

## Why Supporting Broadband is an Investment in the Arts

**In the 21st century, robust high-speed broadband connectivity and internet capacity are fundamental to the production, distribution, and enjoyment of creative works.** From providing artists with a platform to share their work to broadening creative modes of expression, the internet plays a key role for artists today. Audiences increasingly depend on connectivity to appreciate artistic work, whether they are consuming video content requiring broadband or live performances of traditionally in-person experiences like the [Metropolitan Opera](#) through streaming. However, approximately [42 million Americans](#) don't have any high-speed service, and many more have inadequate connections. Although streaming content requires a bare minimum 3 Mbps connection, Microsoft estimates that [160 million](#) don't have access to the internet at broadband speeds (25/3 Mbps).

Highlighting the importance of dependable internet access for artists, the [executive director](#) of Grantmakers in Film + Electronic Media suggests that "regardless of how a work of art or performance is experienced by an audience, at some stage of its creation and/or distribution it will likely transverse electronic media; whether as a sample sent to a prospective curator, or as a reference copy cached for future review, or as a piece of digital art." On the audience side, new mediums for creative digital works, such as [virtual reality](#), may be limited to a select few without changes in the reality of broadband today. Broadband can help ensure an even playing field for creators reliant on digital tools to sustain their careers and to ensure that existing and upcoming art forms can be enjoyed by all. That is why Congress must prioritize policies that promote broadband adoption to support artists and art connoisseurs.

The effects of poor broadband connectivity on creatives in rural communities cannot be ignored either; a [study](#) in rural Scotland suggests that access to broadband of at least 2 Mbps download speeds is crucial for creative workers and that inadequate access may prompt migration to areas with better digital connectivity. Rural artists without stable access to software and online applications face disadvantages in promoting their works, transforming what should be quick tasks such as sending emails with large attachments into [days-long affairs](#). Investing in broadband is essential to supporting the arts for creatives and audiences alike in rural, suburban, and urban communities.

## How Broadband Infrastructure Promotes the Arts

- Broadband enables the creation of new artistic media like fully immersive [virtual reality](#) and higher quality video content relying on next generation technologies like 4K, 5K or ultra high definition.
- Arts participation is [made easier](#) by broadband, allowing individuals to enjoy the kinds of art they want, when they want, and where they want it regardless of where they live and more quickly than if they had to rely on traditional distribution sources.
- By allowing [millions of artists to use the internet to circumvent traditional gatekeepers](#) of content, broadband access opens countless ways for creators to earn money and unleash permissionless creativity.
- The COVID-19 epidemic is highlighting the importance of broadband connectivity to the arts – with many galleries, musical ensembles, dancers, theater companies, and DJs moving their works and performances [online](#).
- Even arts that are seemingly independent of digital tools, like wood carving, increasingly depend on the internet for artists to reach their client base and professional networks - lack of broadband may lead to the outflow of artists drawn to rural settings for their beauty and tranquility.