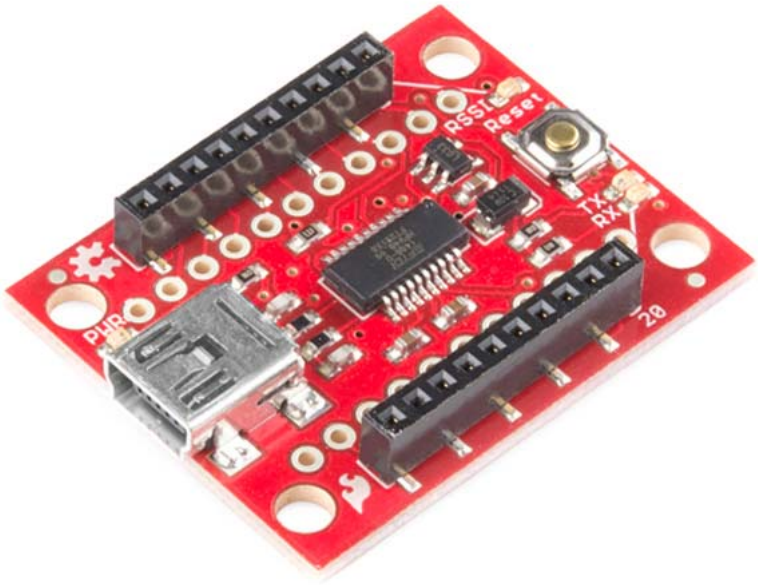
SparkFun XBee Explorer USB

WRL-11812 ROHS

★★★★½ 32



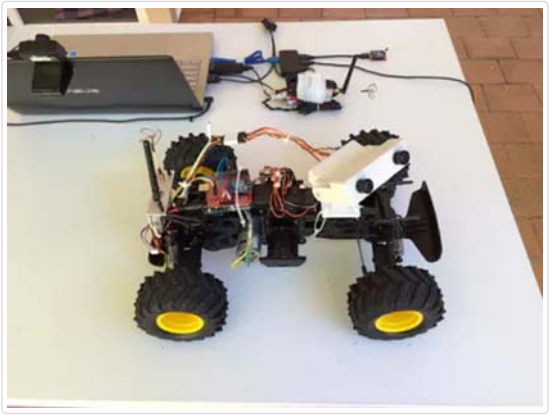
$24.95

1	quantity
◉	173 in stock
$24.95	1+ units
$23.70	10+ units
$22.46	25+ units
$21.21	100+ units

Need larger quantities?
Check out our Volume Sales program

3D Download: Sketchup, STL, Blender

SparkFun XBee Explorer USB
project on
hackster.io



Head Tracking for Wireless 3D First Person Vision
by twhi2525

Description: This is a simple to use, USB to serial base unit for the Digi XBee line. This unit works with all XBee modules including the Series 1 and Series 2.5, standard and Pro version. Plug the unit into the XBee Explorer, attach a mini USB cable, and you will have direct access to the serial and programming pins on the XBee unit.

The highlight of this board is an FT231X USB-to-Serial converter. That's what translates data between your computer and the XBee. There's also a reset button, and a voltage regulator to supply the XBee with plenty of power. In addition, there are four LEDs that'll help if you ever need to debug your XBee: RX, TX, RSSI (signal-strength indicator), and power indicator.

This board also breaks out each of the XBee's I/O pins to a pair of breadboard-compatible headers. So if you want to make use of the XBee's extended functionality, you can solder some header pins into those, or even just solder some wire.

Not sure which XBee module or accessory is right for you? Check out our XBee Buying Guide!

Note: There is no XBee included with this Explorer USB. Check the *Recommended Products* section below for different options.

Documents:

- Schematic
- Eagle Files
- X-CTU Software
- XBee Introduction and Buying Guide
- XBee and X-CTU Hookup Guide
- XBee WiFi Hookup Guide
- GitHub (Design Files)

Recommended Products

PAGE 1 OF 6

SPARKFUN RECOMMENDED
SparkFun XBee Explorer Dongle
WRL-11697
$24.95
★★★★☆ 18

SPARKFUN RECOMMENDED
SparkFun XBee Shield
WRL-12847
$14.95
★★★½☆ 17

SPARKFUN RECOMMENDED
SparkFun XBee Explorer Regulated
WRL-11373
$9.95
★★★★½ 10

SPARKFUN RECOMMENDED
SparkFun XBee Explorer Serial
WRL-13225
$19.95

COMMENTS 25 | **REVIEWS ★★★★½ 32** | TUTORIALS 1

Customer Reviews

★★★★½ 4.4 out of 5

Based on 32 ratings:

5 star	18
4 star	11
3 star	1
2 star	1
1 star	1

1 of **1** found this helpful:

★★★★☆ Product works great but having a lot of trouble getting xbee to work

about 2 years ago by Member #419772 ✔ verified purchaser

I am trying to get 2 xbees to communicate sensor data to one another to get an LED to blink. There is very little documentation about how to get the right settings for the Xbee. Any pointers would be much appreciated

1 of **1** found this helpful:

★★★★★ As advertised, it "just works".

about a year ago by Member #689698 ✔ verified purchaser

Works great, gave me a jump-start on development before our in-house hardware was ready.

1 of **1** found this helpful:

★★★★★ Works like a charm!

about 2 years ago by Member #628174 ✔ verified purchaser

I highly recommend it. Works like a charm!

---

1 of **1** found this helpful:

★☆☆☆☆ Worked... until I tried to remove my XBee!

about a year ago by DirtySocrates ✔ verified purchaser

Worked exactly as stated. Then I went to remove my XBee so I could program another one and the header snapped off! Someone PLEASE make this through hole and not surface mount headers. Now I have to order another and waste another week waiting on shipping. I'm a poor college student on a time crunch! HELP!!!!

> Single T replied on October 20, 2015:
>
> Please contact our support team for assistance. https://www.sparkfun.com/technical_assistance

---

1 of **1** found this helpful:

★★★★★ Works perfectly, reset button is not the greatest.

about 2 years ago by Member #133520 ✔ verified purchaser

I've been using this product for awhile and it works perfectly for interfacing my xbee Pro. I use the xbee Pros as a wireless serial link and the explorer plugs into my computer and creates a COM port with no problems. My only complaint (and a minor one at that) is that the reset button is a bit hard to reach and feel since the xbee module overhangs it slightly.

---

1 of **1** found this helpful:

★★★★☆ Very easy to use

about 2 years ago by Member #253032 ✔ verified purchaser

I was having trouble getting my XBEE to communicate with my computer and here was why I needed the explorer board usb to do so. Once I had the explorer I plugged in the explorer and XBEE and opened up XCTU and I had communication right away!

---

2 of **2** found this helpful:

★★★☆☆ Fragile Headers

about a year ago by Member #355921 ✔ verified purchaser

Works well, but it would be better if the headers were through hole instead of surface mounted. The XBee fits very tightly in the 2mm headers and requires some gentle force to remove. I ended up breaking one of the headers off while trying to remove an XBee.

I wanted to repair it using the breadboard-compatible holes by mounting one of the XBee breakout boards, but the left and right header holes are offset by one pin! I ended up soldering headers and using jumper wires to keep this working while I wait for a replacement. I'm going to replace this unit with one of the competing products that uses through-hole mounting for the XBee 2mm headers.

★★★★★ Exactly what I needed!

about 2 years ago by Member #678045 ✔ verified purchaser

Got my XBees' up and running in no time flat.

★★★★☆ Works well.

about 2 years ago by Member #438329 ✔ verified purchaser

This interface for the XBee module does exactly what it is intended to do. It provides a USB interface to the host PC as well as the necessary level shifting to the 3.3v Rx & Tx ports of the XBee device. It has an onboard a 3.3 regulator to power the module from the USB 5v rail. For the price it would be difficult to produce your own with equivalent functionality.

There are a couple of items that I think could be improved on though. 1) The Explorer pin numbers do not match the XBee pin numbers. For instance XBee pin 1 connects to Explorer pin 10, XBee pin 2 to Explorer pin 9 Etc. 2) The 100-mil headers should be included with the Explorer. 3) The board currently uses the older USB mini-B connector instead of the more predominant micro-B connector. These items reduced the rating from 5 to 4 stars.

★★★★★ Works well

about 2 years ago by Member #146582 ✔ verified purchaser

I use these all the time and have never had a problem. Very useful.

★★★★★ Extremely Reliable!

about a year ago by Member #667981 ✔ verified purchaser

The quality is top notch, and is extremely reliable. I have two, one of them has been working non stop for almost two years.

★★★★★ Excellent interface for WiFly

about 2 years ago by Member #264651 ✔ verified purchaser

The Explorer USB handles the powering and connections for a WiFly (and XBee's, I assume). It's straightforward to use and makes application of the WiFly a snap.

★★★★★ Excellent Product

about 2 years ago by Member #626697 ✔ verified purchaser

The XBee Explorer works as advertised. High marks! I used the Explorer in connecting my Laptop (running Python application) to Raspberry PI. No problems what so ever. Definitely a number of different uses for this product.

★★★★☆ Beautiful bit of work!

about 7 months ago by Member #814684 ✔ verified purchaser

Every Sparkfun creation I've tried has been excellent, and the Xbee Explorer is no exception. This breakout-board serves very well as an Xbee component or as a configuration tool. A great value!

★★★★★ excellent

about a year ago by Member #708680 ✔ verified purchaser

Works fine!

★★★★★ PERFECT

about 2 years ago by Member #669087 ✔ verified purchaser

an excellent tool to facilitate communication between PC and xbee

---

★★★★☆ Simple and straight forward

about 5 months ago by Member #823101 ✔ verified purchaser

Works as expected.

★★★★★ Easy to use

about a year ago by Member #726582 ✔ verified purchaser

Perfect match with XCTU software.

★★★★★ Nice Little Board

about a month ago by Member #861911 ✔ verified purchaser

I originally intended to use this board in my house to hold the Coordinator XBee which communicates with another Xbee which controls my water pump.

I did have to download drivers, install, reboot, uninstall, reinstall again before it would work. This seemed to be more of a Windows problem than this board, but it worked in the end.

Because the mini USB connector was much easier to route thru ~6 feet of ¾ inch conduit, I ended up using this board as the outdoor router for the water pump. It is sealed inside of a water proof Type-LB Nonmetallic Conduit Body.

This means that the board needs to communicate with my Raspberry Pi. In connecting to the Pi, I had none of the bother that I had with my Windows machine: I plugged it in, and it worked fine. Even though the power draw of the Xbee Pro is a bit over what the Pi is spec'ed for, I have not had any problems. Since the Pi is not driving anything else, I have more margin than other applications.

★★★★★ "Must have"

about 2 years ago by Member #408143 ✔ verified purchaser

Must have accessory to work with xBee modules. This allows to re-program the FW, configure them and even recover "dead" ones from a PC. The Digi software works flowlessly with this board. This helped me understand how the the xBee modules work and fine tune my network configuration before using them with an Arduino Yun. I accidentally plugged the module in reverse a couple of times and it did not damage neither the Explorer nor the xBee board. I was able to achieve my goal to build wireless temperature sensors using xBee 2 Series boards that can run for 1.5+ year on a pair of AA batteries.

---

0 of **3** found this helpful:

★★★★☆ I haven't tried it yet.

about 2 years ago by Just Passing Through ✔ verified purchaser

But I have used SparkFun gadgets for my work to do things amazing. So thanks for YOUR support while I explore the amazing world of affordable technology!

★★★★☆ using external power

about a year ago by jim314 ✔ verified purchaser

I want to power the USB explorer board to monitor the xbee tx/rx when the xbee is powered with an external supply. Can the 3.3V pin on the USB explorer be used as the xbee power source when there is no USB connected? Similarly, can the 5V pin be used as the power supply with no USB connected? If yes, will the tx/rx LEDs function with external power? If the board is externally powered, are there any USB explorer pins that must be set hi/low (e.g., RST, RES, CTS, DTR)?

> Single T replied on November 10, 2015:
>
> If you are powering over the 3.3V line, you need to be very sure to have a clean and regulated 3.3V power supply. The Xbees are very sensitive and can become damaged if supplied with to much power.
>
> The 5V input should run through the regulator (MIC5219 3.3V) so you can get away with more input voltage. However, I would suggest keeping it under 9V in on the regulated line.
>
> I have not tested, but the TX and RX should turn on without USB as long as there is data being sent over the respective line.

★★★★★ Works as advertised!

about 7 months ago by Member #116798 ✔ verified purchaser

I have used this product over the past several years. The latest iteration works well with the highest power XBee modules, the Pro S3B if you observe the instructions in the Sparkfun ad regarding the RSSI limitation. I can’t ask for more than doing exactly what it says it does!

★★★★★ Great item at reasonable price

about 3 months ago by Member #670500 ✔ verified purchaser

Good quality and price and performance

★★★★★

about 2 years ago by Member #673156 ✔ verified purchaser

Easy to use. Performed as advertised.

★★★★☆ gets the job done

about a year ago by Member #717650 ✔ verified purchaser

easy to use USB plug and go breakout points available

★★★★☆ XBee Coms

last year by Member #133943 ✔ verified purchaser

Definitely useful for setup and testing.

★★★★☆ Work perfectly - Headers required

about a year ago by Member #739221 ✔ verified purchaser

Work without any problem. headers are not included

---

0 of **1** found this helpful:

★★☆☆☆ Surface mount headers are fragile

about a year ago by Member #742979 ✔ verified purchaser

Be careful with the 2mm pitch headers. I soldered on 0.1" through hole headers to plug this into a breadboard. When I pulled the board out of the breadboard I accidentally put too much force on the 2mm headers on top and one ripped right off. I tacked it back on with some super glue and wires to connect 3.3V and GND (the only connections I need on that side of the board). Through hole headers would have been a better choice.

★★★★★ work great

about 2 years ago by Member #424316 ✔ verified purchaser

Work great with XBee Pro Series 2B and Xbee Series 2
