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AES Audio Engineering Society - Pacific Northwest Section

Around the Puget Sound, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.

NOTE: anyone can attend this meeting regardless of their status as an AES member.

AES MEMBERSHIP IS NOT REQUIRED.

**PNW AES Section
September Meeting Notice
Special Election**

and

**The Perception and Measurement of
Headphone Sound Quality: Do Listeners
Agree on What Makes a Headphone Sound
Good?**

Presented By

**Dr. Sean E. Olive - Harman International &
President of the AES**

**Thursday, September 18th, 2014. 7:30pm
Shoreline Community College, Music Building,
Room 818**

[Directions to Shoreline CC](#)

Annual headphone sales worldwide in 2014 will nearly reach \$10 billion, as consumer's audio experiences are becoming increasingly mobile and personal. Premium headphones (\$100+) now account for 90% of the annual revenue growth, suggesting consumers want better sound quality. Yet, the science behind what makes a headphone sound good and how to measure it is poorly understood. This talk summarizes some recent Harman research into the subjective and objective measurement of headphone sound quality. Using controlled, double blind listening test methods, Harman Research developed and tested a new headphone target response against current popular headphones, as well as headphones calibrated to the recommended diffuse and free-field standards. More recently, the new headphone target response was tested against three popular headphones using 238 listeners from four different countries. This allowed measuring the extent to which age, listening experience and culture influences taste in headphone sound quality. The results show that when headphone brand, price, visual appearance, and celebrity endorsement are removed from the test, most listeners agree on which headphones sound best, and this can be predicted based on their acoustical performance.

Dr. Sean E. Olive



Sean Olive is Director of Acoustic Research for Harman International, a major manufacturer of audio products for consumer, professional and automotive spaces. He directs the Northridge, Corporate Technology Acoustics group, and oversees the subjective evaluation of new audio products. His research focuses on the perception, measurement and optimization of automotive audio, headphones, loudspeakers, and room acoustics. Prior to 1993, he was a research scientist with Dr. Floyd Toole at the National Research Council of Canada where their research focused on the perception and measurement of loudspeakers, listening rooms, and microphones.

Sean received a Bachelors in Music from the University of Toronto, and his Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Sound Recording from McGill University in Montreal. He has written over 38 research papers on the perception and measurement of audio for which he was awarded the Audio Engineering Society (AES) Fellowship Award in 1996, and two AES Publication Awards (1990 and 1995). In 2012 Sean received the Harman Achievement Award, and in 2013, the ALMA Titanium Driver Award for scientific contributions to the loudspeaker and headphone industry. Sean is the current President of the AES.

Special Election

At our last election, we neglected to fill the seat on the Committee held by Scott Mehrens, who resigned when he moved to the Bay Area for a new job. Nominations are now closed, and we will conduct the election at the meeting on the 18th. At that meeting, you may still nominate yourself or someone else who you know who is willing to serve. If you cannot attend the meeting, and both desire to vote and are eligible to vote, a mail-in ballot can be [DOWNLOADED](#). Mailed ballots must be in-hand by noon on the 18th. The following individuals have been nominated for the position:

- Chris Deckard
- Stephen DeVore
- Tom Stiles

The candidate's bio sketches can be found by clicking this [LINK](#).

Steve Malott

AES PNW 2014-2015 Section Chair

n.b. *The material presented at our meetings is the opinion of the presenter and not necessarily that of the Society. You are encouraged to conduct your own research and to form your own opinions before adopting the presented material as Truth.*

Our meetings are open to anyone interested in Audio. AES membership is NOT required for you to attend our meetings.

2013-14 Officers

Chairman Vice- Secretary Treasurer At Large: Refer to the Officers and Committee contact list for contact

Dave Tosti-Lane	Chairman Steve Malott	Gary Louie	Greg Mauser	Aurika Hays, Membership Rick Chinn, Webmaster	information.
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Program Committee

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Bob Smith	Mark Rogers	Scott Mehrens	Lawrence Schwedler	Daniel Casado	JJ Johnston	Dan Mortensen	Dr. Ivan Tashev	Dr. Michael Matesky	Rich Williams

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