



Age: 34  
Marital status: Married  
Children: Alessio (2) and Alonso (4)  
Education: Master's degree in Law  
Job: Consultant  
**Impairment: Deaf**

## meet Tomasa Almaraz...

Tomasa lives with her family in Barcelona, where she has renovated a small house some years ago, together with her husband. She holds a master's degree in Law, and she works in a consulting firm in Barcelona.

Since her teenage years, Tomasa is completely deaf. At first, it was very difficult to communicate with other people, but she has learned to cope with her deafness: she mostly uses lip reading to communicate with other people. Sometimes, she also uses some sign language when she is in a company where people also understand it. But as many people don't understand sign language, she doesn't use it very often.

### technology use

Tomasa is quite a heavy technology user. For work, she has a standard Windows Vista laptop, which she also uses at home and sometimes even in train stations and airports when she is waiting. She spends about 50 hours per week using her computer, it is an important tool for her.

At work, Tomasa creates and edits word and excel documents, and searches for information on the internet. She is also a heavy e-mail user, as she has to keep a close contact with her clients without being able to make phonecalls. At home, she manages the pictures of her children growing up and occasionally plays a casual computer game like Tetris. She has already considered switching to Firefox, but still uses Internet Explorer to surf the internet on a daily basis. Tomasa uses Google, Gmail, updates her blog, uses instant messaging to talk to her friends, takes quizzes on Facebook, sometimes watching a video on Youtube, etc.



The mobile phone is also very important for Tomasa: she couldn't miss it as a tool. But it is also part of her life style, and she carries it around all the time. She uses it to videocall her husband if she will be home late, and to keep up with her friends.

Most important about her phone is the look and feel. It has a big screen displaying clear letters, and it feeds pretty good images when she uses the phone in video calls. Although her smartphone was quite expensive, the device, with all its functionalities, was worth the investment. She mostly uses the phone as any other user would, but as she can't make any regular calls, the video call functionality is very important to her. Besides video call, she uses texting, e-mail (she likes the Qwerty keypad!), and sometimes internet. As the phone has so many features, she thinks it is a pity she can't use all of them, such as the built-in radio receiver, MP3 player, etc. Tomasa uses no assistive technology with her phone.





## problems

Tomasa especially hates the short battery life of her mobile. Especially when making video calls, the battery wears out very quickly and she constantly has to recharge it. Video recordings of her telephone conversations are also very wasteful in terms of phone memory. As for the video chat functionality: sometimes it works, and sometimes it unpredictably crashes, which can be very annoying. Inside Barcelona, 3G coverage is ok, but outside the city limits, the coverage is often very bad. In this case she can't make any calls, as the quality of the video images is too poor for them to be useful.

The internet today offers too much video content for her taste. She misses a lot – much of the auditory information in videos is not available in any other way.



## needs & wants

- Tomasa would like better 3G coverage and no more annoying crashes of her video call software. In addition, she would welcome more phone storage for her video calls. Longer battery life would make her life easier as she wouldn't have to remember constantly to recharge her phone.
- The vibrating alarm clock in her phone is useful, but she doesn't really like to use it when she is sleeping. Another, better solution for waking her up in the morning would be very useful.
- As for her laptop, she wished her built-in webcam provided some better quality images during video calls. For being able to use sign language at an acceptable level, the video image should have at least 30 frames/second.
- As for internet videos: subtitles would be nice, as she often can't make out whether or not the sound is important in a particular video, and what kind of information is given in the sound track of a video.
- She wants longer battery life and bigger memory cards for her mobile phone

## last month...

Tomasa was experiencing difficulties with her mobile phone when all of a sudden, she couldn't receive any more MMS messages. Getting customer support for her phone service proved to be a nuisance. As most of the operators, her operator only offers immediate support through call centres. As she can't call her provider, she first tried to send e-mails. Since they still remained unanswered after a couple of days, she had to ask her husband to call in her place.