Intelâ€™s Thunderbolt Finishing Up Successful First Year

Introduced in February 2011, Intelâ€™s Thunderbolt technology is near its first anniversary. And a successful first year itâ€™s been. Initially adopted by Apple across its PC line, Intel has announced the adoption of the technology by more PC OEMs and PC peripheral makers. On the Windows side, Lenovo has announced that its S430 business laptop would ship with Thunderbolt in Q2â€™12, and Acer has announced that the Aspire S5 Ultrabook would also ship with Thunderbolt in the same time frame. On the motherboard side, ASUS, MSI, and Gigabyte launched or will soon launch Thunderbolt devices.

Seagate, Western Digital and LaCie have all launched Thunderbolt-enabled external storage solutions. Additionally, Belkin has announced a Thunderbolt Dock, which allows a single cable docking solution, and includes USB, FireWire, and DisplayPort connectors. In all, Intel announced that 24 Thunderbolt products were currently shipping, or would ship within a quarter.

The major challenge for Intel will be continuing to gain design wins in Windows PCs, which is difficult due to its expense compared to USB and DisplayPort solutions. In addition, there is a marketing challenge of increasing PC usersâ€™ knowledge of the technology, and its advantages compared to its interface competitors.

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Posted by Janine E. Mooney, Editor

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