



The Monthly Publication of the Arts Consulting Group
Volume XIV Issue 2

National Endowment for the Arts Research Offers New Insights on Arts Participation and Economic Impact

Bruce D. Thibodeau, President

Three new reports issued by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) reveal a host of untapped opportunities — and fascinating insights — about audience participation in, and the economic impact of, arts and culture organizations across the nation. Based on data from 2012 and published in January 2015, the reports provide a revealing look at arts and culture organizations from three different approaches: supply, demand and motivations for consumer behavior, as well as how arts and culture contribute to the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Report #1: "When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance"

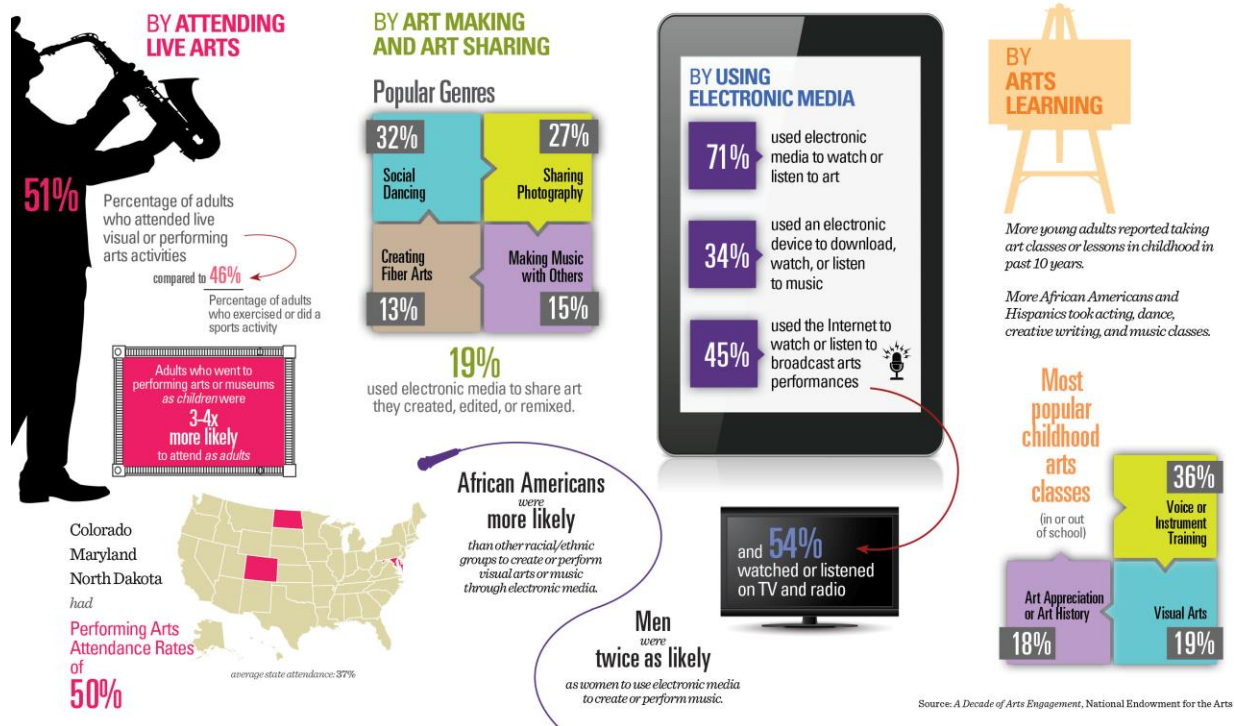
Decline in arts and culture attendance and participation is a hot-button topic for many organizations across the nation. While some organizations are flourishing despite this perceived trend, others are questioning their viability. The NEA report, "When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance," goes beyond examining the demographics of arts and culture consumers to scrutinize attitudes, motivations and barriers regarding arts attendance. Perhaps most importantly, the report offers specific information about the root causes of declining participation: What specifically makes a loyal patron disengage over time? How exactly do people want to experience the arts?

Key findings summarized in the NEA's [press release](#) include¹:

- "Top reasons Americans attend the arts (performances and exhibits) include socializing with friends or family members (73 percent); learning new things (64 percent); and supporting the community (51 percent)."
- "Despite similar household incomes and education, people who call themselves middle-class were more likely to attend the arts than those who identified themselves as working class. Thwarted interest, rather than lack of interest, may be the cause for lower attendance rates among some audiences."
- "Nearly 60 percent of people with children under age six said lack of time was the greatest single barrier to attendance."

¹ NEA Press Release: [Surprising Findings in Three New NEA Reports on the Arts: Exploration into who participates and why, as well as the arts as an economic engine](#). January 12, 2015.
<http://arts.gov/news/2015/surprising-findings-three-new-nea-reports-arts#sthash.3xB83wc3.dpuf>

How do Americans participate in THE ARTS?



Report #2: "A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002-2012"²

Based on the NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), conducted in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau, this report highlights how Americans engage with the arts. It focuses on key questions, such as: What is a stronger predictor of adult participation in the arts: exposure to the arts as a child or education, gender, age or income? What is the one demographic group that has increased its attendance in live visual performing arts activities? How is new electronic media affecting how people experience arts and culture? This expansive report has the data to offer insights into future opportunities for arts participation.

Key findings summarized in the NEA's [press release](#) include:

- "Technology is a great enabler of arts creation and participation. In 2012, nearly three-quarters of American adults — about 167 million people — used electronic media to view or listen to art, and large proportions of adults used electronic media to create music or visual art."
- "Women participate in the arts at higher rates than men across all categories, except a few. For example, men are more than twice as likely as

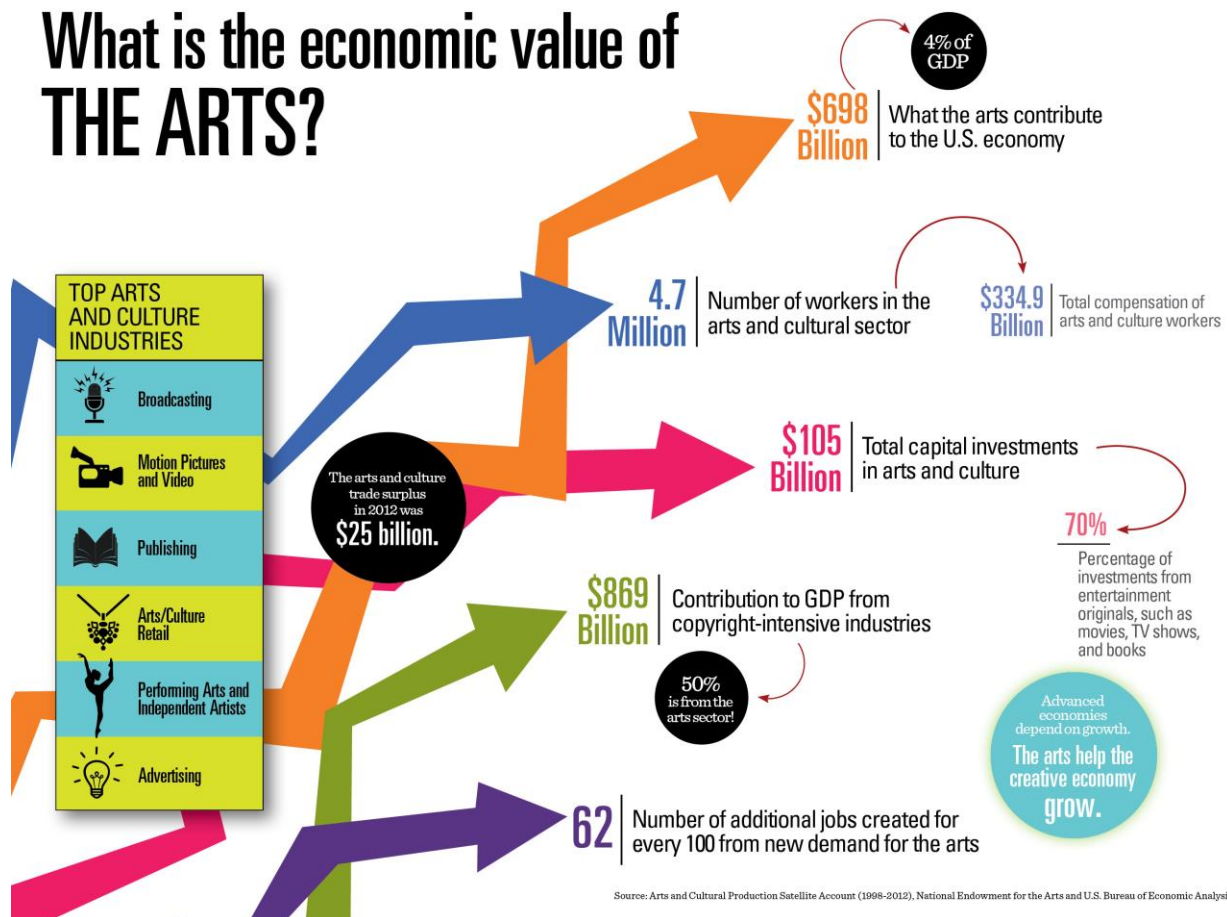
² Infographic courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

women to use electronic media to create or perform music, and they are also more likely to create visual art online.”

- “More than half (54 percent) of all American adults attended at least one live music, theater, or dance performance in the past year, or they went to view an art exhibit. That's about 120 million people.”

Report #3: “The Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA)”³

ACPSA, a partnership between the NEA and the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis, is “the first federal effort to provide an in-depth analysis of the arts and cultural sector's contributions to current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the final dollar value of all goods and services produced in the United States.” The revised estimate reveals that the economic impact of arts and culture, particularly job creation, has been underestimated in the past.



³ Infographic courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

Key findings summarized in the NEA's [press release](#) include:

- "In 2012, arts and cultural production contributed more than \$698 billion to the U.S. economy, or 4.32 percent to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, more than construction (\$586.7B) or transportation and warehousing (\$464.1B)."
- "4.7 million workers were employed in the production of arts and cultural goods, receiving \$334.9 billion in compensation."
- "Arts and cultural spending has a ripple effect on the overall economy, boosting both commodities and jobs. For example, for every 100 jobs created from new demand for the arts, 62 additional jobs are also created."

Arts Consulting Group encourages everyone in the arts and culture community to scan the [press release](#) with highlights of these fascinating reports and invest time in reviewing the full, published versions. The first two reports are available free of charge in print or PDF format at www.arts.gov, the website of the National Endowment for the Arts. Data included in the third report is available there as well for researchers, policymakers, arts practitioners, and all those who seek to better understand the vibrancy of the arts and culture sector.



Bruce D. Thibodeau is president of Arts Consulting Group, Inc. (ACG), which he founded in 1997 to provide hands-on interim management, executive search, revenue enhancement consulting, facilities & program planning, and organizational development services to a diverse range of arts and culture organizations internationally. He has worked with hundreds of clients in guiding effective leadership transitions, increasing earned and contributed revenue, achieving organizational efficacy, developing vibrant institutional messages and brands, and revitalizing governance practices. He has also facilitated a variety of community engagement processes that increase public dialogue about the value and impact of arts and cultural organizations. With a Bachelor of Music from the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford and Master of Business Administration from the F.W. Olin Graduate School at Babson College, he is a candidate for a Doctorate in Business Administration from the Grenoble Ecole de Management (France) centered on how stakeholders influence organizational planning, development and implementation of major strategic initiatives in the arts and culture sector.

###

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW ARTS CONSULTING GROUP CAN HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION ACHIEVE ITS REVENUE ENHANCEMENT AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION GOALS, PLEASE CALL US TOLL FREE AT

(888) 234.4236

www.ArtsConsulting.com

Growing Institutions. Advancing Arts & Culture. Enhancing Communities.