

Line 6 Sonic Port for iPad, iPhone review - Use your iOS device as a mixing desk for your guitar

Enhance your guitar playing experience through your iPod touch, iPad or iPhone

Manufacturer: [Line 6](#)

Pros: Simple to setup; Compatible with any Core Audio app; No latency; Good sound quality; Solid construction; Output directly to an amp.

Cons: Can't charge iOS device when Sonic Port is plugged in, No way to adjust input and output levels on the device itself.

Star rating: ★★★★★



iOS devices have an impressive range of music making apps available to them. If you want to create grooves, explore the pleasures of keyboard emulators, or even jam along with friends in a slightly odd digital-beat-combo, then the App Store has you covered. But if you're more old-school and actually want to plug a real instrument into your device you'll quickly discover that a 1/4in jack doesn't fit into a Lightning connector, no matter how hard you try.

A solution to this problem is the [Sonic Port](#) from Line 6. Acting as a simple analogue-to-digital interface the unit features an input for your guitar lead at one end and a connector to your iOS device at the other. Owners of slightly older units will be glad to hear that both 30-pin and Lightning connector cables are included in the box.

Line 6 has also built the Sonic Port to support Core Audio in OS X, so it will work with GarageBand, Jammit, Ampkit+, JamUp, Amplitube, and the new Line 6 Mobile POD app as well as many others.

The rectangular unit is fashioned from hard plastic with the majority of the casing covered in smooth rubber. It's light, but feels sturdy enough to last the rigours of gigging. It's small enough that you can slip it back into your pocket when the gig is done.

Of course we've seen several interfaces like this in the past, but the Sonic Port has another feature that makes it stand out from the crowd – the unit's ability to output directly to an amp. Thanks to another ¼in jack situated above the guitar input you can turn your iOS device into a complete effects rig and save yourself a small fortune in pedals and boards in the process.

Simply plug your guitar into the Sonic Port, connect to your iPad or iPhone, then run another cable to your amp and you're ready to go. An obligatory headphone output is present, alongside a 3.5mm input that also allows you to use a keyboard with the Sonic Port. Handy.

Setup is painless, as the Sonic Port is automatically detected when you plug it in. By itself it won't really do much, but once you've launched a suitable app the unit proves to be very useful. Some of the early units, such as the Peavey Ampkit and iRig, had problems with crosstalk and awful feedback (most likely due to using the headphone jack as the input) but the Sonic Port is free from any such noise.

The sound quality is excellent, and we experienced no problems with latency, which is a huge plus when you decide to record any riffs you've been working on.

The Sonic Port integrates very well with the various apps we tried. Only GarageBand proved tricky, but that was just down to the 'monitor' switch that needed to be turned on in the app's deeper menus. After this it was plain sailing.

Headphone output was clear and defined, while the amp connection also behaved itself admirably. There was the classic problem of the various patches all being at different volume levels (you even get that on physical multi-effect units), so if you wanted to use the device in a live setting we'd advise creating your own patches beforehand to avoid any sudden surprises.

Macworld Buying Advice

The Sonic Port is a very useful device that works beautifully and without fuss. The sturdy build, diminutive size, and multi-app performance make it something that could really open up your iOS device's musical potential. At less than the price of a decent pedal we think it represents a terrific bargain, especially when you factor in the free Mobile Pod app.