



CREATIVE**MANY**

Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County  
Regional Profile

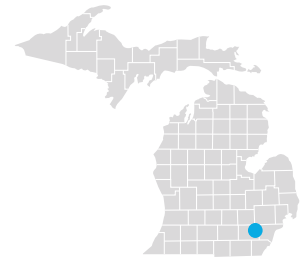
# CREATIVEstate<sup>®</sup>

**2016** Creative Industries Report

## MICHIGAN

Foundations for a Creative Economic Policy for Michigan

# Digitization



The creative technology sector continues to make a substantial impact in Ann Arbor accounting for 57% of the region's creative economy wages.

**Left: The award-winning Ann Arbor Art Fair is the largest in the state.**

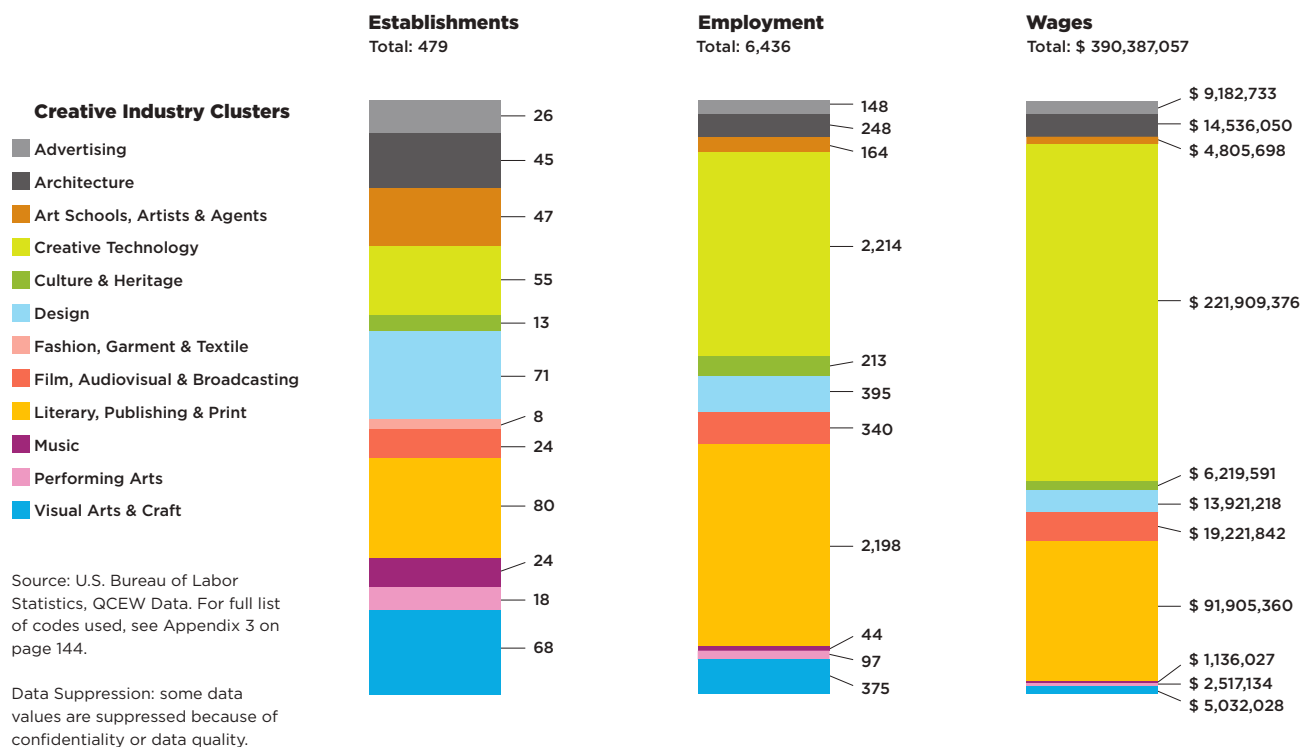
Photo Credit: "Ann Arbor Art Fairs Photos 2010" by Michigan Municipal League is licensed by CC BY-ND 2.0

Although there has been very little change overall in creative industry employment in this region, there has been over 12% increase in wages. Creative Technology represents the largest sector for both employment and wages by a large portion, followed by Literary, Publishing and Print.

Intensely concentrated in Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan education and health system remains one of the largest employers statewide and its diverse art and design education programs are highly regarded. The University boasts award-winning faculty and is ranked among the top ten programs in architecture, theater and music nationwide. Emeritus professor George Shirley and the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan were awarded a 2014 National Medal of Arts in "recognition of their contributions

## Creative Industries in Ann Arbor\* Distribution in 2014

\*Washtenaw County



### Architectural Practice

With its links to architectural practice for over 150 years, the city has both historically intact and contemporary architecture present in the streetscape.

“Since 1999, approximately 45 property owners in Ann Arbor have rehabilitated their historic properties by applying State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, which are available to the owners of properties in locally designated districts.”

MI Place, (n.d.). *Historic Preservation* | MI Place. [online] Available at: <http://www.miplace.org/downtowns-neighborhoods/ann-arbor/historic-preservation> [Accessed 14 Dec. 2015].

to the excellence, growth, support and availability of the arts”.<sup>1</sup> The University continues to provide a critical support structure for a wide range of creative activities and intellectual property generating organizations.

Ann Arbor ranks fourth among U.S. cities for all print and digital book, magazine and newspaper sales per capita from Amazon.<sup>1</sup> However, as in other places, many book publishers here are struggling in the face of technology disruptions while some are adopting innovative approaches to remain relevant. Specialization has been a successful strategy for Spry Publishing which focuses on health and wellbeing, aiming their publications at both patients and healthcare practitioners. Literati Bookstore opened in 2013 with the aim of maintaining an authentic local experience and creating community through hosted interactive events such as poetry nights, book clubs, author readings, and panel discussions. It preserves the service of a downtown-located general bookstore in the wake of the closing of the national book chain Borders. There is also commitment to digital scholarship in the city; “...digitalculturebooks is an imprint of the University of Michigan Press dedicated to publishing innovative work in new media studies and digital humanities.”<sup>2</sup>

Ann Arbor, and communities in the region, have thriving arts and cultural attractions with visitors and locals alike attending a growing roster of seasonal festivals. For 39 years the Folk Festival has brought musical legends and emerging musicians to the stage in support of The Ark, a nonprofit home for folk, roots and ethnic music. The independent Ann Arbor Film Festival attracts over 3,000 film entries to its renowned programming of experimental and art-based cinema. The multi-arts Summer Festival features performing arts and outdoor entertainment including music, dance, comedy, film, circus and street arts and welcomes 80,000 people to the events. The cultural landscape is rounded out with well supported theater programs and art galleries.

## Profile of Creative Industry in Ann Arbor\* for 2011-2014

### \*Washtenaw County

Year	Establishments	Employment	Wages	Nonemployer Establishments
2011	535	6,408	\$347,905,541	5,290
2012	506	6,479	\$356,808,168	5,428
2013	494	6,276	\$363,954,107	5,447
2014	479	6,436	\$390,387,057	N/A

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW program. For full list of codes used, see Appendix 3 on page 144.

## Creative Industry in Ann Arbor\* Change from 2011-2014

### \*Washtenaw County

	Establishments	Employment	Wages	Nonemployer Establishments
Change	-10.47%	+0.44%	+12.21%	+2.97% (2011-2013)

### Kids Learning Code

“‘It’s the new literacy. It’s the new media,’ said Elliot Soloway, a computer science engineering professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. ‘Coding is about giving kids the new pencil and paper, it’s giving them the new typewriter, the new tool to say things that they couldn’t say before.’ ”

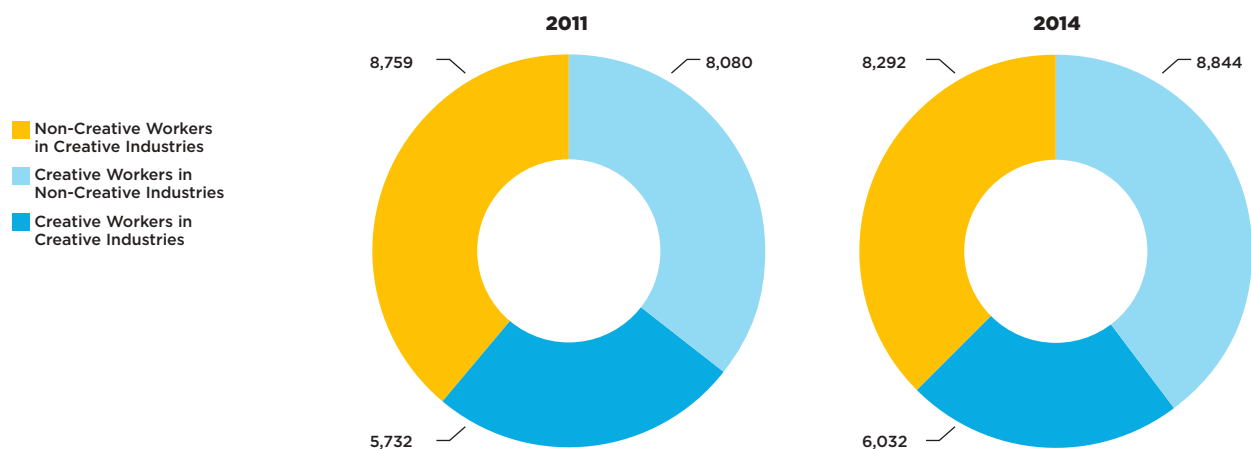
Glum, J. (2015). *Coding For Kids: Teaching Girls, Minorities To Program Important For A Diverse Tech Workforce*. International Business Times. [online] Available at: <http://www.ibtimes.com/coding-kids-teaching-girls-minorities-program-important-diverse-tech-workforce-1791902>

Tech-savvy creative experimentation is also flourishing in the expanding maker spaces and hack-a-thon events where a hands-on approach to tackling technical problems is encouraged. Using tools such as 3D printers, synthetic biology labs and coding software, lean start-up companies are also merging great ideas with grassroots entrepreneurial acumen. More than half of all venture capital firms operating in Michigan are located in Ann Arbor, providing necessary funding to help grow and scale these fledgling businesses and assisting in expanding Michigan’s economic diversity.<sup>3</sup>

By far the largest increase in employment in creative occupations in the city has been the growth of software and app developers. This reflects the corresponding increase in mobile device platforms as information technology companies expand their reach, the emerging internet of things connecting objects with technology, and a growing appetite for digital games. The strength of computer sciences, data sciences and electrical engineering at the University of Michigan supports the expansion of creative digital activity. More graphic designers are finding work in the city as well, many providing interaction design and user experience expertise alongside digital developers. A synergy of expertise will mean these two occupations will likely see continued growth in the near future as technology continues to be woven into healthcare, home monitoring systems and transportation.

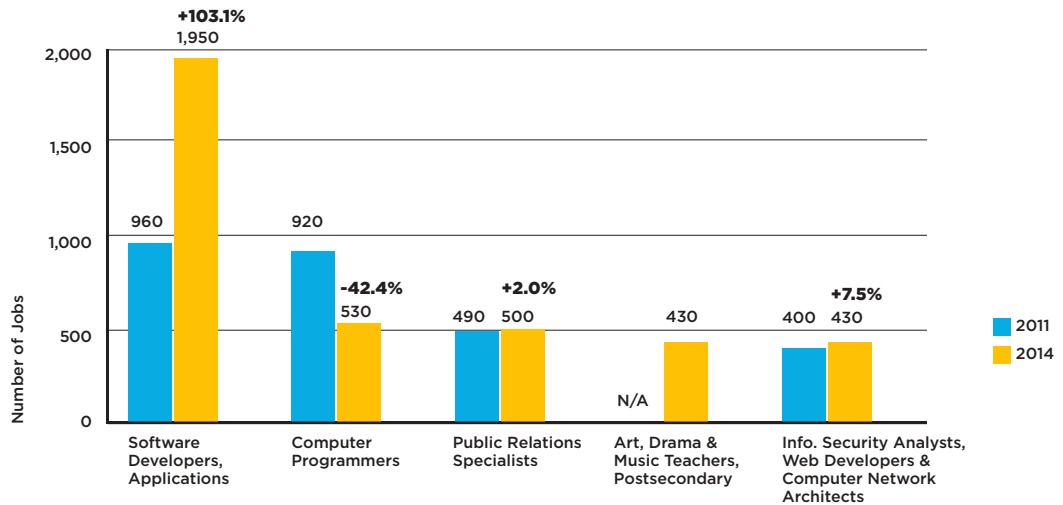
1. Business Wire, (2016). *Amazon.com Announces the Most Well-Read Cities in America*. [online] Available at: <http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=176060&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1695968&highlight=>
2. Regents of the University of Michigan, (2012). *About*. [online] The University of Michigan Press. Available at: <https://www.press.umich.edu/about> [Accessed 25 Feb. 2016].
3. Michigan Venture Capital Association. (2015). *2015 Michigan Venture Capital Annual Research Report*. [PDF] Ann Arbor: Michigan Venture Capital Association, pp.1-53. Available at: <https://michiganvca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/MVCA-2015-Research-Report.pdf>

## Creative Employment Breakdown for Ann Arbor MSA



Source: Economic Modeling Specialists Incorporated, 2015.

## Top Creative Occupations in Ann Arbor MSA by Employment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics program.  
 Included codes: 15-1132: Software Developers, Applications, 15-1131: Computer Programmers, 27-3031: Public Relations Specialists, 25-1121: Art, Drama, and Music Teachers, Postsecondary, 15-1179: Information Security Analysts, Web Developers, and Computer Network Architects.

Percentage change  
in total regional creative  
industries wages, 2011-2014

**+10.9%**

2014 regional  
creative industries  
location quotient  
compared to U.S.


**0.94**

## Top Paid Creative Occupations in Ann Arbor MSA for 2014

Job Title	Average Wages
Public Relations Managers	\$124,370
Marketing Managers	\$116,550
Curators	\$109,800
Communications Teachers, Postsecondary	\$103,340
Art Directors	\$95,530

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics program.  
 For full list of codes used, see Appendix 3 on page 144.

Although there has been a large increase in the number of people employed in the information and communications technology sector in Ann Arbor, advertising jobs continue to command the highest salaries of creative occupations, with three of the top five average wages for Public Relations Managers, Marketing Managers and Art Directors.



A Maker Works member welding at Ann Arbor workshop facilities.

Photo Credit: Al McWaters

#### CASE STUDY: ANN ARBOR & WASHTENAW COUNTY

## Maker Works

This member-based workshop provides access to tools and training, creating a safe space to nurture creative skills and experience.

Located in Ann Arbor, Maker Works is a 14,000 square foot member – based workshop space that provides tools and training to both makers and learners. It is a hub that brings together small businesses with good ideas, entrepreneurs who want to invest, and tradespeople, skilled workers, engineers, artists, electronics geeks and hobbyists who want to create things.

Maker Works is the brainchild of Dale Grover and Tom Root. They share values and a common ambition – to run a business and achieve social good. Grover's background includes participation in the maker community and involvement in tech meet-ups and co-working. Root has been engaged in social entrepreneurship, running a community of food-related businesses under the Zingerman's brand.

Together they realized the potential of a makerspace workshop to address critical issues in their community.

Companies in Southeast Michigan have made significant investment in training workers for manufacturing jobs that have declined in recent times. Grover and Root saw the opportunity to connect this skilled workforce with people who have the potential to start a business, to scale it and to eventually employ others. They also saw the potential to encourage the development of the makers of the future by supporting students who no longer have access to shop classes.

Providing access to tools and training in the areas of metal, circuits/ electronics, wood and craft/textiles enables the workshop to support life-long learning and the development of

future makers in the Ann Arbor area. Conceived as a prototyping facility, each domain is anchored by an expensive piece of equipment that is cost-prohibitive to most individuals.

Amer Abughaida is one member who has taken advantage of the facilities and community at Maker Works. Inspired by a classmate in Saudi Arabia who uses a wheelchair in an environment with lots of stairs, Abughaida has been developing a stair-climbing wheelchair.

Maker Works reflects a long history of making and manufacturing in Michigan by creating a safe space for nurturing creative skills and experience (spanning low to high tech) that will be important for the workforce of tomorrow. ■