

FAST FACTS

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Information: THAT'S Entertainment!

We hear a lot about the role of information in the economy these days, but the focus is usually on its increasingly critical role in business, industry, and government. What about the role of information in the consumer sector of the economy? How big a part of the U.S. economy is it as an entertainment product?

The June 1997 issue of **Survey of Current Business** reports detailed national data on consumer spending on recreation from 1993 to 1995. By 1995, more than a third of such expenditures were for “information”—that is, books and periodicals as well as audio and video cassettes, CD-ROMs, computer software packages, and the hardware they each require.

Highlights

Americans spend ...

- four times as much on books as on tickets to movies or sporting events.
- more on books and periodicals combined than on children's toys or adult “toys,” such as cameras, boats, and exercise equipment.
- twice as much on electronic information and the equipment it requires as on amusement parks, bowling alleys, bus tours, dance halls, golf courses, skating rinks, and swimming pools combined.

Between 1993 and 1995, the “information as entertainment” economy grew by nine percent, making it, by 1995, more than a third of the recreation economy. This can be credited largely to a 28 percent increase, during that two-year interval, in consumer spending on electronic information and related equipment. But, spending on recreational print matter increased, too. Between 1994 and 1995 alone, spending for books grew by four percent and spending for periodicals grew by almost seven percent.



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Consumer Spending on Information in Print and Non-Print Formats and Other Recreational Activities, 1993-95

Type of Expenditure	Billions of Dollars			Annual Percent Change	
	1993	1994	1995	1993-94	1994-95
Books and maps	\$19.0	\$20.1	\$20.9	5.8%	4.0%
Magazines, newspapers, etc.	22.6	24.0	25.6	6.2	6.7
Video and audio products, computer equipment, etc.	68.8	80.0	88.3	16.3	10.4
Information sub-total	110.4	124.1	134.8	12.4	8.6
Sports and photographic equipment, boats, and pleasure craft, etc.	32.6	39.1	43.8	19.9	12.0
Nondurable toys and sport supplies	36.5	40.1	42.7	9.9	6.5
Commercial participant amusements (amusement parks, bowling alleys, bus tours, dance halls, golf courses, skating rinks, swimming pools, etc.)	31.4	34.9	37.0	11.1	6.0
Clubs and fraternal organizations	11.2	12.1	12.9	8.0	6.6
Legitimate theater, opera, etc.	7.9	8.7	9.0	10.1	3.4
Motion picture theaters	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.8	1.8
Spectator sports	5.1	5.3	5.3	3.9	-0-
Pari-mutuel gambling (net receipts)	3.3	3.3	3.3	-0-	-0-
Other	95.5	101.9	107.5	6.7	5.5
Recreation total	339.0	374.8	401.7	10.6	7.2

Source: **Survey of Current Business**, June 1997, National Data, D-29, Table B.4. Personal Consumption Expenditures by Type of Expenditure