Kensington’s SD5700T Thunderbolt 4 dock has all the ports you could need

Thunderbolt 4 is here, and so is the first fully powered Thunderbolt 4 docking station. Kensington’s SD5700T includes a whopping 11 ports, 90W of power delivery, and transfer speeds of up to 40Gbps. It provides either one 8K output at 30 Hz or two 4K outputs at 60 Hz.

Make no mistake: This is a fancy dock. It’s listed for $289.99 on Kensington’s site. But if you’re the kind of person who uses an elaborate desk setup with multiple monitors and peripherals, and you have the money to spend, this could be a good choice.

If you look at the most recent Thunderbolt 4 laptop releases, you’ll probably notice that some of them have… sparse port selections. That’s par for the course as laptops get thinner. The Dell XPS 13, for instance, only has two Thunderbolt 4 ports, one audio jack, and one microSD card reader. (And one of those ports will sometimes need to be occupied by the charger.) If you’ve decided to buy one of the XPS 13 models (which is a good choice — they’re great), and you want to use an external monitor, peripherals like a mouse and keyboard, or an Ethernet connection, you’re going to need a dock of some kind.

That doesn’t mean you need the SD5700T — Thunderbolt 4 ports will still support a cheaper Thunderbolt 3 dock if you already have one lying around. But I do think the SD5700T is worth shelling out for if you need more connectivity and value Thunderbolt 4 functionality. It essentially packs a full home-office setup into one very portable box.

The dock is also compatible with Thunderbolt 3 MacBooks that

are running macOS Big Sur. It worked just fine with my 2019 MacBook Pro.

Three USB-A ports, three USB-C ports, a power port, and Ethernet.

Besides the aforementioned Thunderbolt 3-enabled MacBook Pro, I've been using the SD5700T with a Thunderbolt 4-enabled Acer Swift 5 as well. I'm someone who often needs to plug in way more mice, cameras, drives, headphones, and other thingamabobs than my laptops allow, so my workspace is often covered in a mess of dongles and docks. The SD5700T provides a heck of a lot more connectivity than docks of this size that I've used in the past, and it's made my life a lot easier.

With a single Thunderbolt cable (which is included), Kensington 5D5700T owners have access to the following:

- Four Thunderbolt 4 ports (with transfer speeds up to 40Gbps and dual 4K video output)
- Four USB-A ports (one 5V / 1.5A charging port on the front and three Gen 2 @ 10Gbps ports on the back)
- One Gigabit Ethernet port
- One audio combo jack
- One UHS-II SD 4.0 card reader
- 90W power delivery (regardless of the number of connected devices)

Obviously, use cases vary, but I really can't think of anything else that the vast majority of people would need. And remember, these aren't all you get – plugging the dock into one port frees up the other ports on your laptop that might otherwise be occupied by a charger, monitor adapters, and other peripherals.

One USB-A port, one USB-C port, one audio jack, one SD card reader, and the power button.
The SD5700T didn’t require any expertise whatsoever to set up: I plugged the dock into the wall, plugged in all my odds and ends, turned it on, and then connected it to the laptop. And that was it — it just worked.

Everything I connected worked just fine. I didn’t experience any bugs or performance issues. The one thing I’d like to see is a way to disconnect the dock as a whole with a single click. Currently, you have to eject every connected device individually before unplugging a laptop from the SD5700T, which can be a pain if you have a bunch of things plugged in. There are third-party apps that can make this happen, but some companies like Corsair provide ejection utilities optimized for their own docks.

Final observation: It’s not a bad-looking dock. It’s got a nice finish that’s shiny but unobtrusive — nothing that will stand out on your desk or turn any heads in the office. At 0.96 pounds (0.435 kg) and 7.68 x 2.95 x 1.18 inches (195 x 75 x 30 mm), it’s also easy to carry around if you need to move your workspace. You can slip it in into a purse or backpack without a problem (though the 180W brick is a bit clunky).

You can preorder the Kensington SD5700T now, and it will ship in the second week of January.

Photos by Monica Chin / The Verge

https://www.theverge.com/22219031/kensingtons-sd5700t-thunderbolt-4-dock-90w-charging