

Arts, Culture, and the Biden-Harris Digital Equity Act

Webinar co-hosted by NTIA and NEA

Tuesday, April 18, 3:00-4:00pm ET

Today's Goals:

1. **Meet representatives** at the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA).
2. **Explore intersections** between Arts & Cultural Sector, Digital Equity, Digital Divide.
3. **Understand goals** for the Biden-Harris Digital Equity Act and current Request for Public Comments.
4. **Discuss challenges, needs, and opportunities** related to advancing digital equity and the Arts/Cultural Ecosystem (Arts orgs, Artists, Arts Workers, Audiences).
5. **Build new relationships** to further ensure your local communities and constituents have the skills, resources, technology, and capacity needed to meet their needs, improve their quality of life, and reap the full benefits of our increasingly digital society and economy.

What is Digital Equity?

“ Technology has penetrated every aspect of social, economic, political, and personal life. The interplay of citizenship, rights, and literacy ultimately determines an individual’s ability to live in digitally mediated societies, just as in the physical world. ”

Excerpt from: [Bridging The Digital Divide: Arts And Digital Placemaking](#) (Natalie Larsen, 2/2023)

What is Digital Equity?






- **Digital citizenship** evolves through the digital acts a person undertakes and, over time, facilitates new forms of digital participation.
- **Digital rights** allow an individual to access, use, create and publish digital content on devices such as computers and mobile phones, as well as in virtual spaces and communities. They pertain to participation in a virtual space through the use of computers and smartphones, which ties directly into digital literacy and having the knowledge to access this space.
- **Digital literacy** is the foundation for digital citizenship and rights and is broadly defined as a general familiarity with digital tools, services, and media.



Excerpt from: **Bridging The Digital Divide: Arts And Digital Placemaking** (Natalie Larsen, 2/2023)

The Connection of Digital Placemaking & Inequity

<h2>Creative Placemaking</h2> <p>Publicly available spaces made up of physical assets such as buildings, lots, streets, public art, etc.¹</p>	<h2>Digital Placemaking</h2> <p>Digital spaces that either interact with physical spaces or create new spaces entirely.²</p>
<h3>Infrastructure</h3> 	
<h3>Society</h3> 	<p>Digital inequity is furthered if placemaking efforts do not address it. Those already embedded in digital environments reap the benefits as digitization widens the gap between those who have access and those that do not.⁵</p>

<h2>Creative Placemaking</h2> <p>Economic growth comes from increased participation with local businesses as visitors interact with revitalized spaces.</p>	<h2>Digital Placemaking</h2> <p>Economic growth primarily comes from cultural tourism in visual and performing arts spaces where tech-centered attractions are.³</p>
<h3>Economy</h3> 	

Excerpt from:
[*Connection of Digital Placemaking & Inequity*](#)
Natalie Larsen (11/2022)

How do “The Arts” advance digital equity?



Building
Digital Skills
through arts
activities



Offering
STEAM-based
initiatives
(K-12 + Higher Ed)



Engaging
communities through
digital, tech-centered,
or virtual arts
programming
(via workshops and
exhibitions, etc)



TECH AS ART

Supporting Artists Who Use Technology
as a Creative Medium



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
for the
ARTS
arts.gov

NEA RESEARCH PUBLICATION

Resources Available For Download

- www.arts.gov/impact/media-arts

Includes:

- 100+ tech-focused artists and orgs
- 9 Artist Case Studies & Video Profiles
- 10 Commissioned Essays
- [Challenges and recommendations](#)

Identified Opportunities

Tech-centered artists can bring **specialized expertise** in using digital technology to:

CONNECT

Connect audiences within and across physical/virtual/digital spaces.

ADVANCE

Advance gender, racial, and economic equity across the Arts and other industry sectors, such as computer science and technology.

ENGAGE

Engage local communities, address social issues, and bridge digital divides through their arts projects.

Excerpt from: **Tech as Art** (NEA Research Publication, 2021)

Relevant NEA Report Recommendation

Strengthen Technology Infrastructure Serving Arts + Culture

Suggested Actions

- Identify areas where a digital divide exists across geography, ethnicity, race, and gender.
- Establish federal interagency working groups and partnerships to address digital infrastructure needs and support technology-focused arts and cultural programming.
- This could pave the way for interagency programs, such as:
 - Arts-and-technology initiatives designed to bridge **digital divides**, advance **digital literacy**, and build **21st-century skill sets** across the United States.
 - Pilot programs that build support for arts and cultural organizations that focus on **equitable on-ramps to science and technology careers**.

Relevant NEA Report Recommendation

Deepen Public Understanding of the Field's Value and Impact

Suggested Actions

- Researchers can conduct studies documenting the value and impact of artists and cultural organizations working in the following areas:
 - Advancing digital equity and inclusion for youth and adults
 - Building pipelines for a more equitable and diverse tech industry
 - Examining ethical issues surrounding technology, such as data privacy and artificial intelligence.

Relevant NEA Report Recommendation

Lift Barriers to Collaboration across Arts and Non-Arts Sectors

Suggested Actions

- Understand the “silos” that hinder effective collaborations
- Host activities that build relationships and regularly connect across artistic disciplines, academic departments, and industry sectors
- Seed infrastructure that can catalyze technology-focused partnerships and strategic initiatives using the arts to advance shared goals and priorities.

REGIONAL TRENDS IN TECH AS ART

Supporting Artists Who Use Technology as a Creative Medium



Regional Trends Report

Includes:

- National Observations
- Regional Briefs
- Identifies Regional Challenges & Needs
- Summarizes Action Items & Ideas

**Data sourced from more than 70 participants from the arts & cultural field.*

Download on NEA website:

www.arts.gov/impact/media-arts

Theme Across All Roundtables:

Digital Divide = Shared Issue Among Arts/Cultural Field

Bridging Digital Divides

- **Urban/rural divides:** Lack of broadband infrastructure, affordable high-speed internet, and digital divides impact orgs/artists/audiences within urban and rural areas.
- **Access to digital technology and training:** Arts organizations, artists, audiences are affected in various ways, such as geographic or financial barriers, limited opportunities to build digital literacy, or limited capacity to invest in strengthening these resources for constituents.

Excerpt from: [Regional Trends in Tech as Art](#) (NEA Research Publication, 2022)