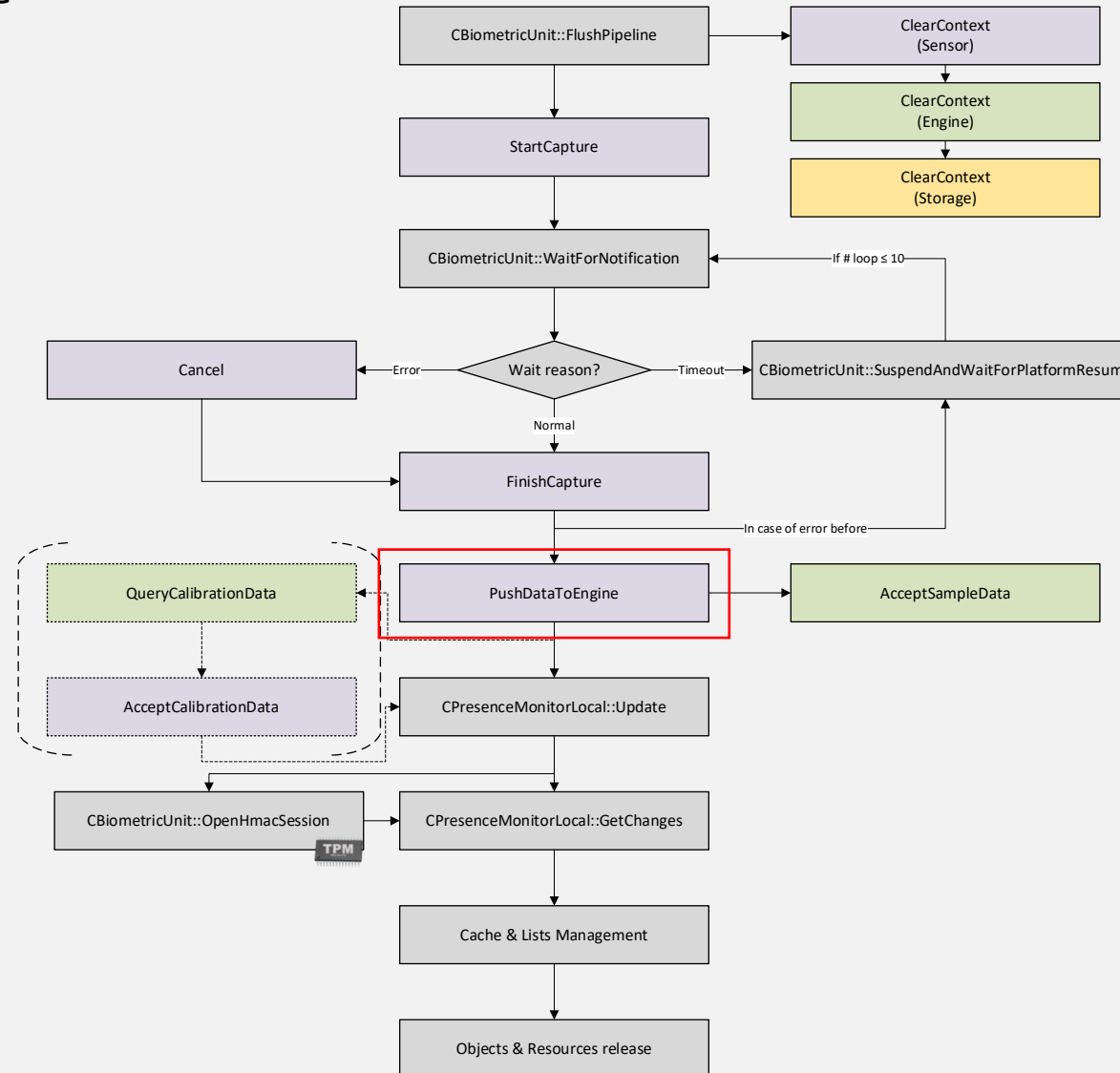
- Adapter Capture & Update



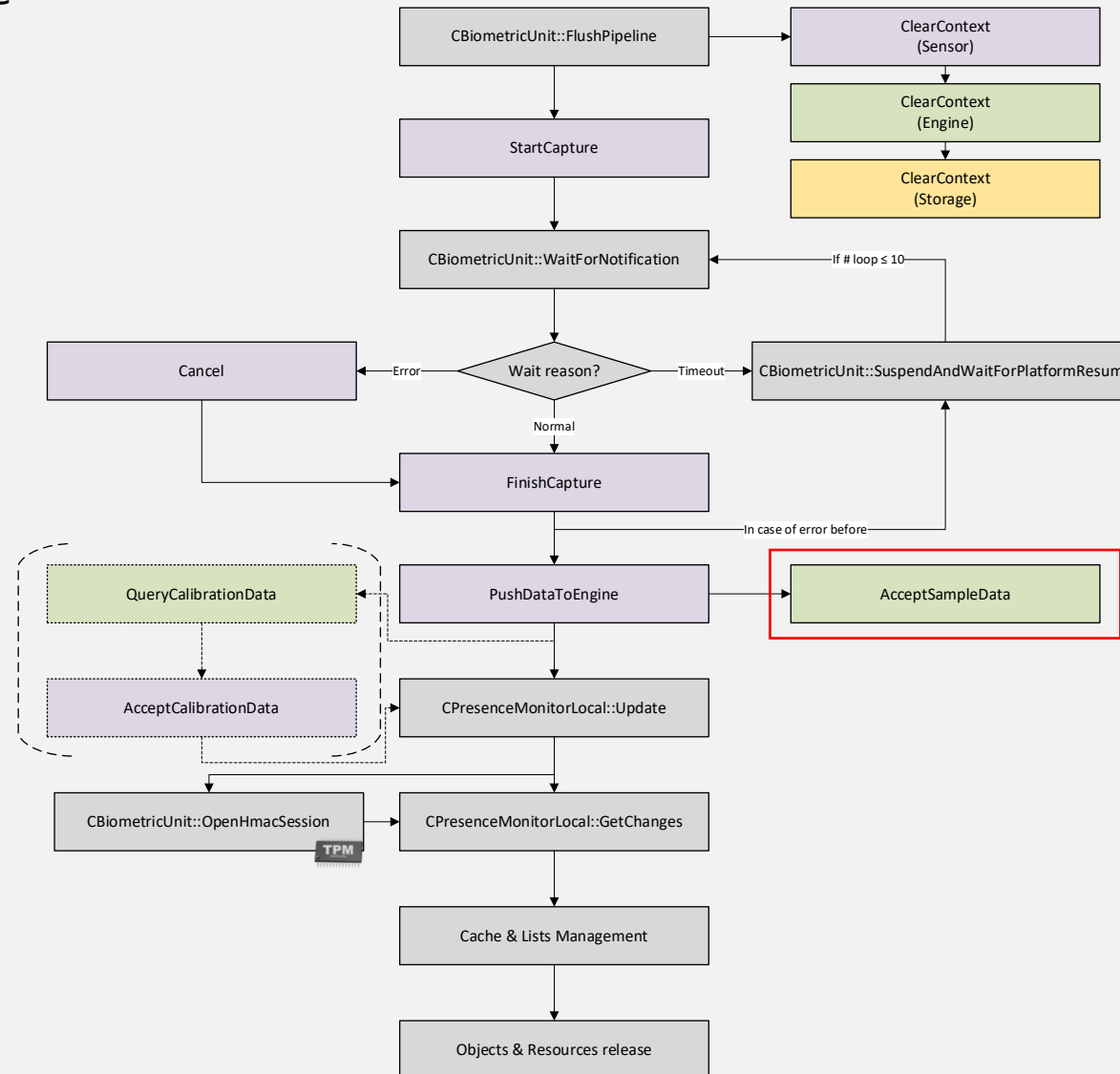
- Adapter Capture & Update



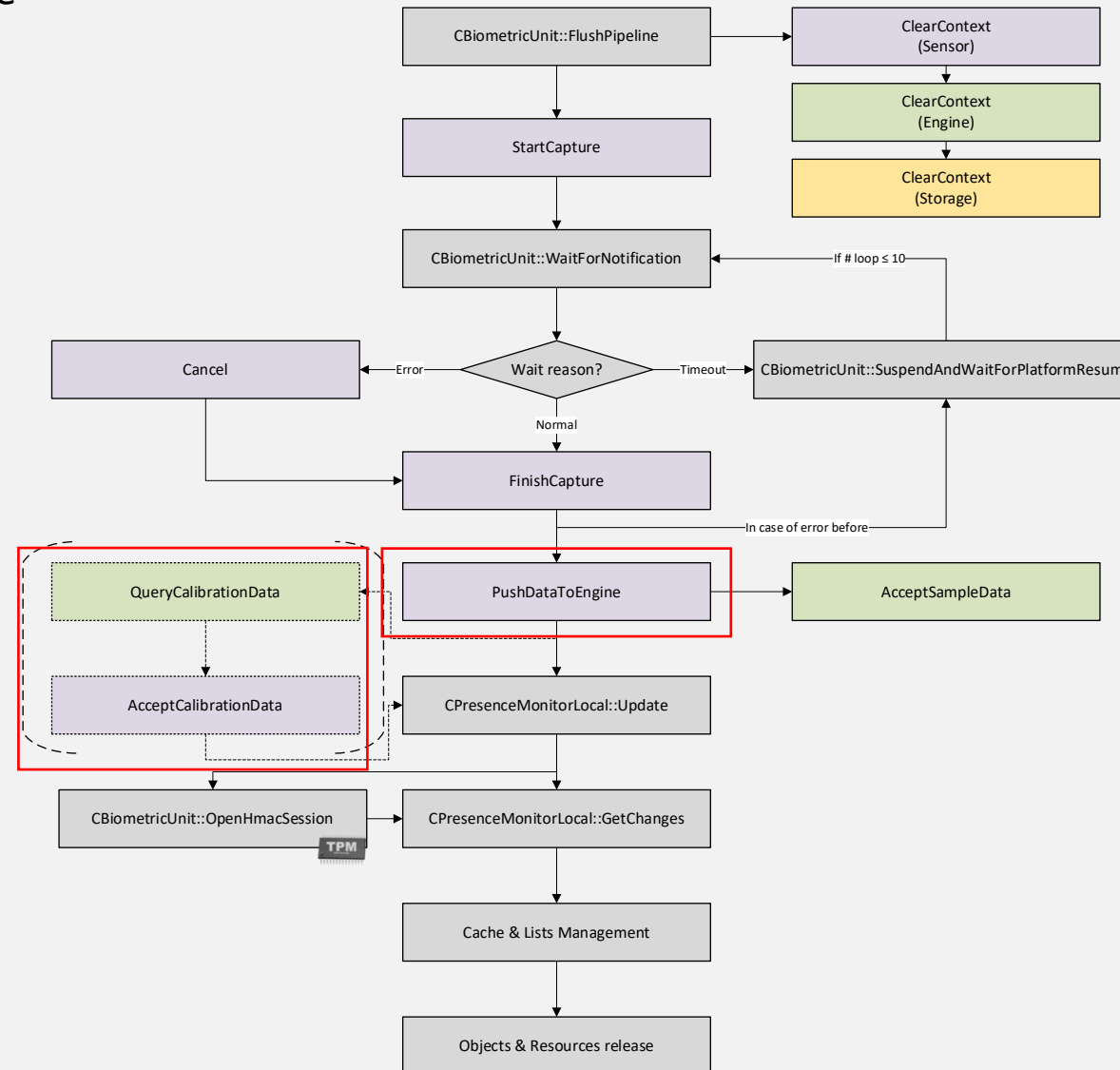
- Adapter Capture & Update



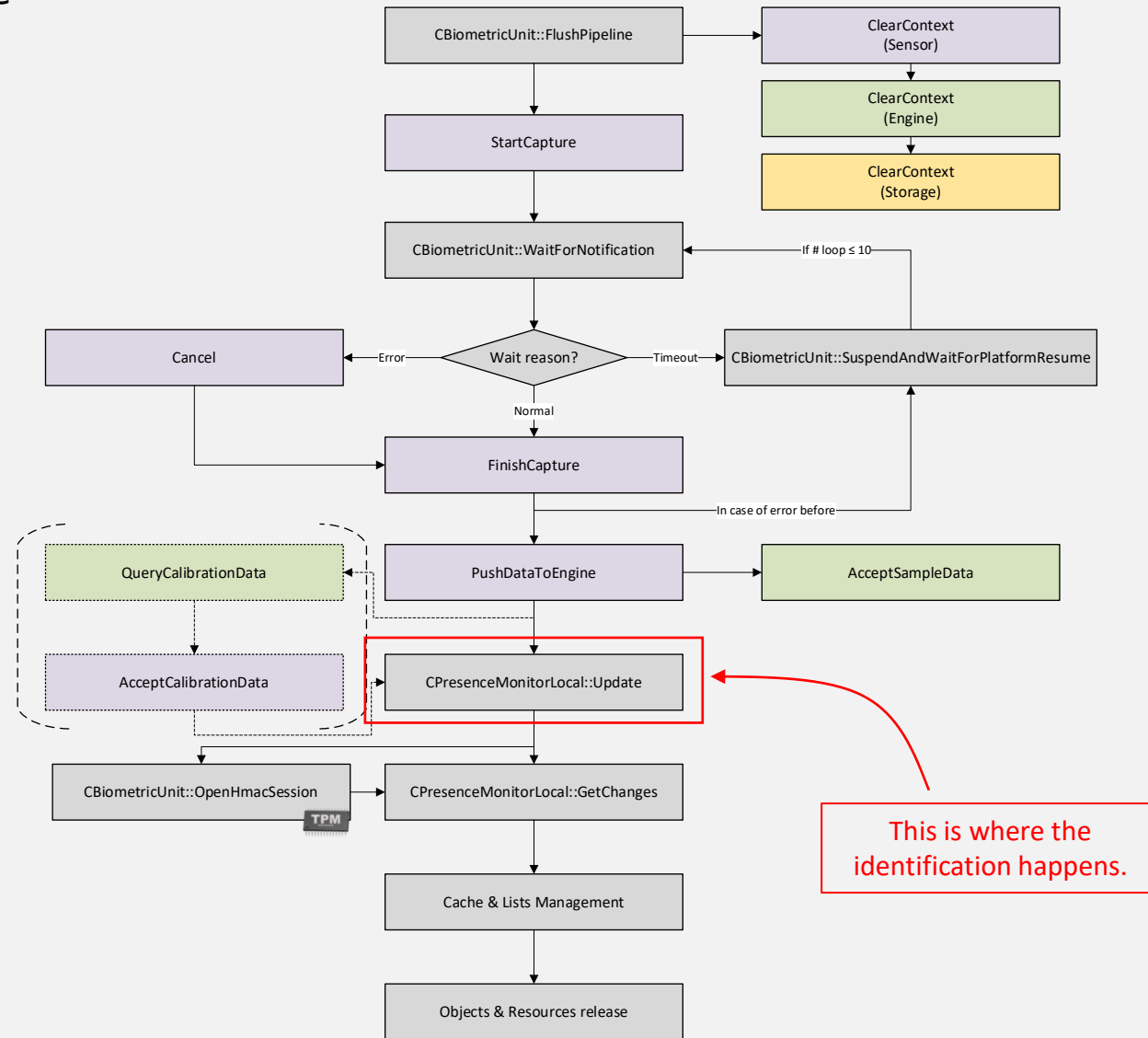
- Adapter Capture & Update



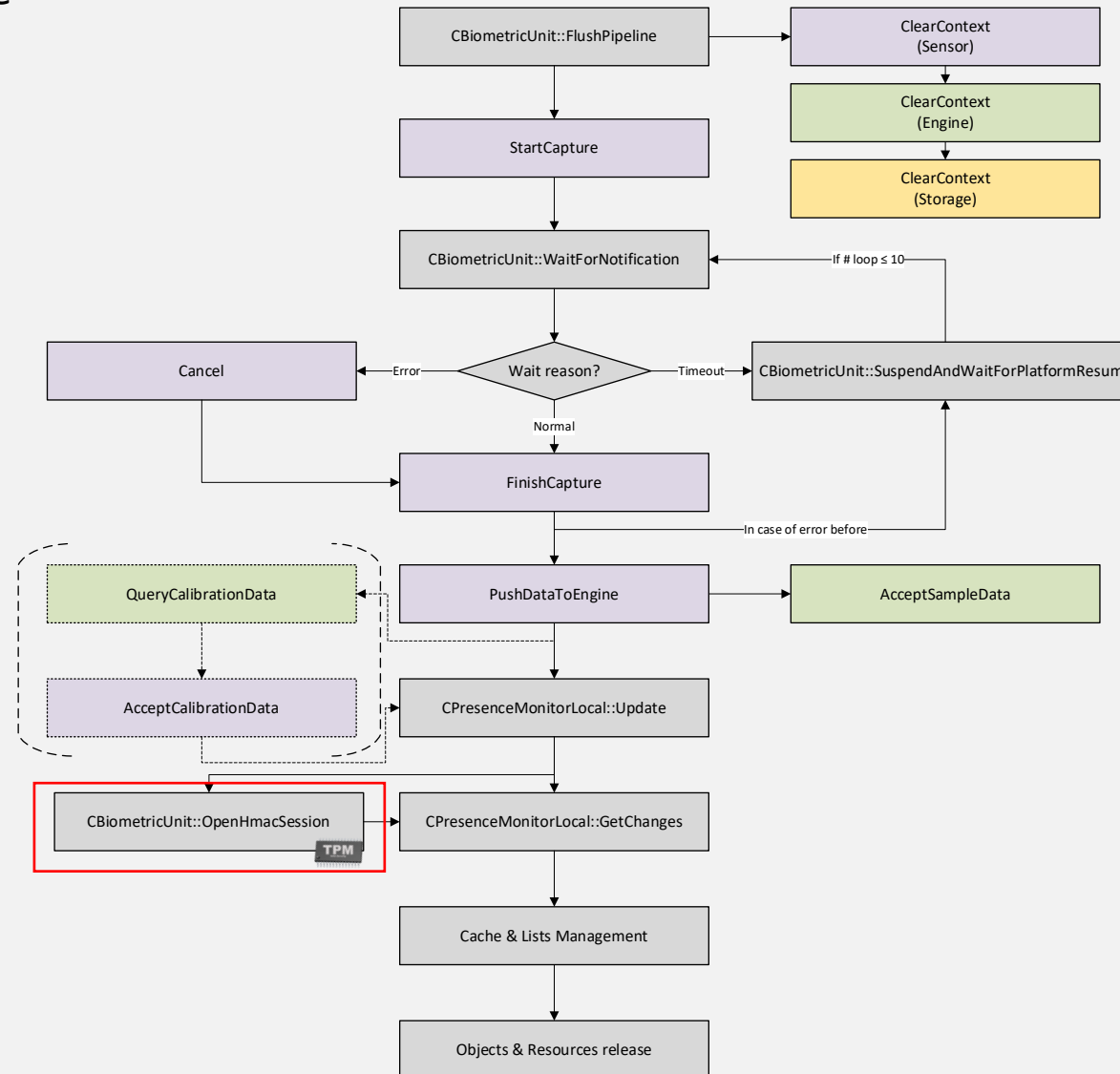
- Adapter Capture & Update



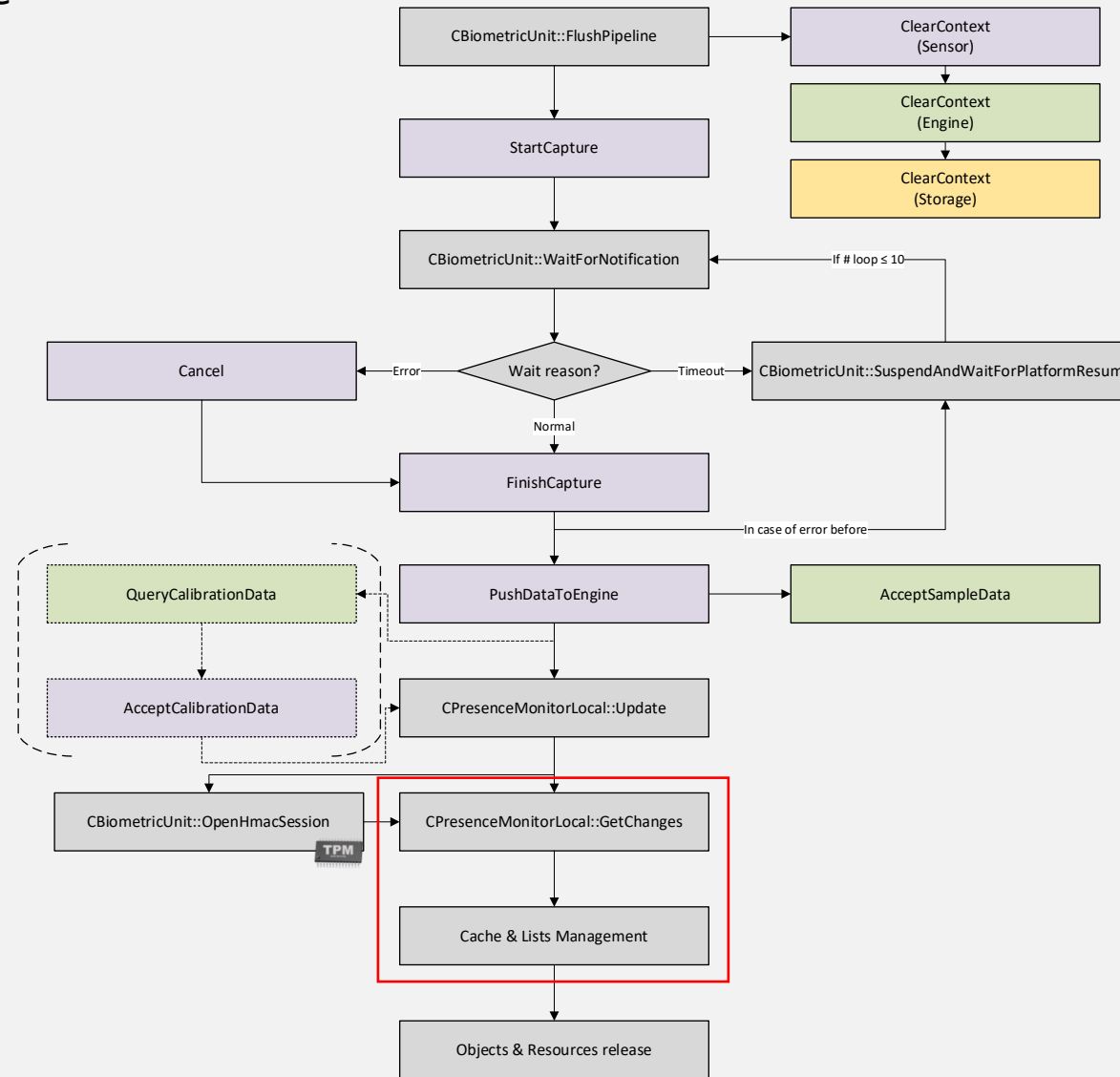
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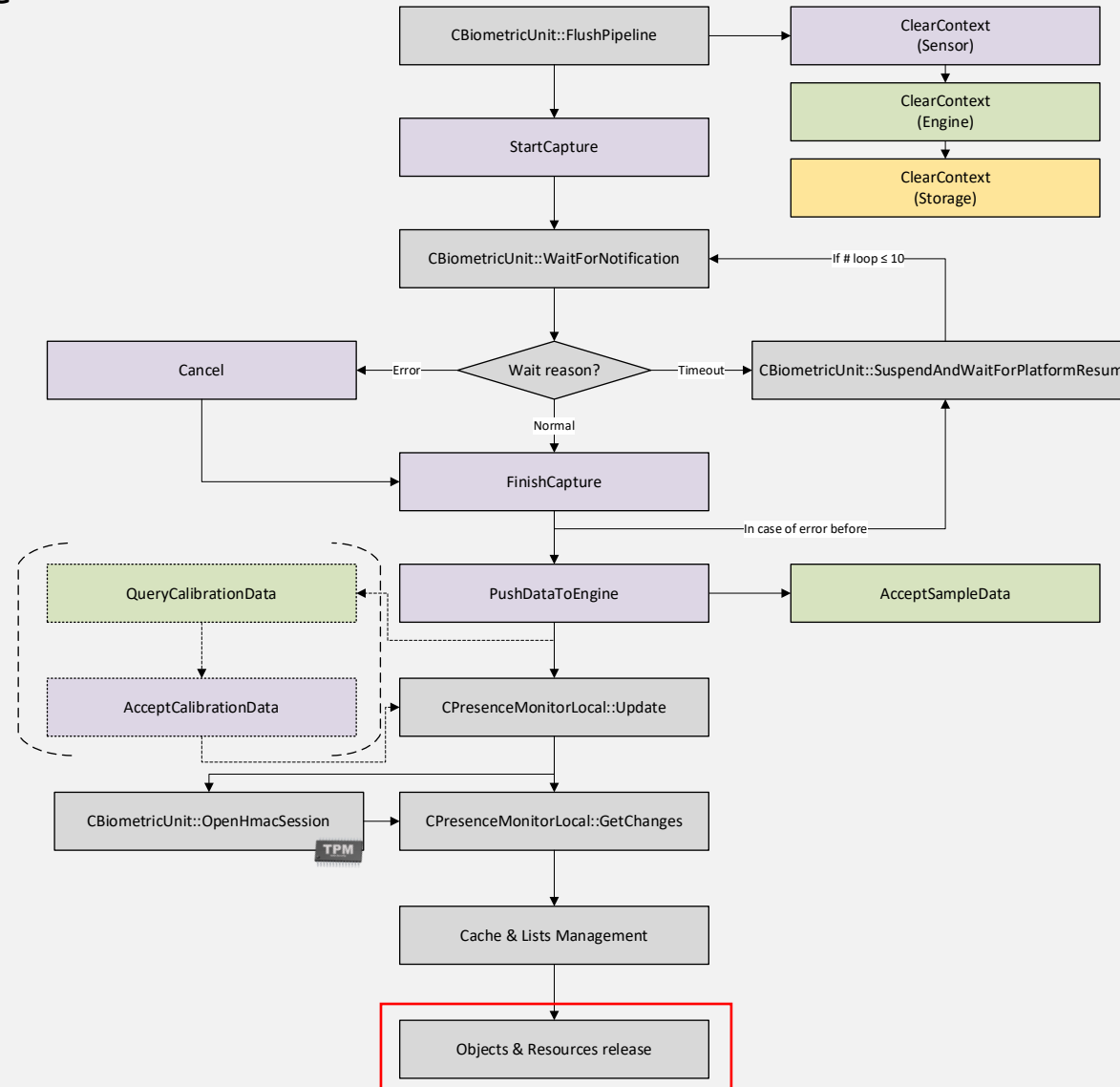
- Adapter Capture & Update



- Adapter Capture & Update

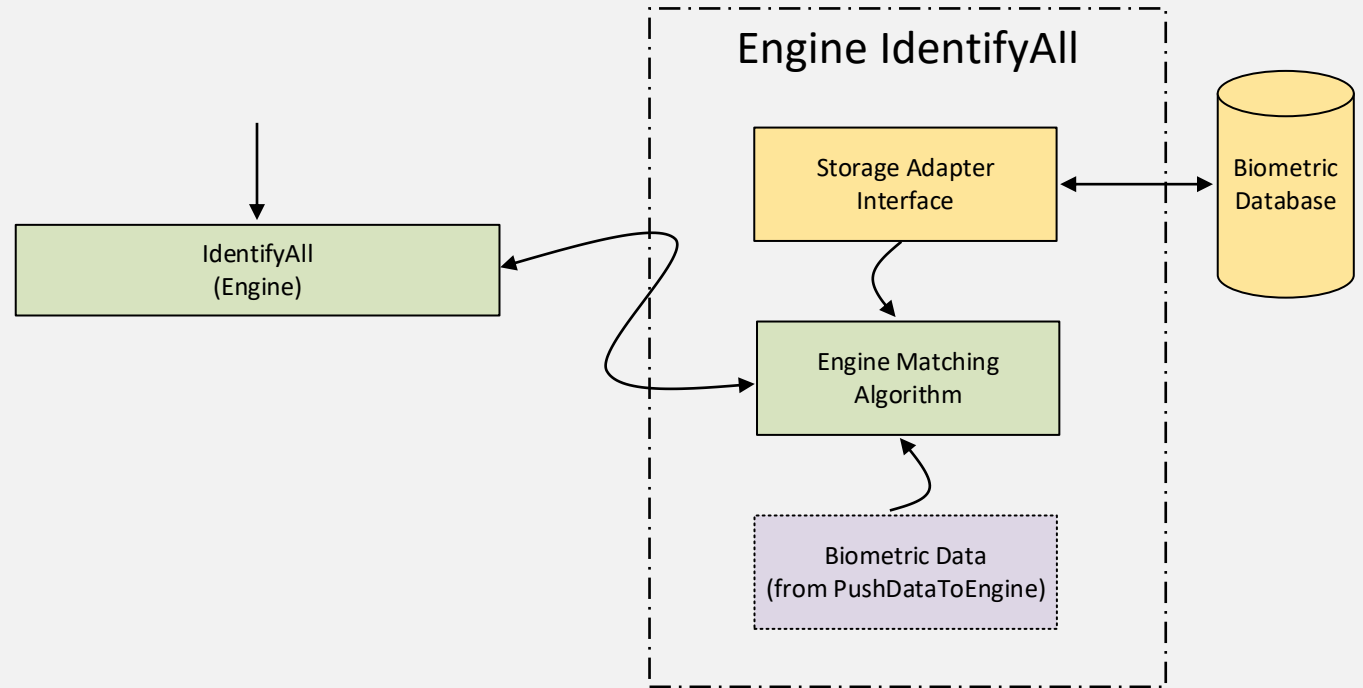


- Adapter Capture & Update

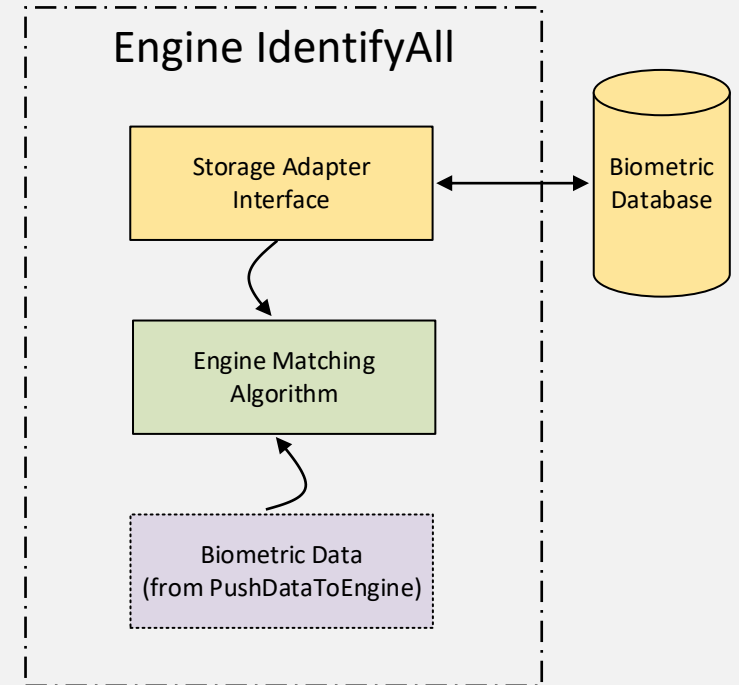
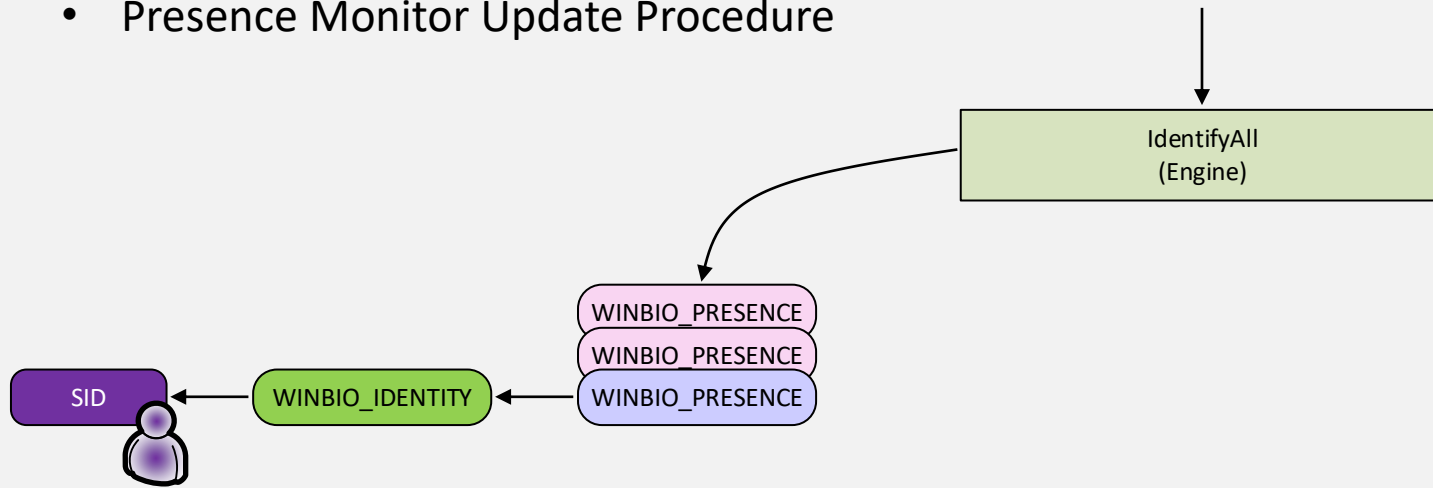


- Presence Monitor Update Procedure

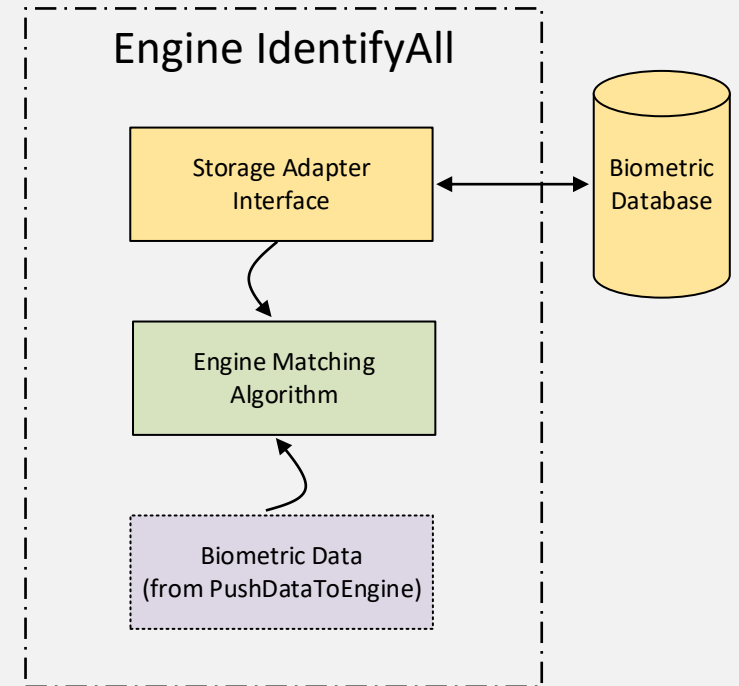
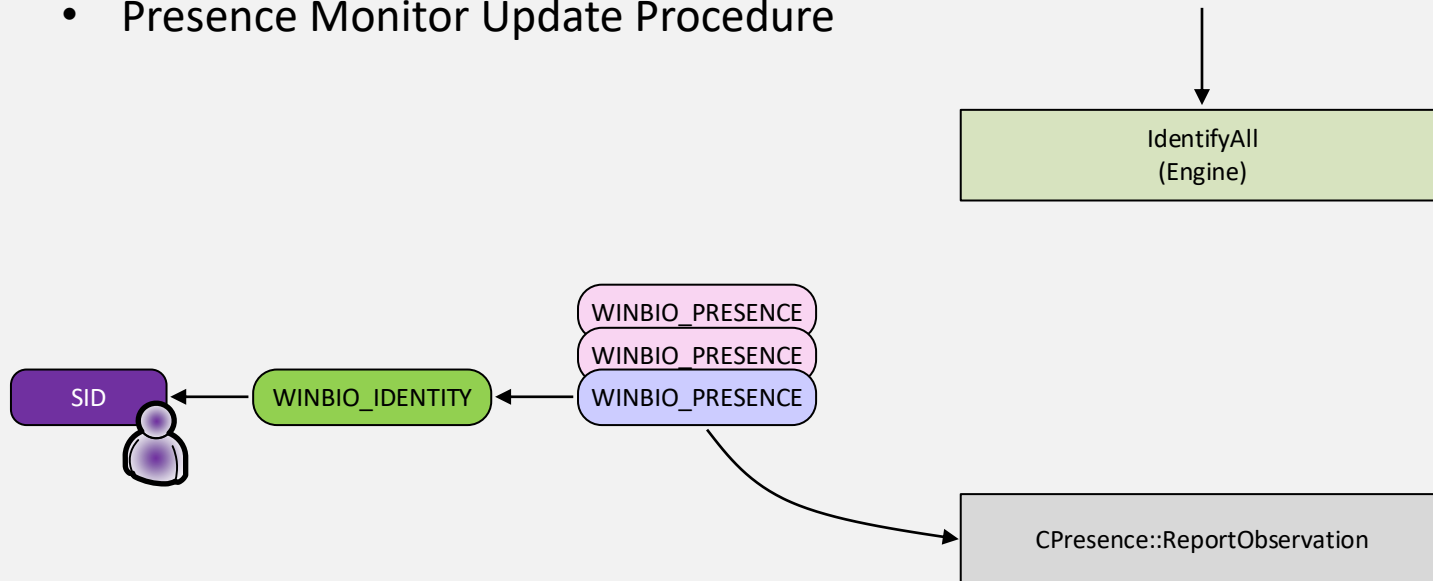
- Presence Monitor Update Procedure



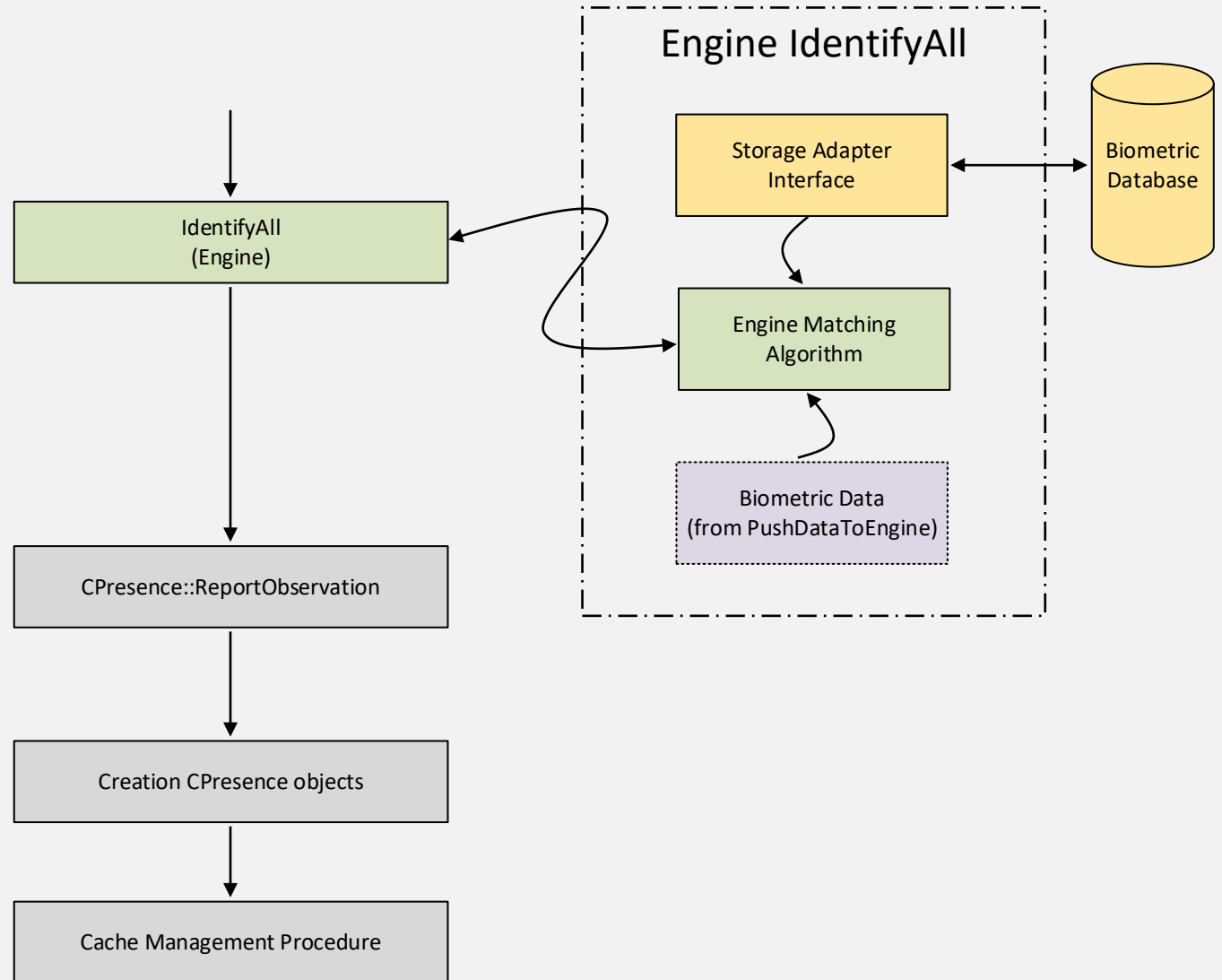
- Presence Monitor Update Procedure



- Presence Monitor Update Procedure



- Presence Monitor Update Procedure

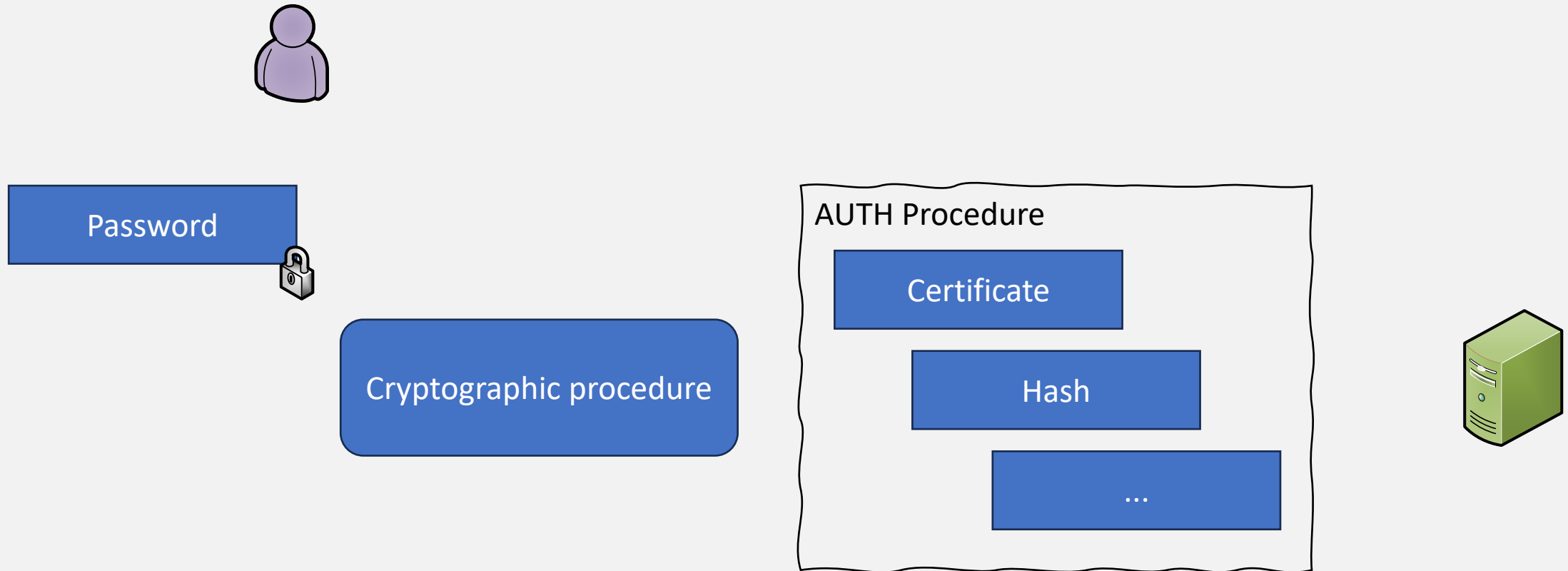




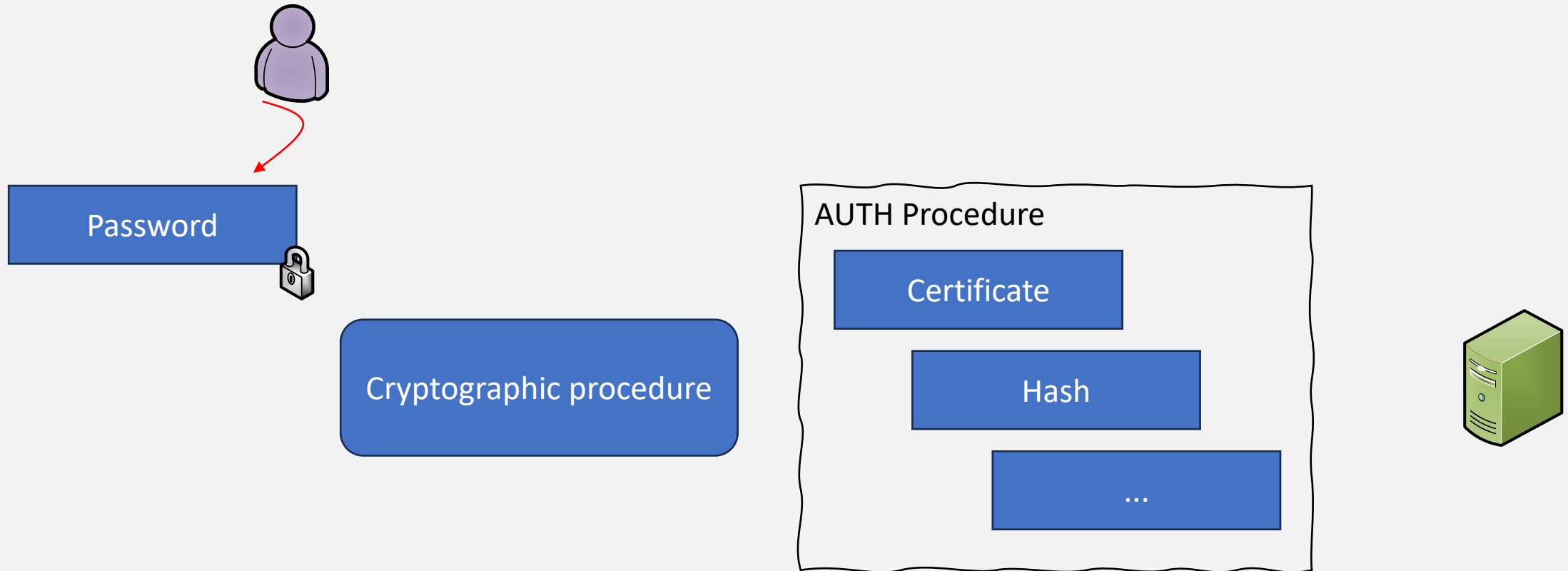
Authentication procedure

Once the identification happened

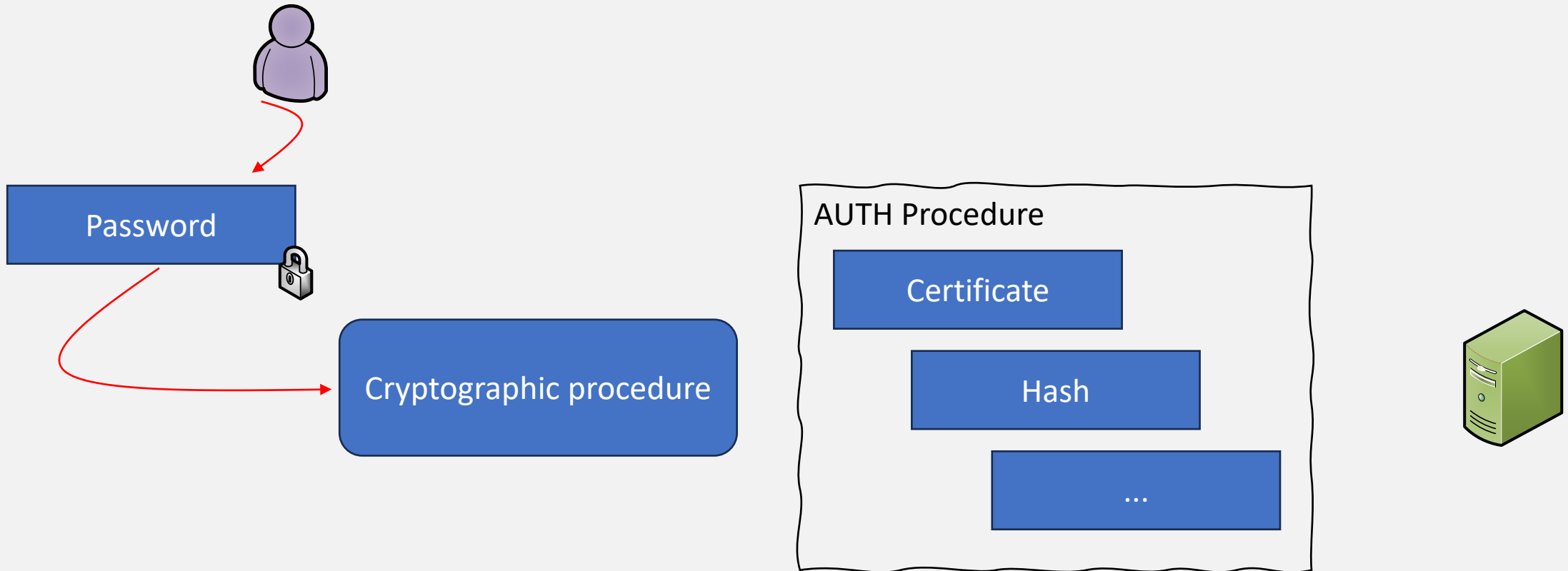
Traditional Auth management



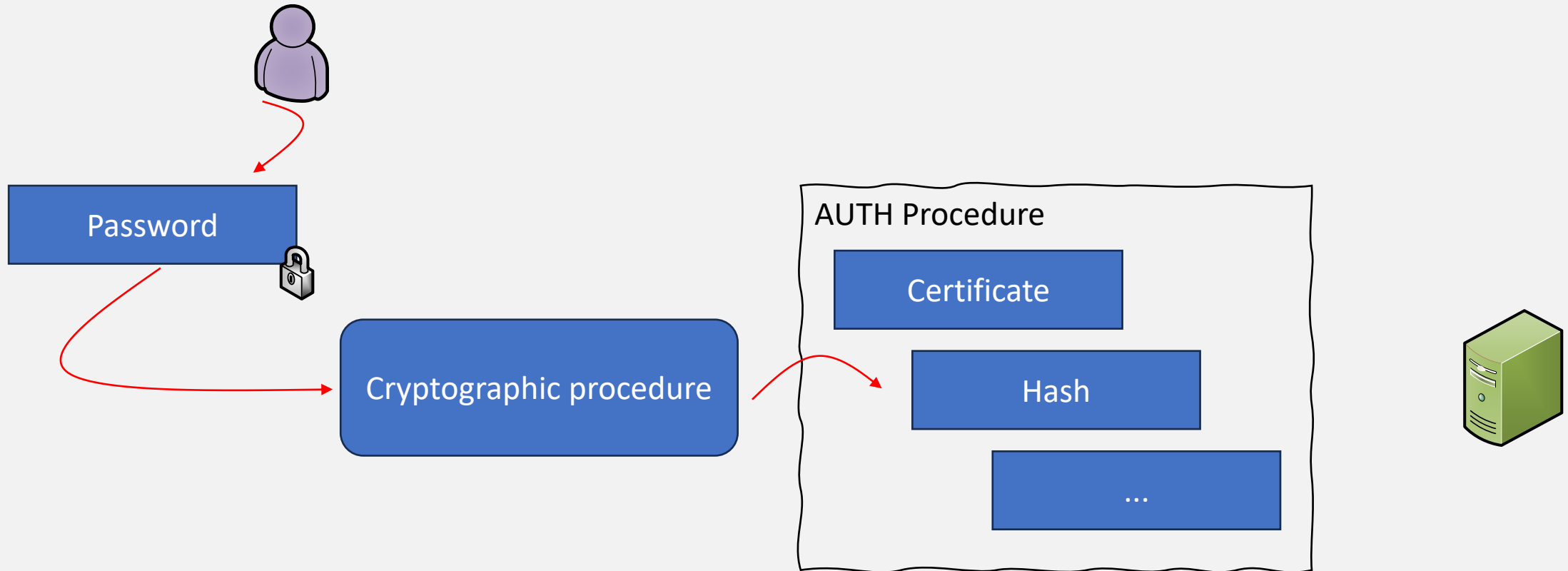
Traditional Auth management



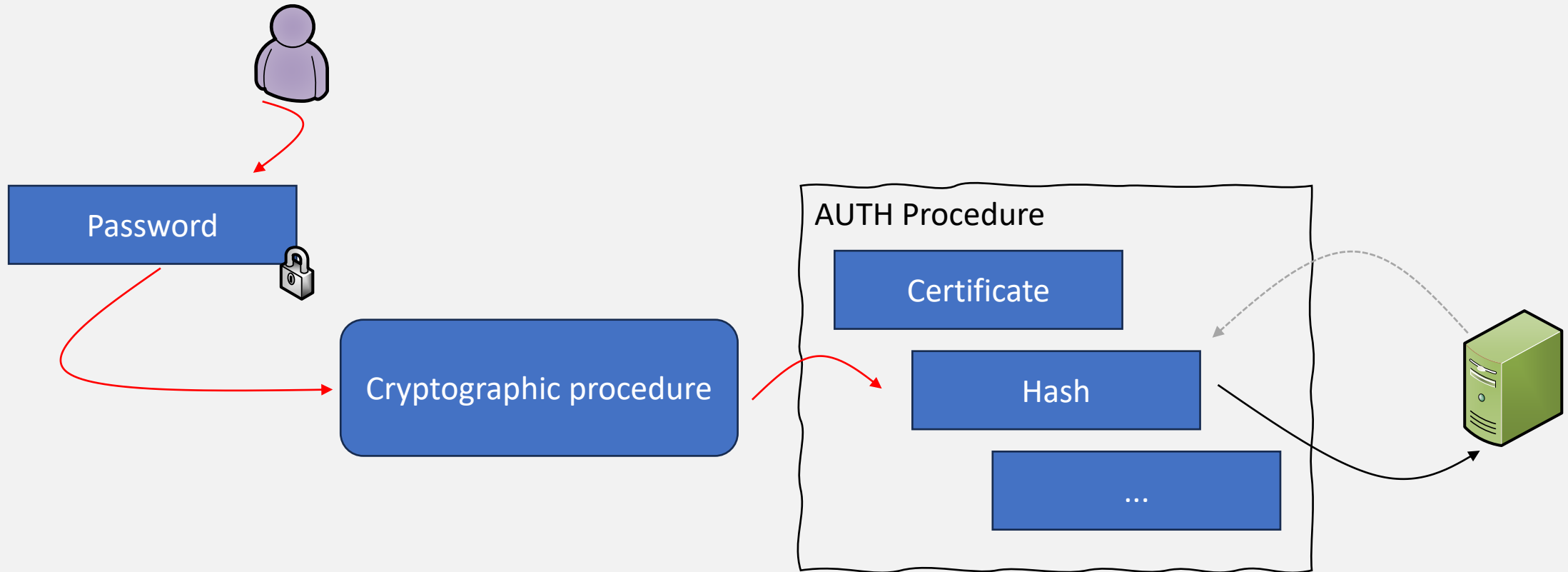
Traditional Auth management



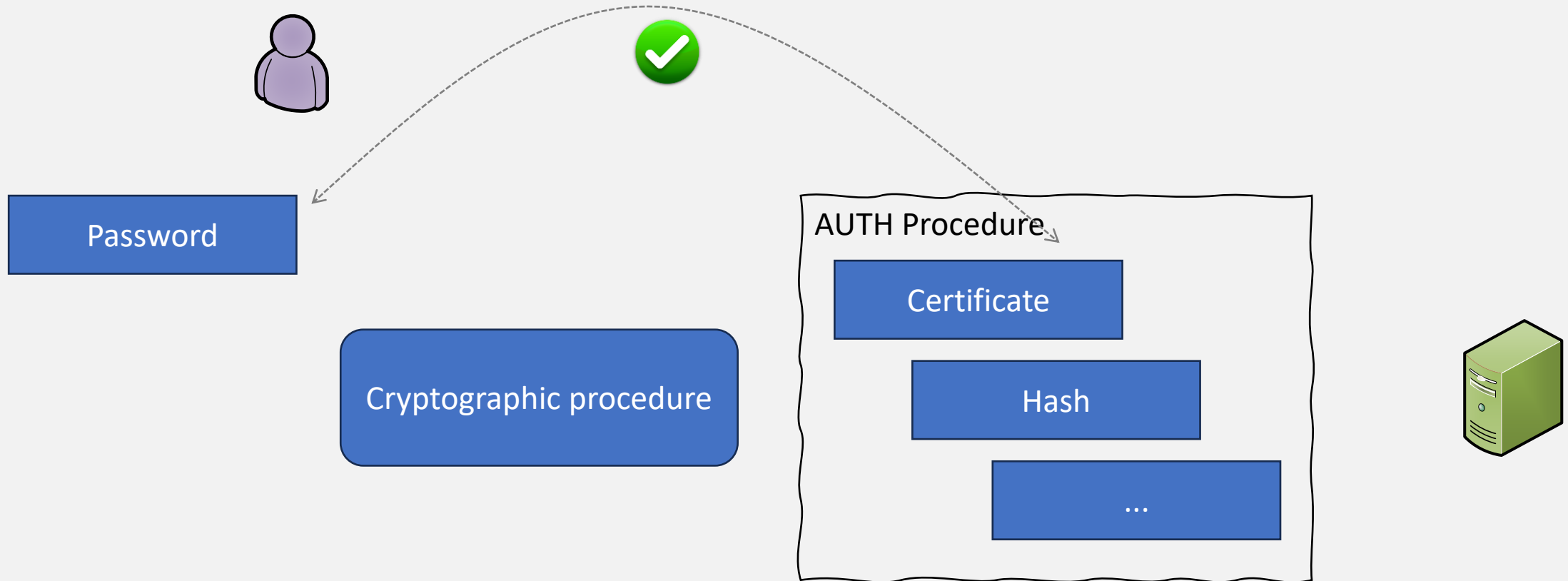
Traditional Auth management



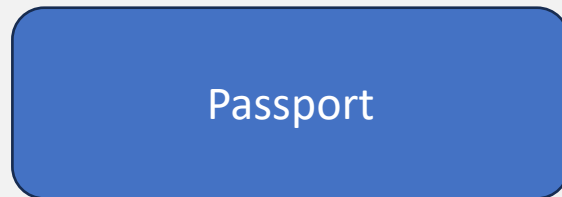
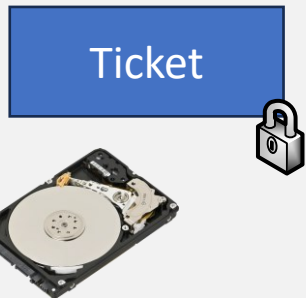
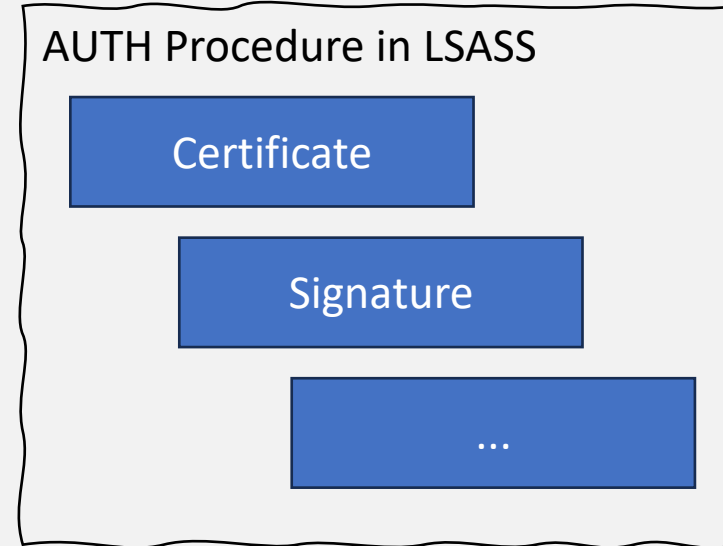
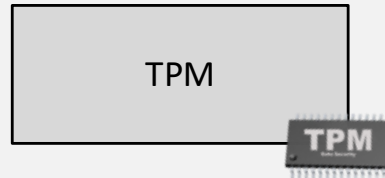
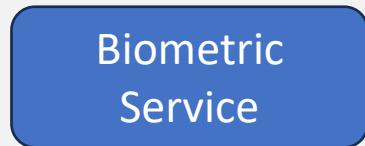
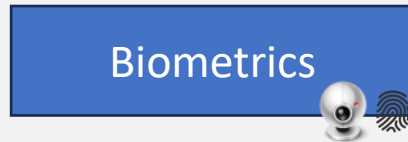
Traditional Auth management



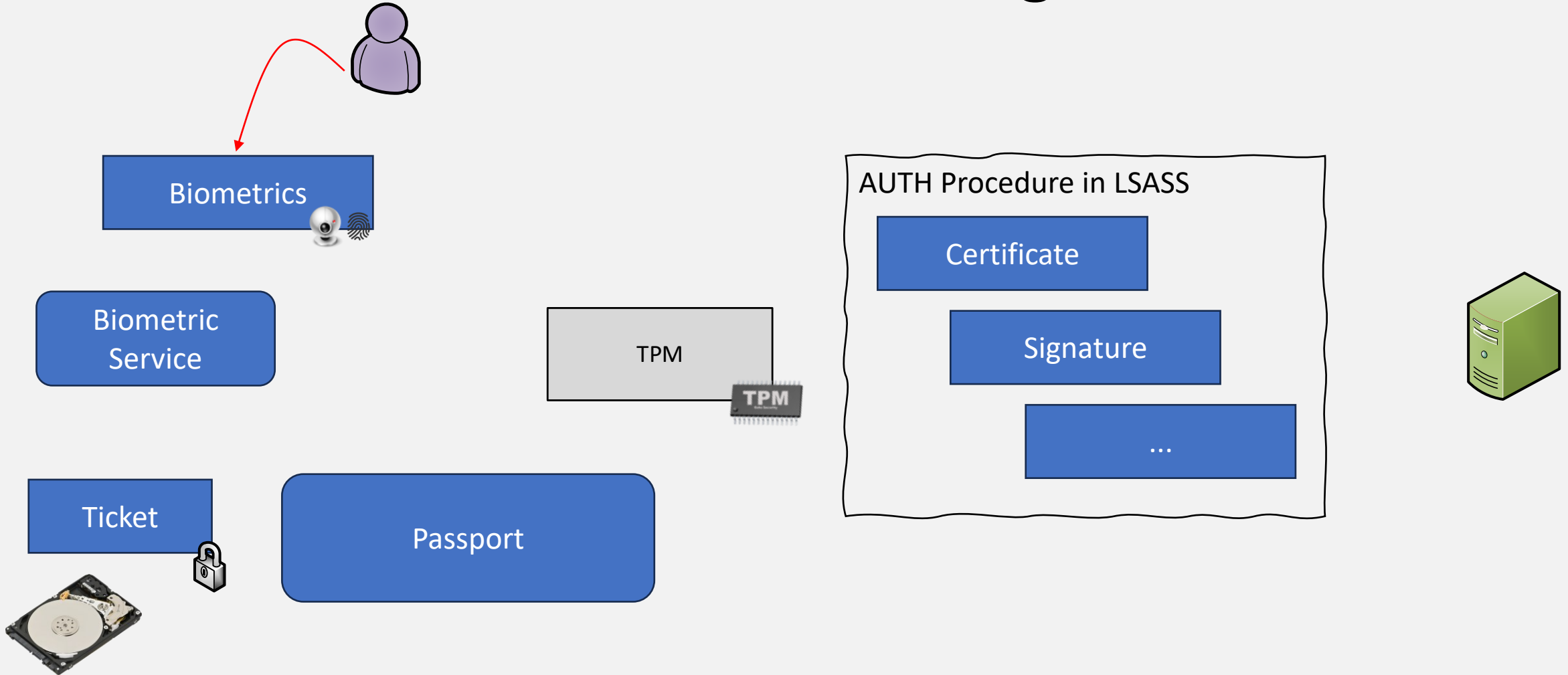
Traditional Auth management



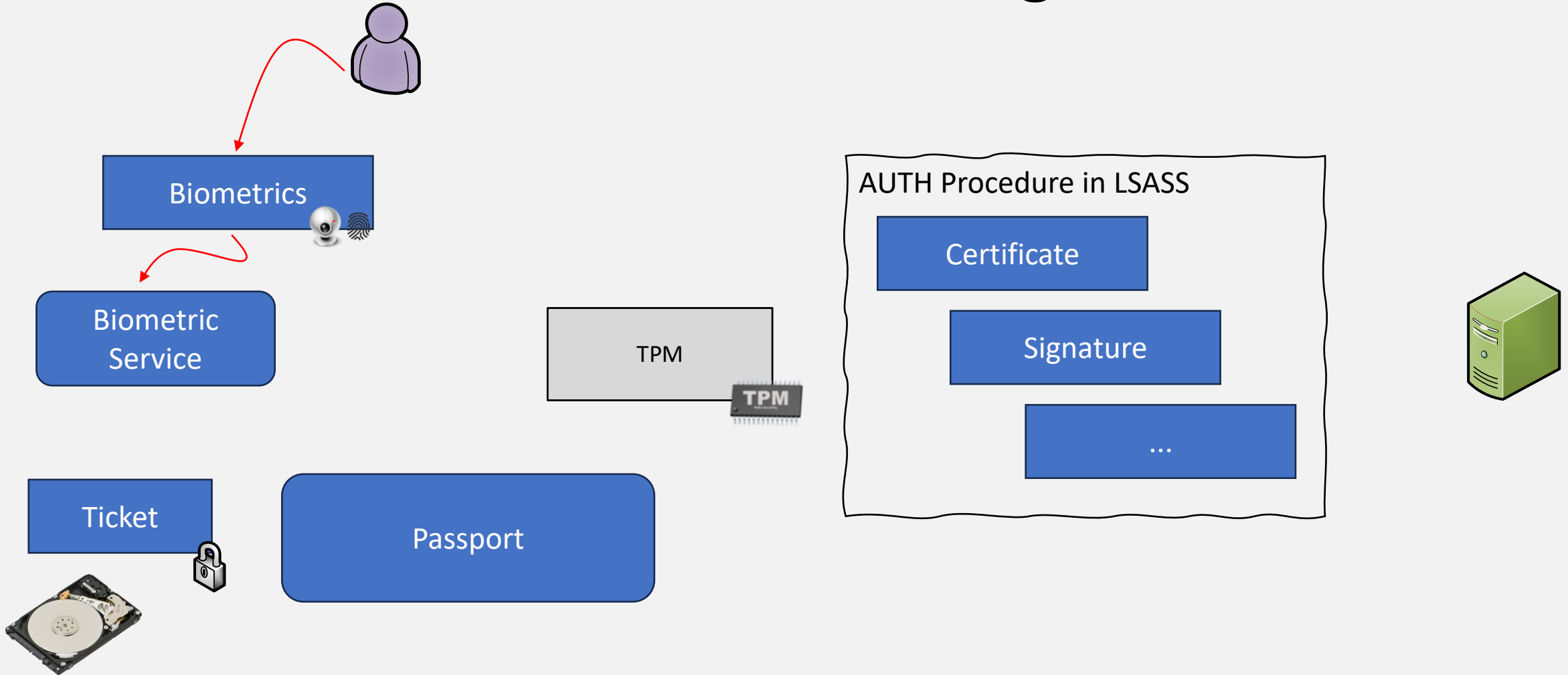
Windows Biometric Auth management



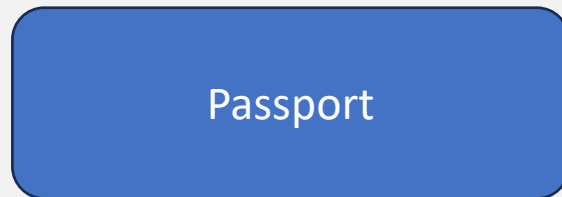
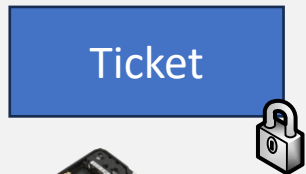
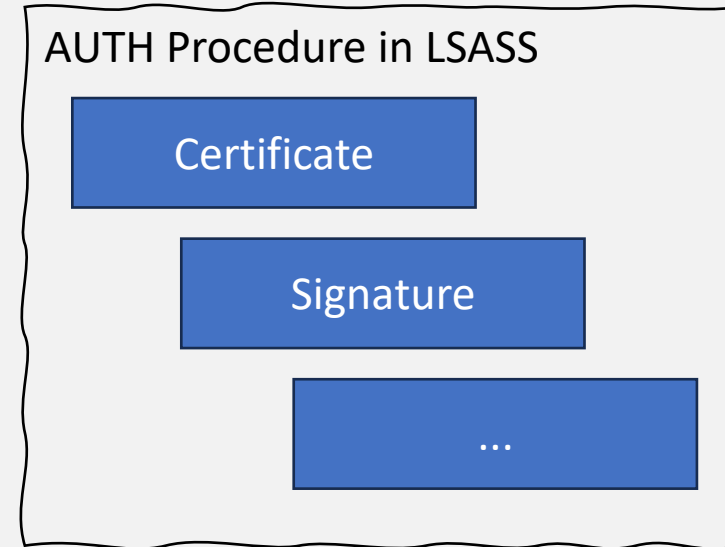
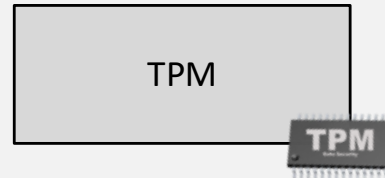
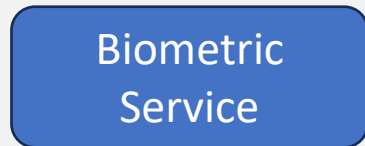
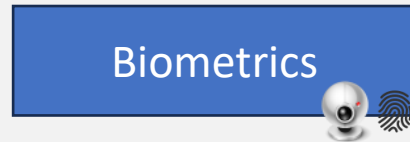
Windows Biometric Auth management



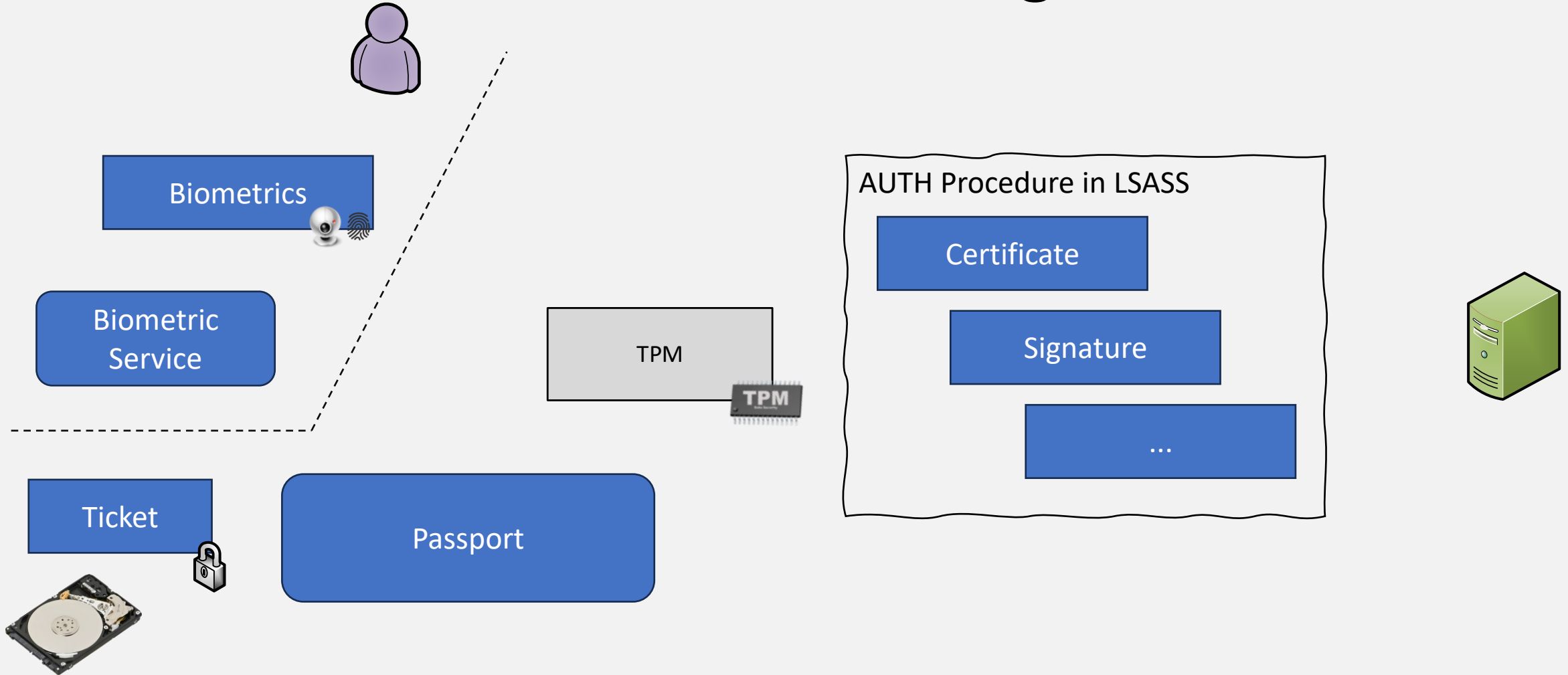
Windows Biometric Auth management



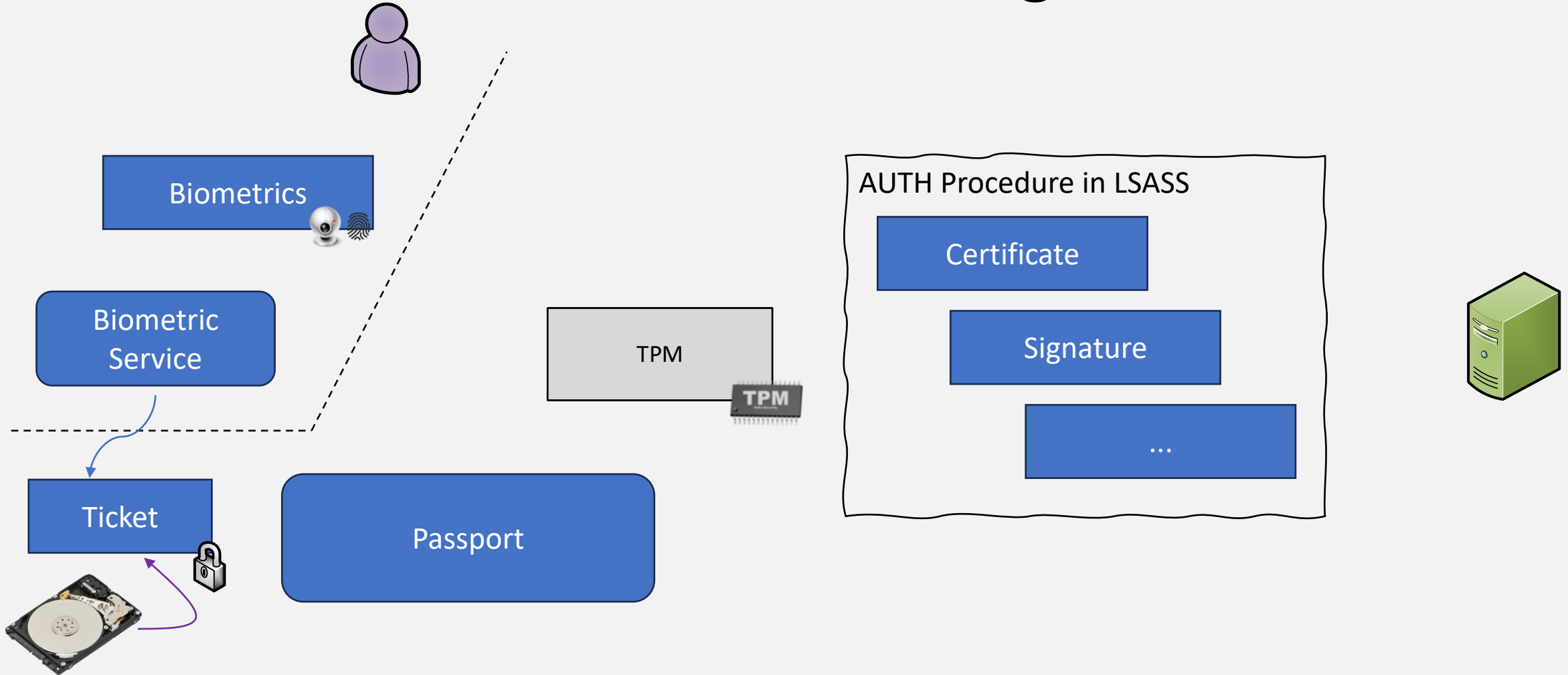
Windows Biometric Auth management



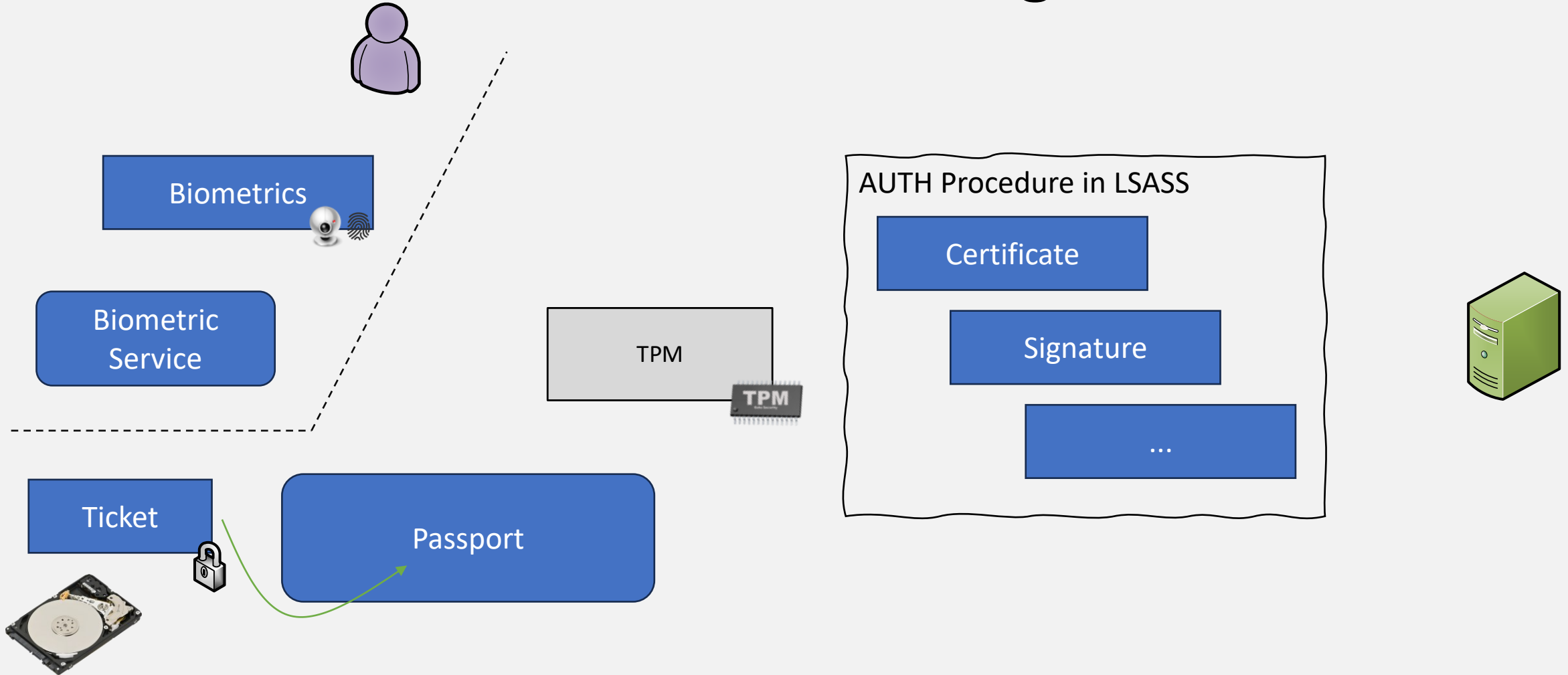
Windows Biometric Auth management



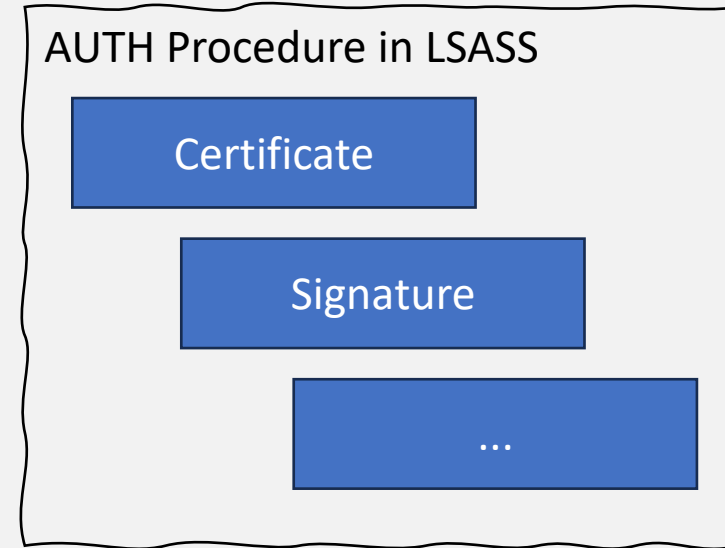
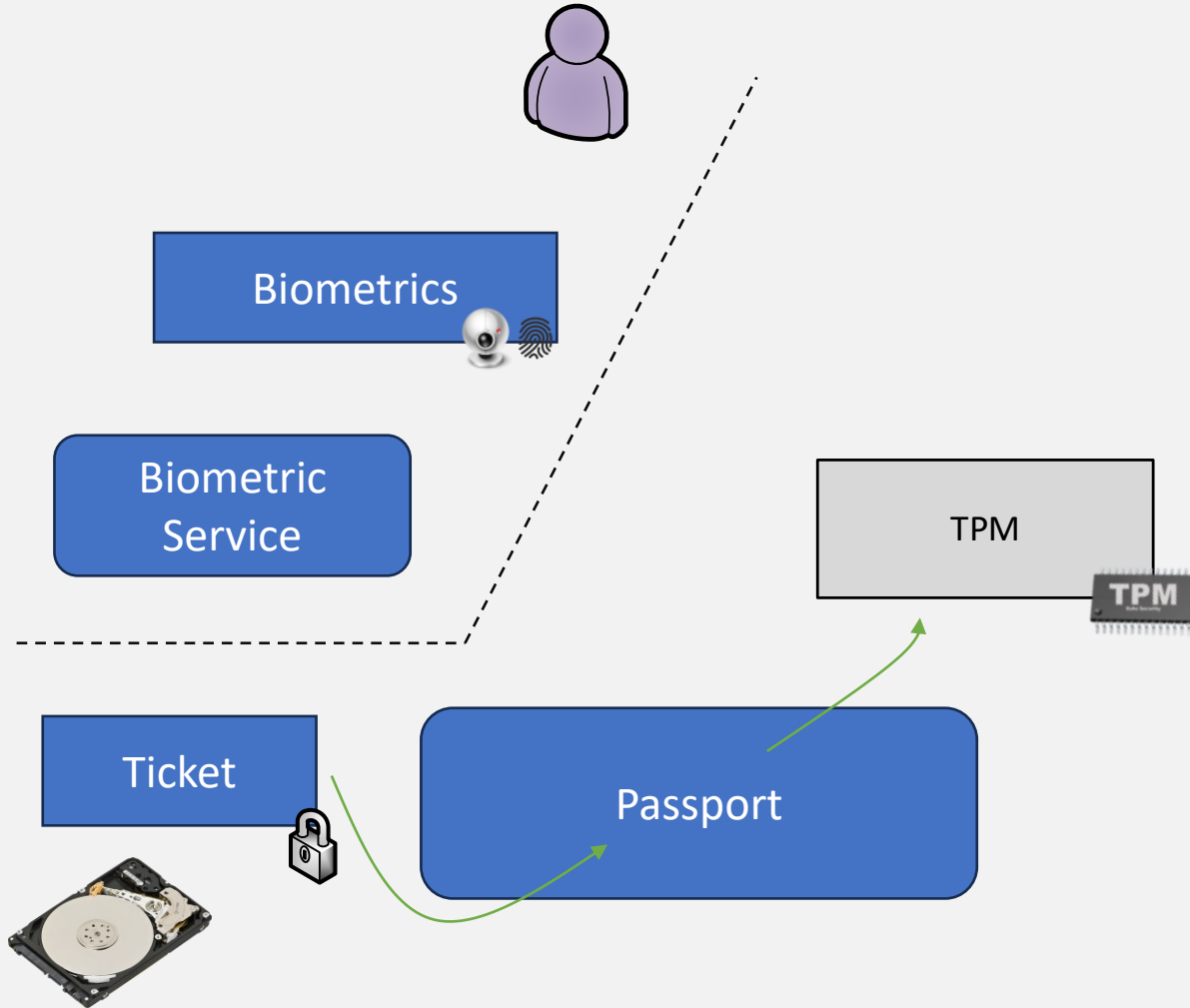
Windows Biometric Auth management



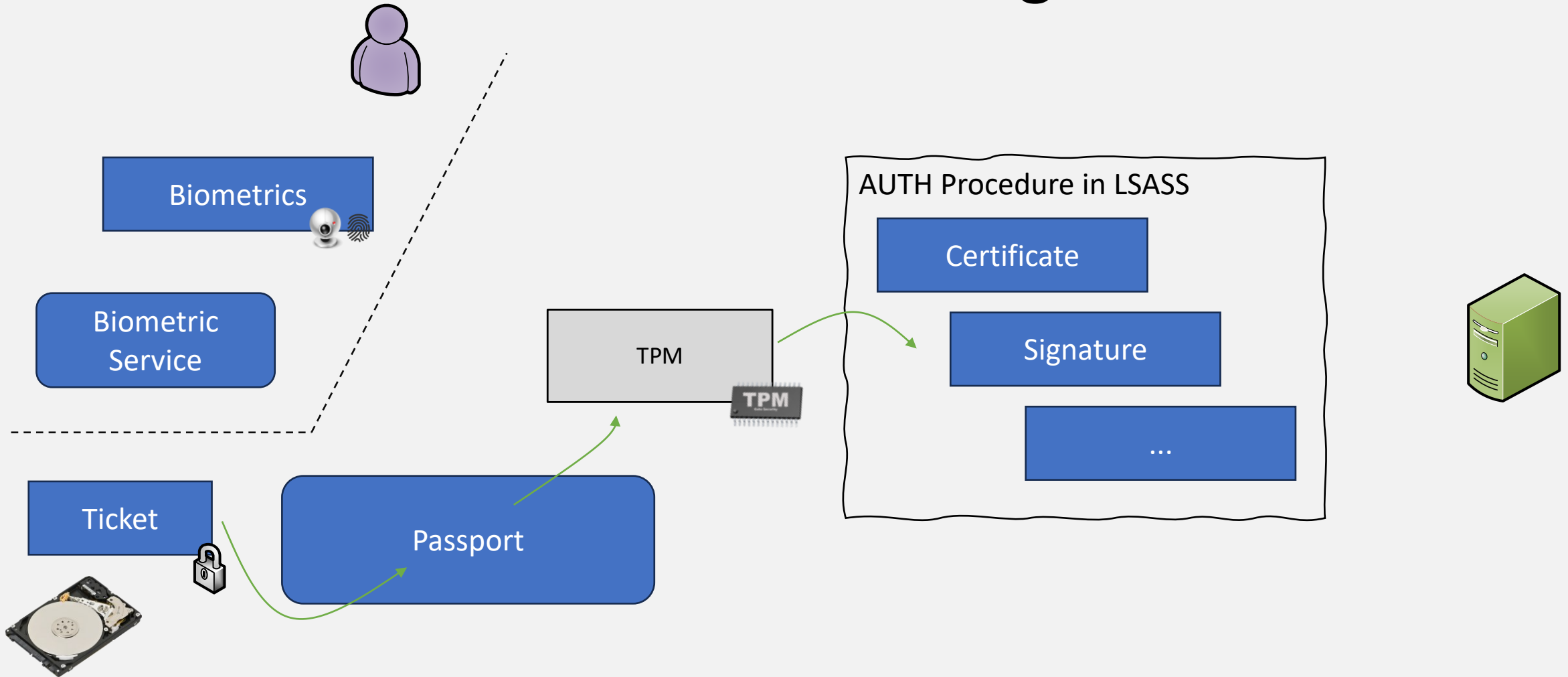
Windows Biometric Auth management



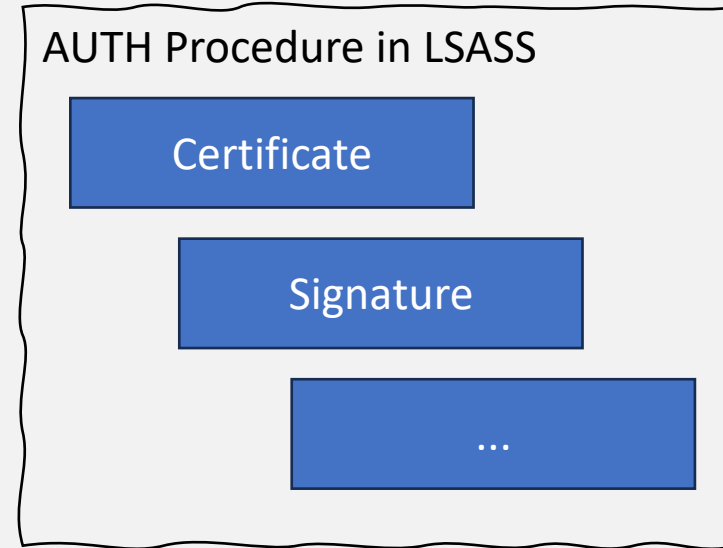
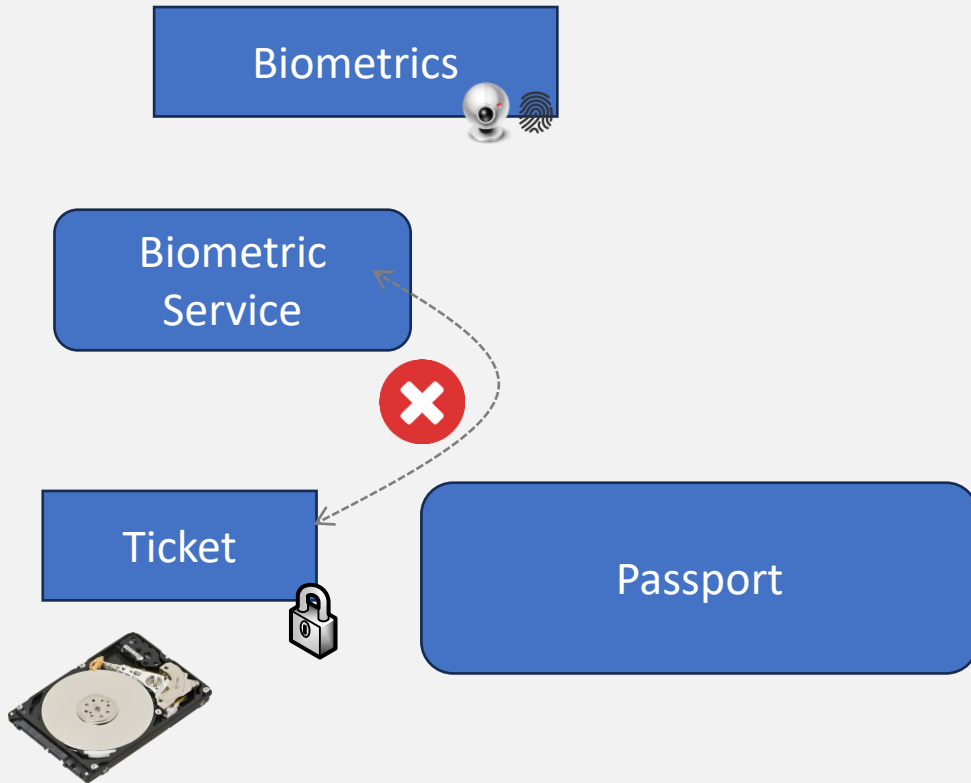
Windows Biometric Auth management



Windows Biometric Auth management



Windows Biometric Auth management





Database Format

Let's have a look inside

Database

- Let's start with Microsoft's [FAQ](#).
- And some [documentation](#) ... 😊

Database

- Let's start with Microsoft's [FAQ](#).
- And some [documentation](#) ... 😊

Who has access on Windows Hello biometrics data?

Since Windows Hello biometrics data is stored in encrypted format, no user, or any process other than Windows Hello has access to it.

Database

- Let's start with
- And some [doc](#)

Biometric data storage

The biometric data used to support Windows Hello is stored on the local device only. It doesn't roam and is never sent to external devices or servers. This separation helps to stop potential attackers by providing no single collection point that an attacker could potentially compromise to steal biometric data. Even if an attacker could obtain the biometric data from a device, it couldn't be converted back into a raw biometric sample recognizable by the biometric sensor.

Each sensor has its own biometric database file where template data is stored (path `C:\WINDOWS\System32\WinBioDatabase`). Each database file has a unique, randomly generated key that is encrypted to the system. The template data for the sensor is encrypted with the per-database key using AES with CBC chaining mode. The hash is SHA256.

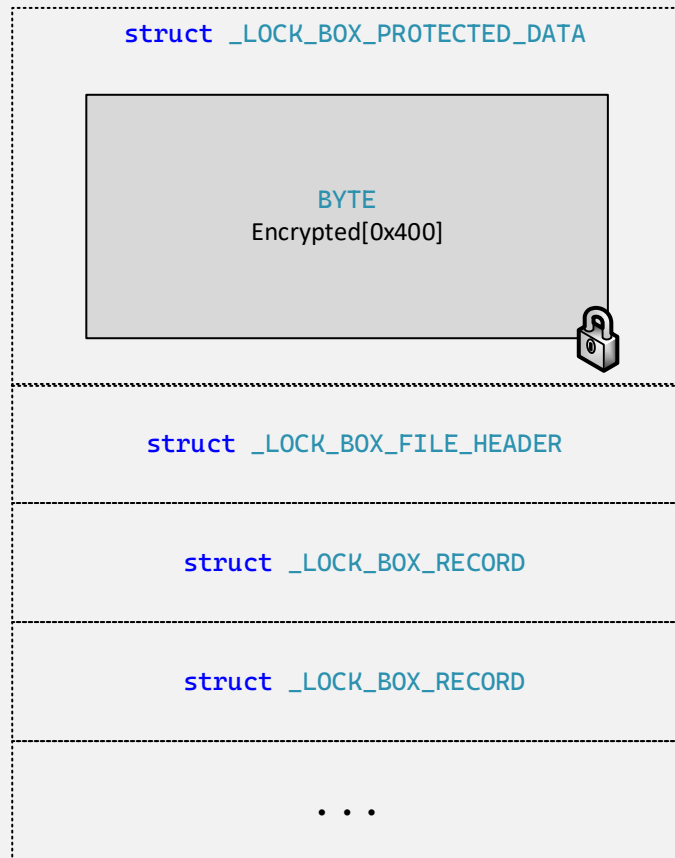
ⓘ Note

Some fingerprint sensors have the capability to complete matching on the fingerprint sensor module instead of in the OS. These sensors store biometric data on the fingerprint module instead of in the database file. For more information, see [Windows Hello Enhanced Security Sign-in \(ESS\)](#).

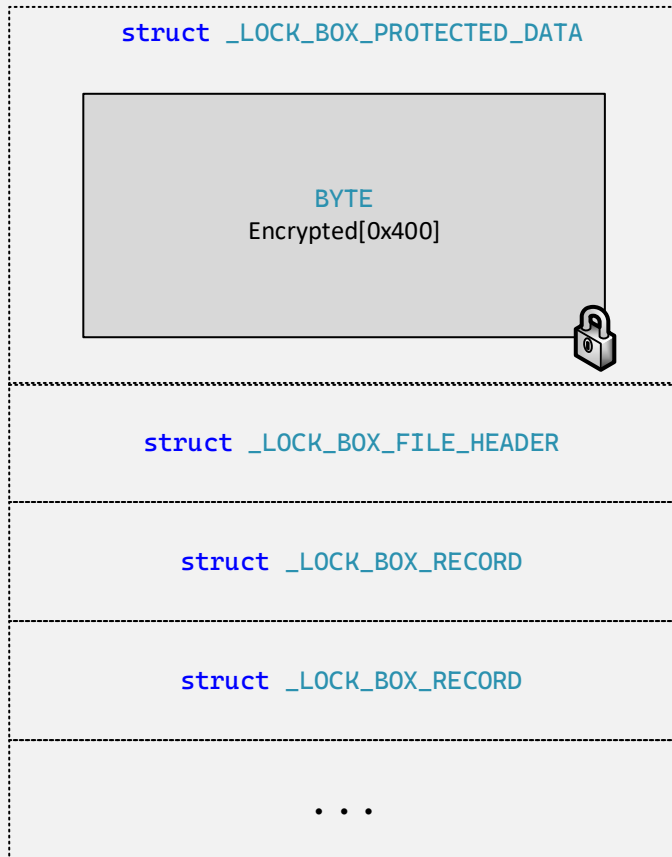
What do we know?

- Biometric data is the holy grail of mobile device security.
 - Therefore, we need strong encryption!
- We need something that identifies a user.
 - In Windows this is typically a security identifier (SID).
 - User authentication is the holy grail of domain security.
- The biometric unit uses the templates saved in the database.
 - We need to decrypt the template before we can compare it.
- Where is the key coming from?
 - We do not provide a password or entropy of any kind!

Database Format – Overview

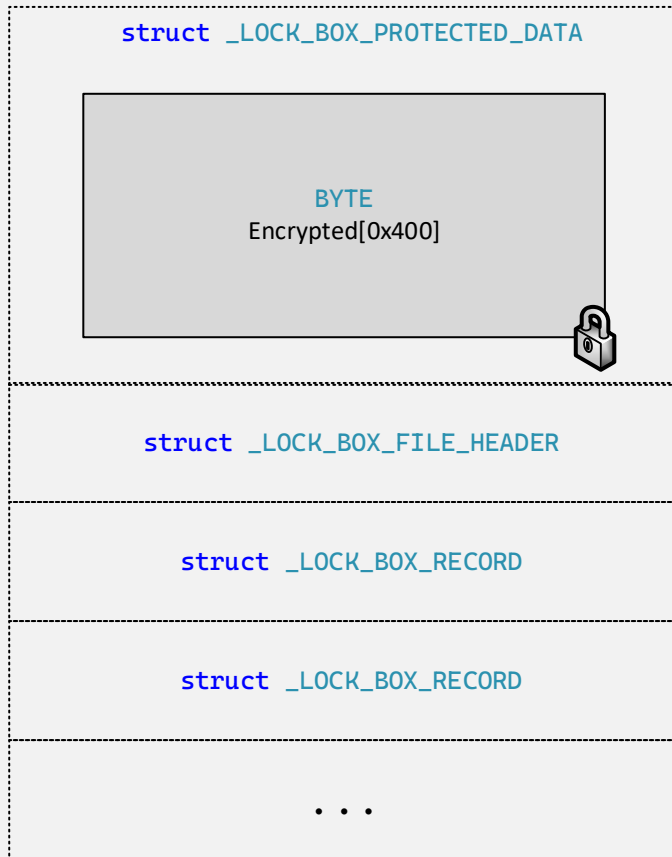


Database Format – Overview



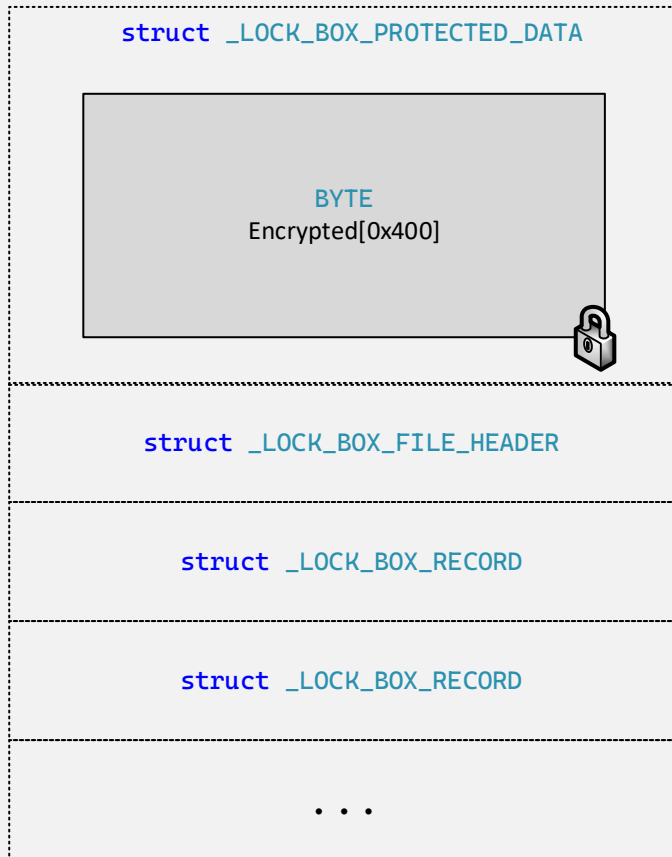
- The encrypted header
 - Ensures the integrity of the database using a SHA256 hash
 - Contains the AES key for the encrypted templates

Database Format – Overview



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 - Ensures the integrity of the database using a SHA256 hash
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- The unencrypted header holds information regarding
 - Version information
 - Number of used records and available records

Database Format – Overview

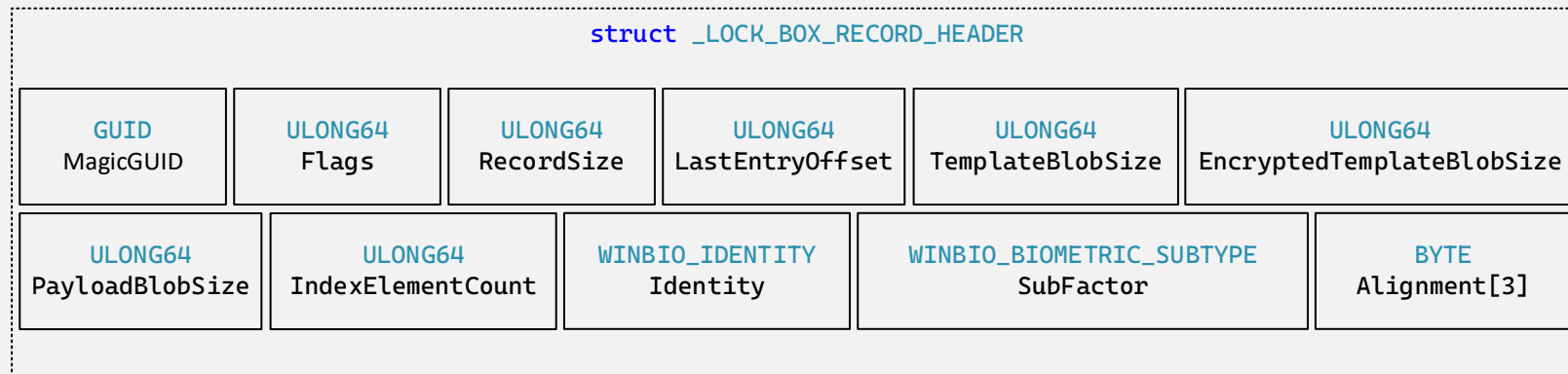


- The encrypted header
 - Ensures the integrity of the database using a SHA256 hash
 - Contains the AES key for the encrypted templates
- The unencrypted header holds information regarding
 - Version information
 - Number of used records and available records
- One record per enrolled user
 - SID
 - Encrypted template

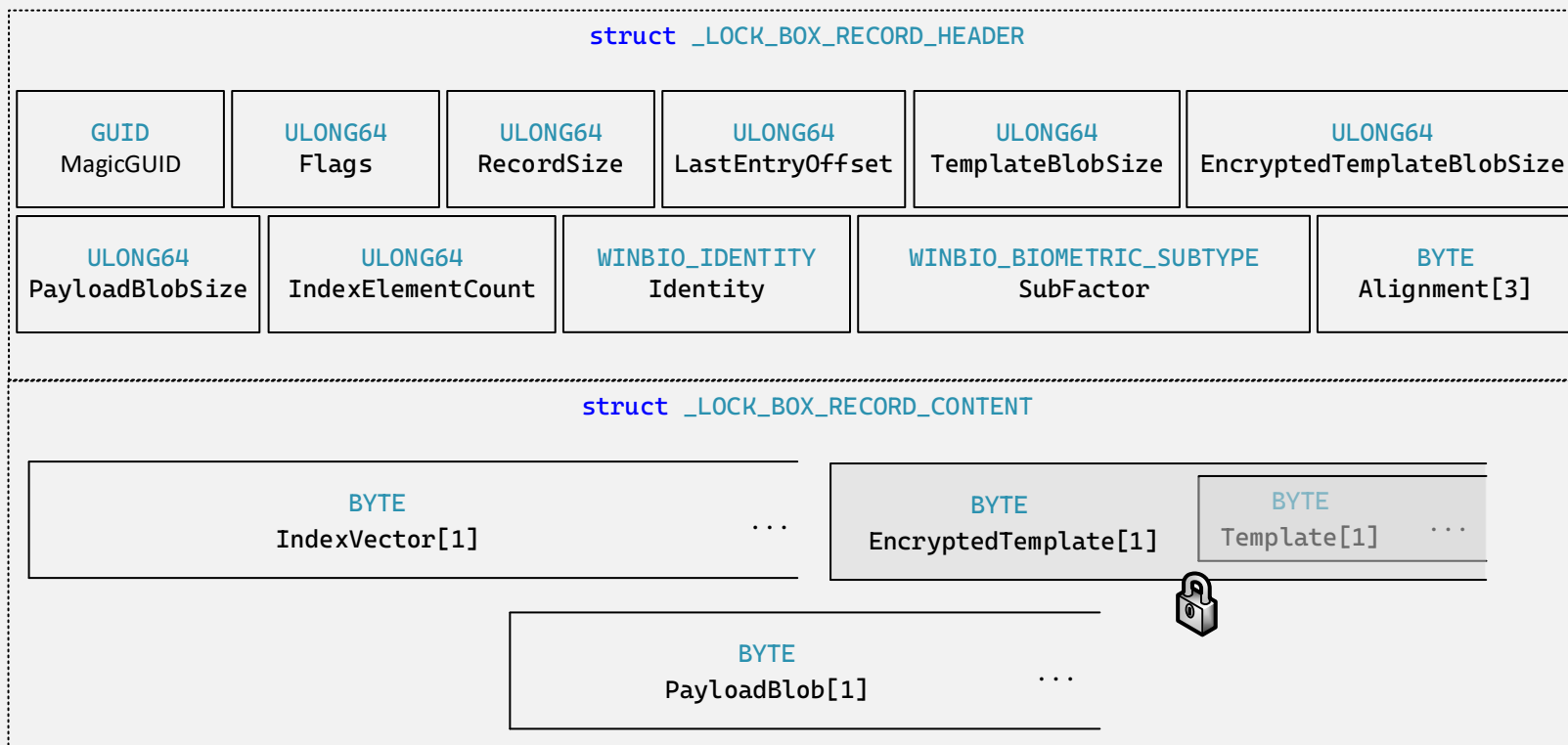
Database Format

```
struct _LOCK_BOX_RECORD_HEADER
```

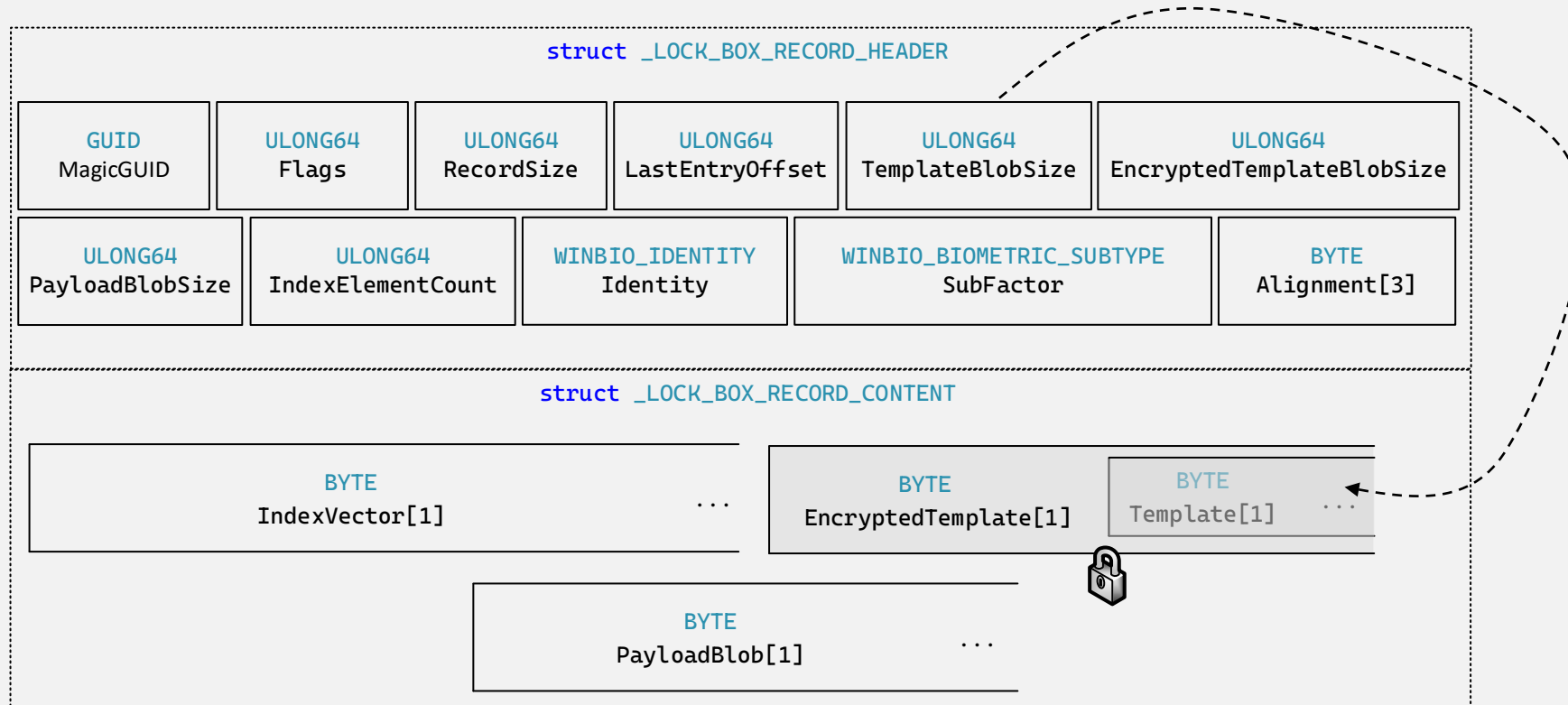
Database Format



Database Format



Database Format

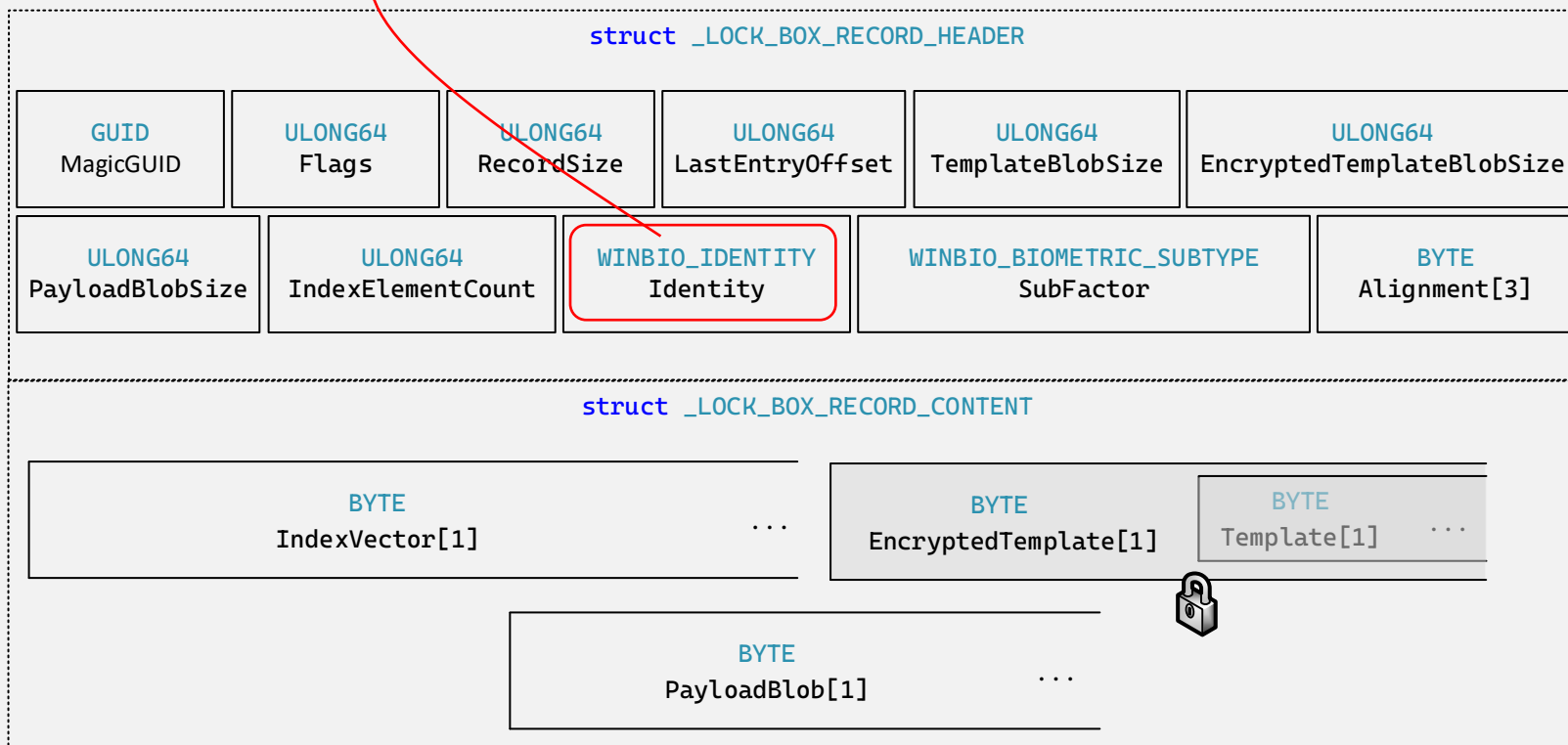


Database Format

For instance:

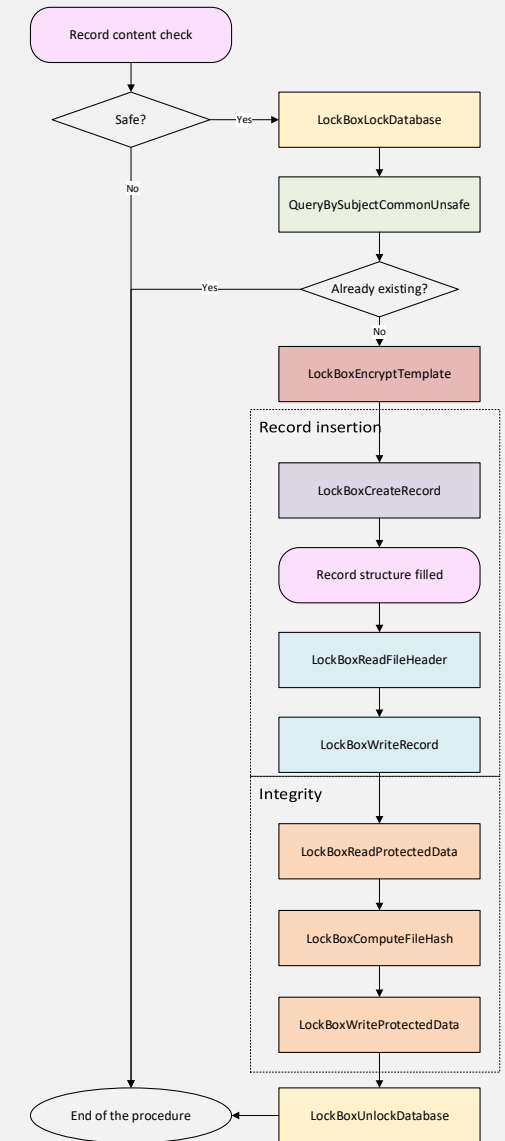
“S-1-5-21-1004336348-1177238915-682003330-512”

```
typedef struct _WINBIO_IDENTITY {
    WINBIO_IDENTITY_TYPE Type;
    union {
        ULONG Null;
        ULONG Wildcard;
        GUID TemplateGuid;
        struct {
            ULONG Size;
            UCHAR Data[SECURITY_MAX_SID_SIZE];
        } AccountSid;
    } Value;
} WINBIO_IDENTITY;
```



Database Security

- There is an encrypted header that ensures
 - The integrity of the database and confidentiality the of biometric data
- How the header's integrity and confidentiality achieved?
 - We need functionality that does not require an additional key!
 - The header is protected with [CryptProtectData](#)/[CryptUnprotectData](#) functions.
 - Cipher keys are managed locally by NT-AUTHORITY\SYSTEM.
 - Local administrator can get access 😊.



Database (In)security

- Local administrators break the security of the database:
 - Decrypt and read the encrypted templates of enrolled users.
 - Change the database and circumvent the integrity controls of the database.
- This means:
 - Exchange SIDs of enrolled users.
 - Decrypt templates.
 - Bring their own biometrics to the system.
 - Authenticate as every enrolled user.

2025



A scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise. A path leads through a row of tall, slender cypress trees towards a bright, hazy sky. The water in the foreground reflects the warm colors of the sky. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Windows Hello for Business is here to stay!
 - Added as security feature to new products like Recall.
- Local administrator to domain user is still a threat.
 - Worst case local admin to domain admin.
- Securing heterogenous clients is a challenge Microsoft faces.
 - ESS mode needs hardware support – new Thinkpads with AMD do not have it.
 - ESS mode needs VBS – sadly not used enough!
 - **If you can use it!**

Make the world a safer place

- In any case:
 - Only one user per client!
- Also:
 - Consider only allowing PIN authentication.
 - Monitoring: Only WBS should open or modify the database.

NO SHARING





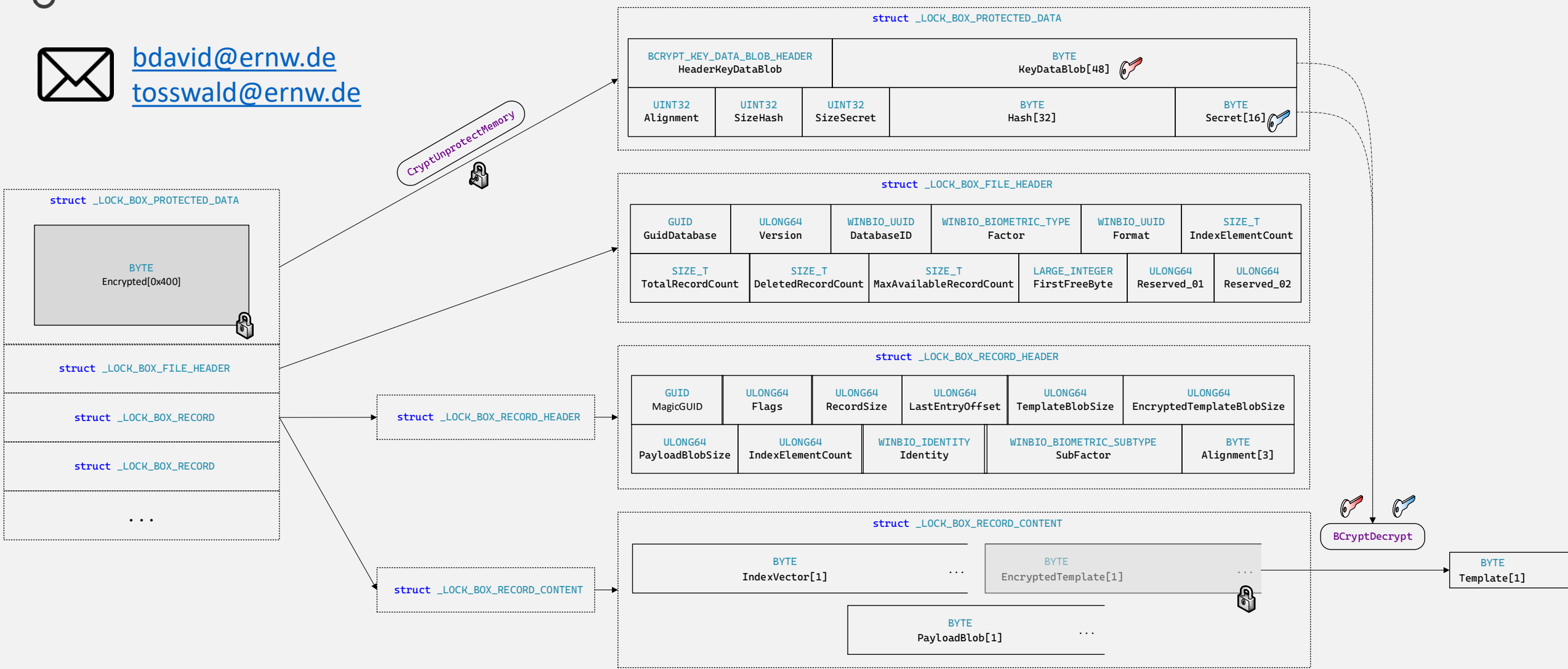
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www.insinuator.net



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References

- Slide 6: <https://thecyberconsultancy.com/hello-auth.html>
- Slide 7: <https://support.microsoft.com/de-de/windows/mit-recall-ihre-schritte-zur%C3%BCckverfolgen-aa03f8a0-a78b-4b3e-b0a1-2eb8ac48701c>
- Slide 7: <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/security/identity-protection/passkeys/>
- Slide 37: [Looking after your teeth – Guernsey Dental Association](#)
- Transition slides: <https://www.socwall.com/>