

Comparison of three Docking/Interface units

When there are similar units that perform the same kinds of task, it is not easy to decide which is best for you. My main focus is on being able to clone disk but this does not take away from the other features. I will cover the three units I have experience with.

The first:

FIDECO USB 3.0 to SATA Hard Drive Docking Station Dual-Bay External HDD Dock with Offline Clone/Duplicator Function and TF & SD Card Slots for 2.5/3.5 Inch SATA HDD SSD, Support 16 TB



This unit cost about \$40 on Amazon. It has the two slots that will accept both the HDD or SSD type drives. To clone a drive do not even connect the unit to the computer, put the source drive in the first slot and the target drive in the second slot. Press the clone button and it makes a clone, an exact copy of the source drive. Cloning between a HDD hard drive to a SSD, or the reverse is no problem. The target capacity just has to be as large, or larger than the source drive.

One thing I really like about this unit is the built-in USB hub. It is totally buffered from the system USB3 so it does not draw any power from the computer. This is nice because it gives the user an easy to get to, USB3 port pair, instead of just consuming one.

Also look closely at the picture and see there is also a place to plug in a normal SD memory chip, and a TF (microSD) chip that the computer can read and write to/from. Very handy however you cannot clone from anything but the first disk slot on the top, and only to the second disk slot.

This next unit sells in the \$26 dollar range is also from FIDCO:

FIDECO SATA/IDE to USB 3.0 Adapter, Hard Drive Adapter Cable Converter for Universal 2.5/3.5 Inch IDE and SATA External HDD SSD, 5.25-Inch DVD-ROM/CD-ROM/CD-RW/DVD-RW/DVD+RW, Support 16TB



\$26 price range. This unit is special because it can clone an old IDE drive to a new SATA drive. I do not know of other units that will do that. It will act as an interface to the computer but it only read/writes with SATA drives (the IDE port is read only).

There are a few things about this unit. It makes a good test jig however it is not very good as a full-time installed unit. This is because everything must lay on the table like an Octopus and drives are not mechanically support and will come loose if bumped. I do find the clone takes longer than my other units, but it does do a good job and is quite inexpensive.

The last unit I will review is the SRBRENT Docking Station: \$37 price range.



This is a very nice looking unit and is in the \$36 range. It works as a docking station for external drives, and like the others it will clone a drive. There it ends as there are no other features. It is a very nice unit, it just misses the features of the FIDECO Docking Station.

One thing all of the units have in common; when the unit is plugged into a USB3 port, the computer sees the drives the same as it does internal drives and are used the same way.

If you do not have a USB3 port, the units can still be used for cloning as that function does not use the computer and is performed unplugged from the computer.

I have not tried it, so I do not know if plugging it into a standard USB port would work to access and initialize a new drive, but it would be too slow to try to use an external drive. Cloning is done off-line by the unit itself, for the clone function it does not want to be plugged into a computer at all.