Arts and culture accounted for nearly $700 billion in U.S. GDP

By Javier Panzar contact the reporter

The arts-and-culture sector contributed $698 billion to U.S. GDP in 2012, more than previously thought Broadcasting, the film industry and publishing were the biggest contributors to the $698-billion arts industry The arts-and-culture sector of the economy that includes broadcasting, film and publishing industries contributed $698.7 billion to the U.S. economy in 2012, according to a federal report released Monday.

The study by the the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis found that the arts-and-culture sector accounted for 4.32% of the U.S. gross domestic product in 2012, ahead of the $586-billion construction industry and the $461-billion transportation and warehousing industry, according to the report.

The arts industry's contribution is up compared with an estimate by the federal government last year that placed the sector's economic contribution at $504 billion.

The new report factors in the economic effect of artists in other lines of work including architecture and advertising. Analysts also took into account the long-term value of original artistic works that function as capital investments like TV shows that continue to sell on DVD.

The U.S. has a trade surplus when it comes to artistic and cultural products, said Sunil Iyengar, director of research and analysis for the National Endowment for the Arts.

"When you run a trade surplus you are talking about more job growth domestically. It is a healthy sign," he said. "It is clear that the arts are deeply integrated in the fabric of American life."

Analysts determined that 4.7 million workers were employed in arts-and-culture production and that for every 100 jobs created from new demand for the arts, 62 additional jobs are also created in other sectors.

The report is part of a new effort by the federal government to take a more in-depth look at the economic value of the arts.

The federal government released two other reports on arts participation levels and access to the arts Monday. California's performing-arts attendance rate was among the highest in the nation, with 42% of survey respondents reporting having gone to an art event in 2012.