

Linux-Compatible USB-C to HDMI Adapter

Posted June 27th, 2016 by Thomas Hunter II (<https://thomashunter.name/blog/author/tlhunter/>) & filed under [Linux](https://thomashunter.name/blog/category/linux-tutorials/) (<https://thomashunter.name/blog/category/linux-tutorials/>), [Reviews](https://thomashunter.name/blog/category/reviews/) (<https://thomashunter.name/blog/category/reviews/>).

I recently purchased the Dell XPS 13 (9350) (<http://amzn.to/28V6hpe>) laptop, which lacks any dedicated video output ports but does have a USB-C port. This recent Skylake-based laptop is constantly gaining hardware compatibility with Linux with each kernel release, so almost as soon as a new kernel comes out I upgrade. Consequently I'm currently running Linux Kernel 4.6.2.

When I first installed Linux on this machine I believe I was running Kernel 3.19, and later I upgraded to 4.4. It wasn't until I believe the 4.5 series before I could mount my USB-C Nexus 5X phone. At that point I figured it was time to buy a new USB-C peripheral to get an external display working.

I ended up purchasing this peripheral for \$50 from Amazon:



(<http://amzn.to/293IRor>)

Cable Matters USB-C to HDMI / VGA / Ethernet / USB Multiport 4K UHD Adapter (TB3 Compatible)
(<http://amzn.to/293IRor>)

This device has four ports: Gigabit Ethernet, USB 3.0, VGA, and HDMI. It draws all the power it needs from the host via the single USB-C wire.

I'm currently typing this post on an external monitor attached to HDMI, using a keyboard simultaneously attached to the USB port. I haven't tried using the Ethernet port, however I can confirm the device is displayed when running `ifconfig`. I also tried using the VGA port to and it worked as well. The monitor appears to be running at 60fps (and `xrandr` output lists it as 60fps).

This device is a sort of docking station; I can leave it at my desk attached to my monitor and a USB hub and only worry about plugging in power and the device when coming home.

I will say, though, that the device is a bit on the big and ugly side. What's with the checkered pattern on top? Why not make it more squat and put ports on the side? Also, having a USB-C female port on the device would make for a great addition.

I also have no idea how this device performs with other USB-C computers, such as the Apple Macbook. I can only assume it works great, as the Macbook is currently the most popular consumer laptop with USB-C (though, charging would be impossible, lacking a USB-C female port).

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Thomas Hunter II (<https://twitter.com/tlhunter>)

Thomas is passionate about technology and building products. A web design business created while attending college slowly evolved into a brick and mortar on Main St. of his small Midwestern hometown. His desire for fame and fortune led to the co-founding of a Y Combinator startup and a life in California.

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