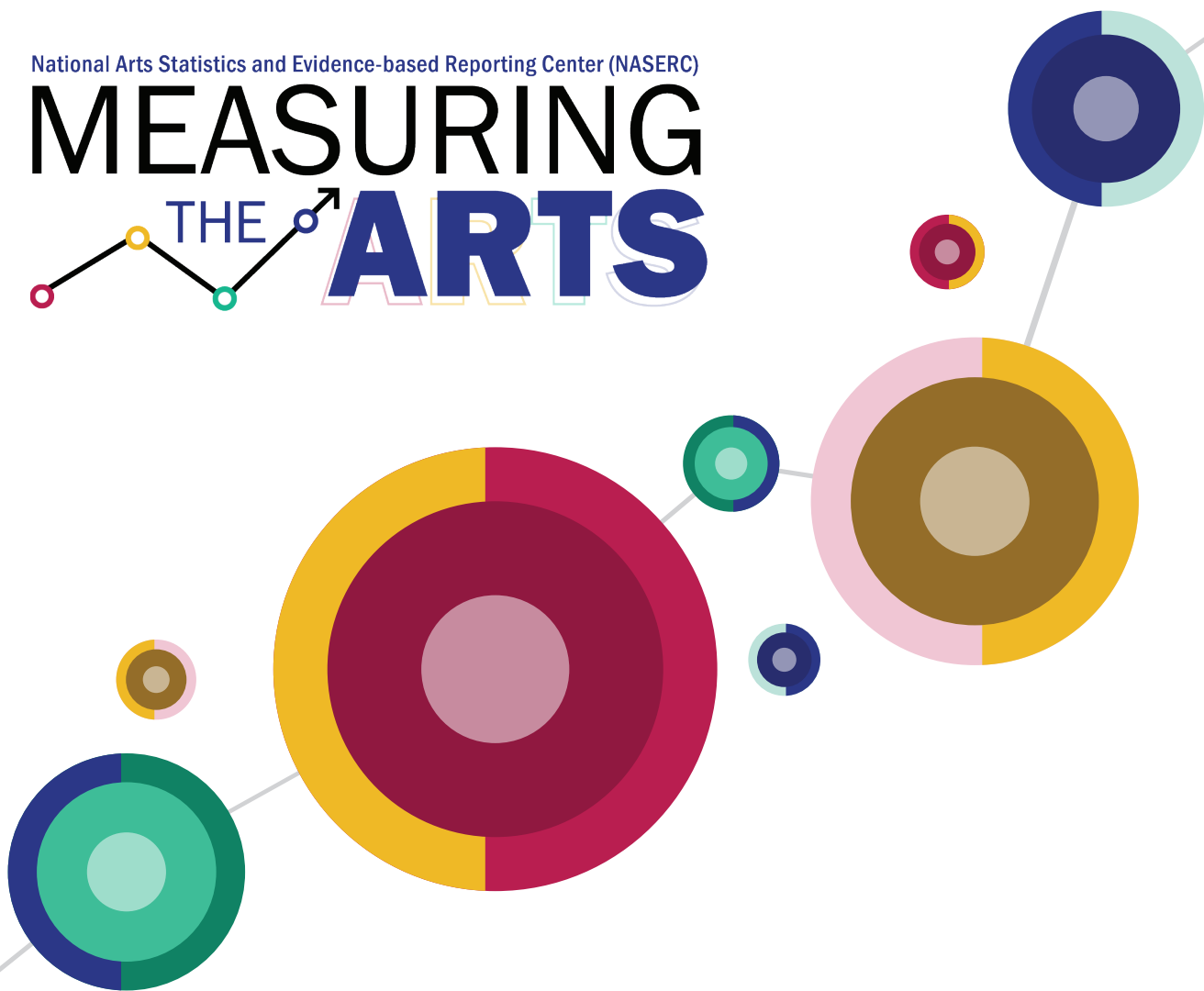



National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC)

MEASURING THE ARTS



Domain C

Arts and Cultural Assets



Indicator C.1: **What Do the Arts
Contribute to the U.S. Economy?**

Introduction

The arts are an essential part of the U.S. economy. In 2021, the arts contributed 4.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) to the U.S. economy, and this contribution reflects a rebound from the decreases in production that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indicator C.1 shows the overall contributions of arts and culture industries¹ within the broader economy by highlighting the total economic output for those industries, as well as the production of goods and services and import/export activity. For more information about the data used in Indicator C.1, see *Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA)*.

Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA)

Indicator C.1 uses data from the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA). Produced by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the ACPSA tracks the annual economic value of arts and cultural production across 35 commercial and nonprofit industries. Additional data from the ACPSA on employment and compensation are used in **Indicator C.2: Which Industries Employ Artists and Other Cultural Workers?** For more information, see the NEA's 2023 publication [Arts Data Profile #34: The U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account \[1998–2021\]](#)



Real Value Added to the GDP by Arts and Cultural Industries

In inflation-adjusted dollars, arts and cultural industries² contributed \$935 billion to the U.S. GDP in 2021 (see **Table C1-1**). Information services was the largest arts and cultural industry sector in the U.S. in 2021, contributing \$525 billion, or over half (57 percent) of the overall arts and cultural total (**Figure C1-1**).³ Other major industry sectors included design services (\$118 billion) and art support services (\$98 billion). The contribution of arts and cultural industries to the U.S. GDP has increased by 10 percent overall since 2018. While information services saw the largest absolute increase between 2018 and 2021 from \$440 billion to \$525 billion (an \$86 billion increase), design services saw the largest percentage increase (22 percent) during this period.

Economic activity from all major arts and cultural industry sectors was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The contribution of arts and cultural industries to the GDP decreased by 5 percent overall between 2019 and 2020 (from \$864 billion to \$822 billion). While most industries were negatively impacted, information services was the exception; its contribution to U.S. GDP increased by 1 percent from \$448 billion in 2019 to \$454 billion in 2020. The performing arts saw the largest absolute and proportional declines, from \$73 billion in 2019 to \$48 billion in 2020, a decrease of 34 percent. Fine arts education, construction, and manufacturing also

1 The U.S. Census Bureau classifies business establishments and enterprises into industries using its North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). “Arts and cultural industries” are those NAICS codes that represent organizations that are engaged in the production of arts and culture-related goods and services. The estimates of arts and cultural production employment in this indicator include just those workers in these organizations who are engaged in producing arts and culture-related goods and services. They include arts and cultural industries as well as non-arts industries that produce arts and cultural goods and services (a.k.a. all other industries). The employment figures for this indicator do not include artists and other cultural workers who are self-employed or employed in other industries that do not produce arts and culture-related goods and services. For more information, see the National Endowment for the Arts’ Arts Data Profile #34 [The U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account \(1998–2021\)](#).

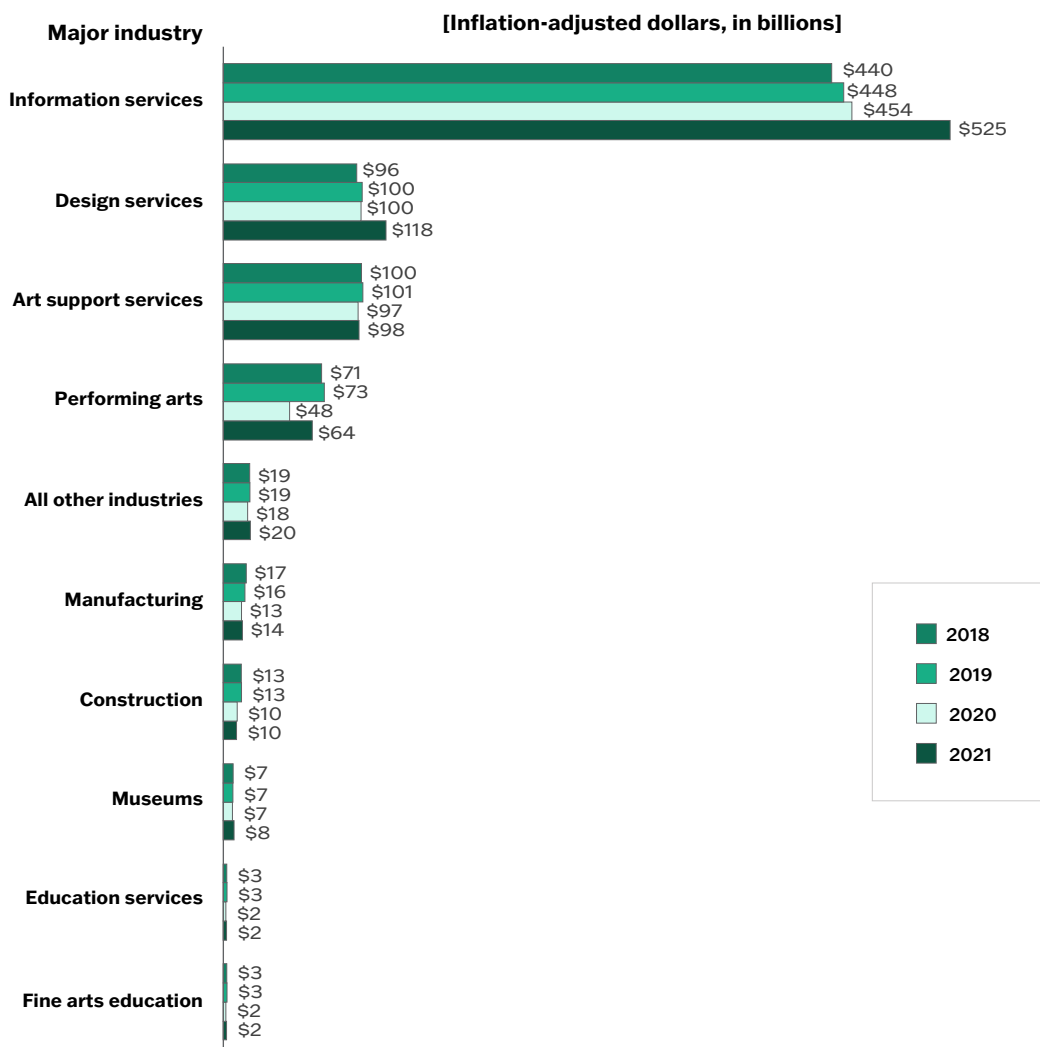
2 “Art support services” includes rental and leasing, grant-making and giving services, unions, government and other support services (such as theatrical ticket agencies). “Design services” includes advertising, architectural services, landscape architectural services, interior design services, industrial design services, graphic design services, computer systems design, photography and photofinishing services, and all other design services (such as jewelry design services, lighting design services, and textile design services). “Information services” includes publishing, motion pictures, sound recording, broadcasting, and other information services (such as web publishing and streaming). “Manufacturing” includes jewelry and silverware, printed goods, musical instruments, custom architectural woodwork and metalwork, and other goods (such as pottery manufacturing, stained and blown-glass manufacturing, and motion picture equipment). “Performing arts” includes performing arts companies; promoters of performing arts and similar events; agents/managers for artists; and independent artists, writers, and performers.

3 Differences between estimates (including trends over time) are considered significant because they are based on satellite account information derived from the Bureau of Economic Analysis core statistical program, so statistical tests related to sampling theory are not applicable. For more information see *The Arts in the United States: Developing Key National Indicators of Arts Activity* report.

had substantial declines (31 percent, 24 percent, and 16 percent respectively). However, most arts and cultural industries have since rebounded. The 2021 total economic contribution of these industries (\$935 billion) surpassed the total from 2019 (\$864 billion) by 8 percent and the total from 2020 (\$822 billion) by 14 percent. However, the total increase masks differences among specific arts and cultural industries. For example, while the performing arts rebounded from \$48 billion in 2020 to \$64 billion

in 2021 (a 34 percent increase), the contributions of this industry to the GDP in 2021 was still 12 percent less than the total in 2019 (\$73 billion). Fine arts education followed a similar pattern. In contrast, the design services industry experienced a 1 percent decrease to \$100 billion in 2020 but an 18 percent increase to \$118 billion in 2021. Likewise, the contribution of museums to the GDP dropped 5 percent to \$7 billion in 2020, but then increased to \$8 billion in 2021 (a 16 percent increase).

Figure C1-1. Real value added to GDP by arts and cultural industries, by major industry: 2018–2021



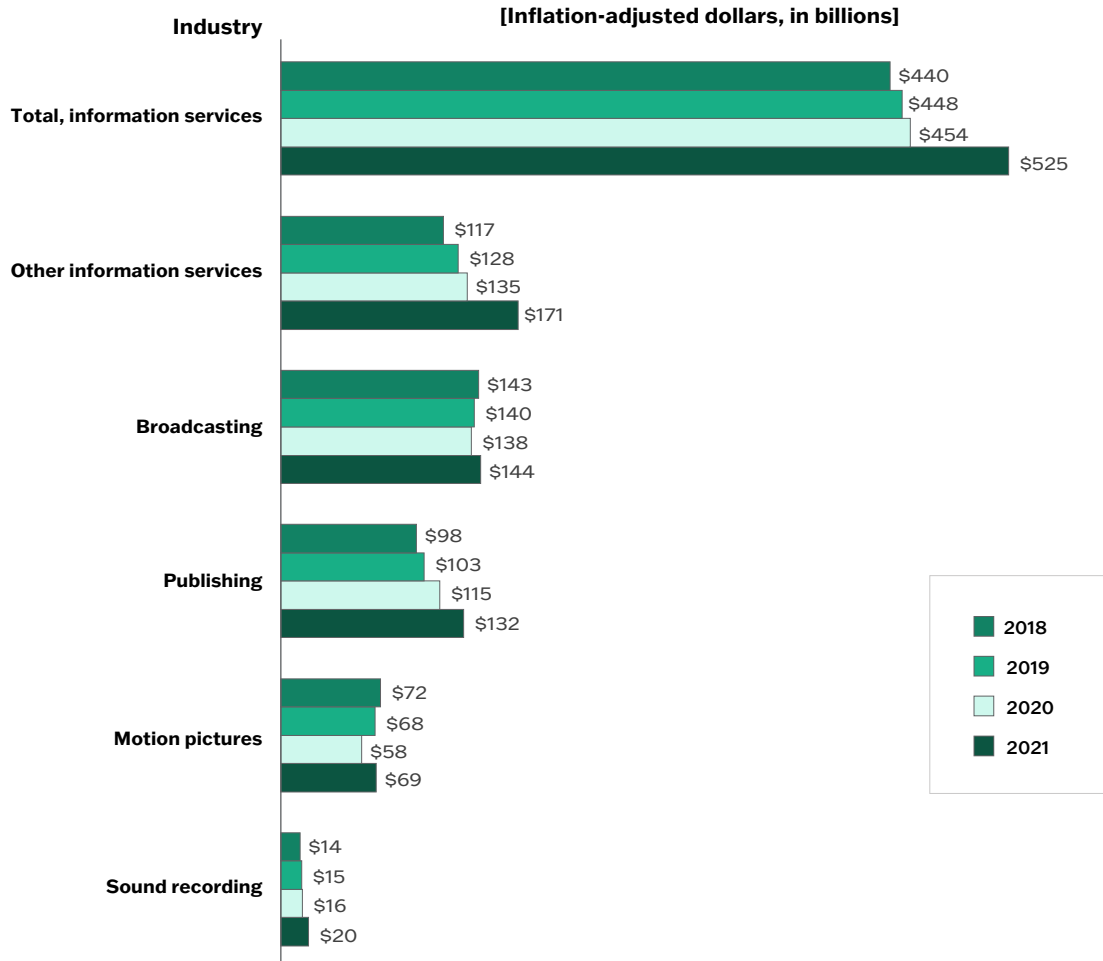
NOTE: “Real value” refers to estimates adjusted for inflation. “Art support services” includes rental and leasing, grant-making and giving services, unions, government and other support services (such as theatrical ticket agencies). “Design services” includes advertising, architectural services, landscape architectural services, interior design services, industrial design services, graphic design services, computer systems design, photography and photofinishing services, and all other design services (such as jewelry design services, lighting design services, and textile design services). “Information services” includes publishing, motion pictures, sound recording, broadcasting, and other information services (such as web publishing and streaming). “Manufacturing” includes jewelry and silverware, printed goods, musical instruments, custom architectural woodwork and metalwork, and other goods (such as pottery manufacturing, stained and blown-glass manufacturing, and motion picture equipment). “Performing arts” includes performing arts companies; promoters of performing arts and similar events; agents/managers for artists; and independent artists, writers, and performers. “All other industries refers” to non-arts industries that produce arts and cultural goods and services.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), 2018–2021.

Within information services, other information services—including web publishing and streaming—contributed \$171 billion to the GDP, followed by broadcasting (\$144 billion) and publishing (\$132 billion; **Figure C1-2**). As noted earlier, information services saw the largest absolute increase between

2018 and 2021 in its contribution to the GDP among arts and cultural industries. This increase was driven by an increase in other information services from \$117 billion in 2018 to \$171 billion in 2021, a 46 percent increase.

Figure C1-2. Real value added to GDP by information services industries, by industry: 2018–2021



NOTE: “Real value” refers to estimates adjusted for inflation. “Broadcasting” includes industries such as radio, television, and cable broadcasting excluding sports. “Motion pictures” includes industries such as motion picture production and distribution, television show production, cartoon production and distribution, cinemas, and film festivals. “Other information services” includes industries such as web publishing and streaming. “Publishing” includes industries such as book publishers, newspaper publishers, art print publishers, and arts-related software publishing. “Sound recording” includes industries such as record producers, music publishers, and sound recording studios.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), 2018–2021.

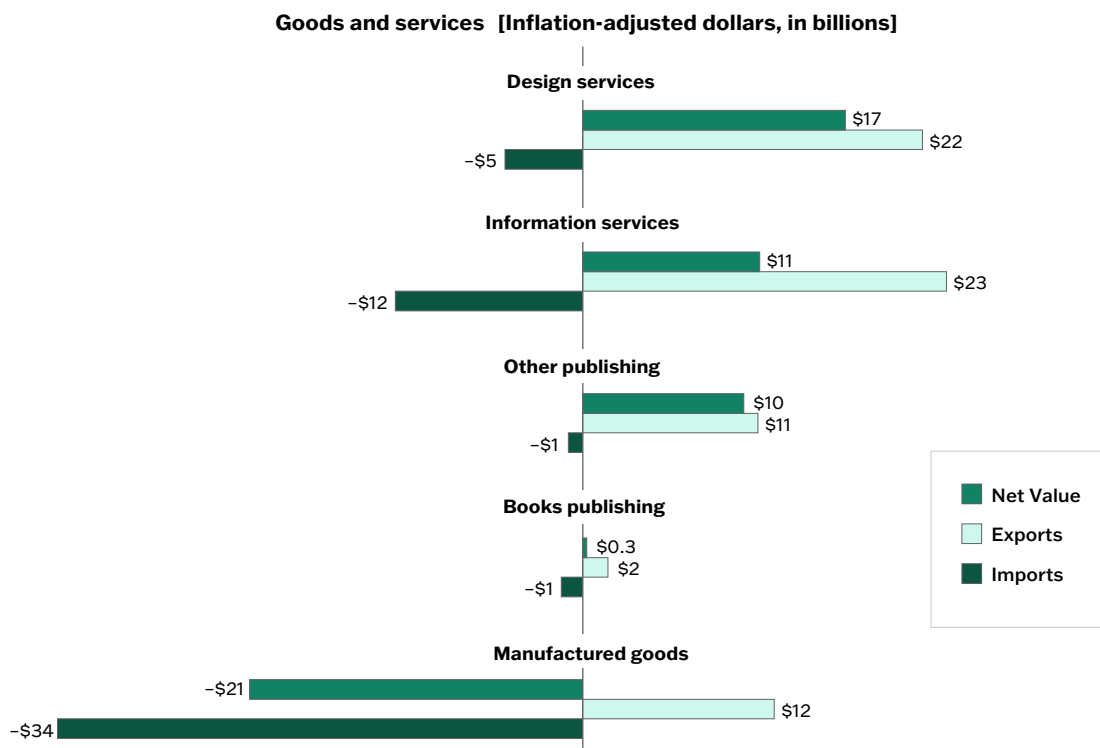
Imports and Exports of Arts and Cultural Goods and Services



In 2021, exports from U.S. arts and cultural industries surpassed the value of imports by \$18 billion (\$71 billion for exports compared to \$54 billion in imports; see Table C1-2). Net value is driven by the balance of exports to imports in each arts and cultural goods and services sector. Design services, information services, and other publishing had the highest net values in 2021, with \$17 billion, \$11 billion, and

\$10 billion, respectively (Figure C1-3). Design services (\$22 billion), information services (\$23 billion), and other publishing (\$11 billion) as well as manufactured goods (\$12 billion) had the highest exports in 2021. While manufactured goods had a higher level of exports (\$12 billion) compared to other publishing (\$11 billion), manufactured goods also had the highest level of imports (\$34 billion), resulting in the lowest net value of all sectors (-\$21 billion). This was driven by imports of jewelry and silverware (\$21 billion) and other manufactured goods (\$11 billion).

Figure C1-3. Real value of imports and exports, by selected major arts and cultural industry goods and services: 2021



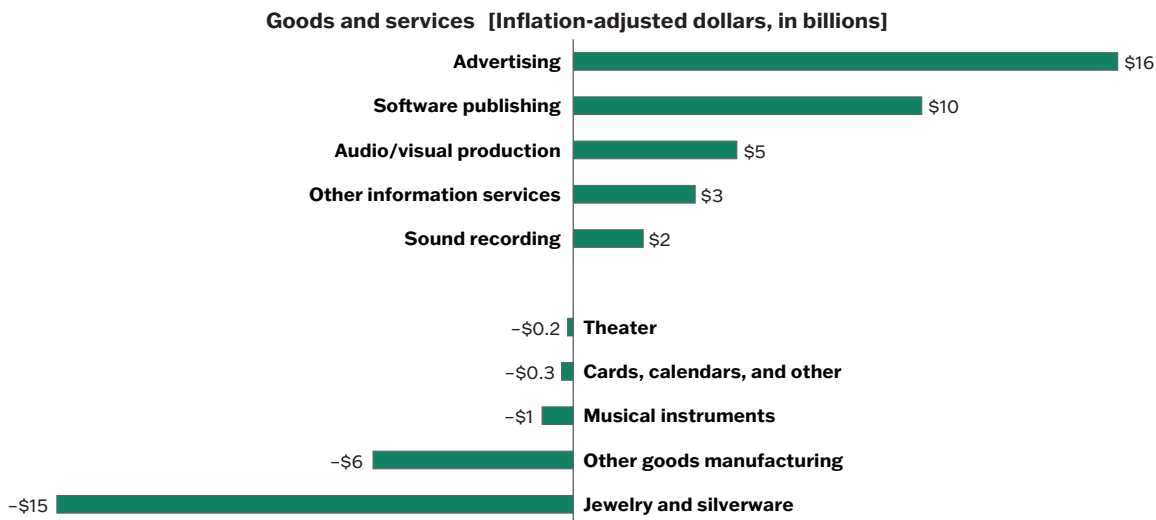
NOTE: “Real value” refers to estimates adjusted for inflation. “Net value” refers to the value of the total exports of industry goods and services (shown in this figure as positive numbers) minus total imports (shown as negative numbers). “Books publishing” includes education (K–12); higher education; general reference; professional, technical, and scholarly; adult trade; and children. “Design services” includes advertising, architectural services, landscape architectural services, interior design services, industrial design services, graphic design services, computer systems design, photography and photofinishing services, and all other design services (such as jewelry design services, lighting design services, and textile design services). “Information services” includes publishing, motion pictures, sound recording, broadcasting and other information services (such as web publishing and streaming). “Manufactured goods” includes jewelry and silverware, printed goods, musical instruments, custom architectural woodwork and metalwork, and other goods (such as pottery manufacturing, stained and blown-glass manufacturing, and motion picture equipment). “Other publishing” includes cards, calendars, and other; newspapers and periodicals; and software. Art support services; construction; education services; entertainment originals; fine arts education; independent artists, writers, and performers; museums, and the performing arts are excluded because net value, exports, and imports are equal or round to zero.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), 2021.

The net value of design services in 2021 was primarily driven by advertising, which had the highest net value of any arts and cultural goods and services subcategory in 2021 (\$16 billion; **Figure C1-4**).

Advertising was followed by software publishing (\$10 billion), audio/visual production (\$5 billion), other information services (\$3 billion), and sound recording (\$2 billion).

Figure C1-4. Detailed arts and cultural industry goods and services with the five highest and lowest net values: 2021



NOTE: “Net value” refers to the value of the total exports of industry goods and services (shown in this figure as positive numbers) minus total imports (shown as negative numbers). “Other information services” includes goods and services such as web publishing and streaming. “Other goods manufacturing” includes goods and services such as pottery manufacturing, stained and blown-glass manufacturing, and motion picture equipment.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), 2021.

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