

Sonnet Thunderbolt 3-to-PCIe Expansion Systems

Written by Marco Attard
16 January 2017

Sonnet Technologies announces a pair of Thunderbolt 3-to-PCIe card expansion systems for the 2016 MacBook Pro-- the Echo Express SEL Thunderbolt 3 Edition and the Echo Express SE I Thunderbolt 3 Edition.



The SEL and SE I are compact single-slot expansion systems taking advantage of the 2750MB/s PCIe bandwidth offered by Thunderbolt 3. The SEL is the smallest of the two, and houses one low-profile single-width PCIe 3.0 card, such as Thunderbolt-compatible 16 and 8Gb fibre channel, 40 and 10Gbps ethernet, 6Gbps or 12Gbps SAS and host bus adapters, RAID controller cards and even low-profile pro video capture cards like the BlueFish 444 Epoch 4K Neutron.

The bigger SE I houses a one-half length full-height single-width PCIe 3.0 card, with additional mounting space for a daughter card. It delivers enough bandwidth for most Thunderbolt-compatible PCIe cards, including pro video capture, digital audio interface, 6Gbps or 12Gbps SAS or SATA host bus adapters, 16 or 8Gb fibre channel, 10Gbps ethernet and RAID controller PCIe cards.

Both systems feature dual 40Gbps Thunderbolt 3 ports with support for the daisy chaining of up to 5 Thunderbolt peripheral devices. The addition of an Apple Thunderbolt 3 (USB-C) to Thunderbolt 2 adapter provides backward compatibility with 20Gbps Thunderbolt 2- and 10Gbps Thunderbolt-equipped devices, while the appropriate cable provides support for a variety of DisplayPort-enabled displays and any number of USB devices.

The SEL and SE I are available now. Sonnet offers Thunderbolt 3 upgrade cards for existing thunderbolt 2 Echo Express SEL and SE I expansion systems, enabling such models with the capabilities of Thunderbolt 3 Editions.

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