

Jose Maria Marin

Alexa Automotive at Amazon

What gets me out of bed every morning is looking into the future of voice activated technologies and helping to design a world where we can just speak with the machines around us.



Why did you choose to work in acoustics?

I remember closing my eyes outdoors when I was a child and trying to identify birds by their song. My father worked at a radio station and he used to let me borrow old equipment to experiment with, and that really got me started.

What did you study to get into acoustics?

I studied Telecommunications Engineering and took a course in audio that made me fall in love even more with sound. Later, when I was working in automotive noise and vibration, I studied an MSc in Acoustic Engineering.

What makes acoustics interesting to you?

Everything! Hahaha. It's a fascinating field because it touches everything and everybody. It's connected and crucial to many industries and the applications are increasing all the time: medical, defence, cars, consumer electronics, buildings, broadcasting, mobile phones, hearing aids, professional audio, you name it.

What do you do on a typical workday?

I discuss with our partners the different applications of Amazon's voice recognition technology in future generations of cars. And I help our internal product development teams to improve Alexa's design based on the feedback we get from customers.

What is most challenging about your job?

Sound is often not considered seriously and early enough in product development. This is a common frustration among Audio and Acoustics professionals, and in automotive this is perhaps more obvious.

What are the most important skills to have in your job?

Know how to listen. Listening is a sound skill for which humans are very well equipped for, but we often forget to do it carefully enough. As an acoustician, you tend to become good at critical listening, which is extremely helpful as a technical tool, but also becomes very handy in crucial conversations.

What's one of the most exciting projects you've ever done?

When I was at Harman my team built a demo car to showcase HALOsonic's sound enhancement technologies. We came up with new ideas for loudspeaker positions and sound synthesis algorithms that really advanced sound design for Electronic Vehicles. The car was presented at the Music Day in Munich and can be seen in [Harman's website](#).

What else might a student need to know about a career in acoustics?

It is a fascinating field, and a complex one as well. At school don't let yourself get overwhelmed with all the information out there, instead focus on the basic physical principles that govern sound and vibration. Dig deep until you can explain it to your mother in very simple words! You'll have time to learn the application techniques later at work. But most importantly, don't give up. If you love this thing we call sound, your dream job will find you one day, and you will always love this profession. Tell us a fun acoustic fact!