

Every year, when Creative BC and other official sources release new **GDP figures** and **jobs supported** in the creative industries, confusion can quickly arise between the economic impact of **British Columbia (BC)** as a whole versus that of the **City of Vancouver**. Since Vancouver is BC's largest metro hub with a dense cluster of film, TV, VFX, animation, and interactive digital media companies, it's tempting—and easy—to blur the lines when explaining these numbers.

But as someone with 12 years covering BC's film and TV sectors, I've learned that keeping regional scope straight is essential. It also helps clarify how industry drivers like **virtual production** and **real-time visualization** are reshaping workflows and competitiveness across the province—not just in Vancouver.

Why Does BC vs Vancouver Matter in GDP Explained?

First off, let's set the record straight:

- **British Columbia (BC)** is the entire province on Canada's west coast, home to over 5 million people, including many urban, suburban, and rural communities.
- **Vancouver** is the largest city within BC, with about 675,000 residents in the city proper and roughly 2.6 million people in the Metro Vancouver area.

When Creative BC or provincial economic reports detail GDP generated by film, TV, VFX, animation, and interactive digital media, they often refer to the province-wide impact. In contrast, municipal reports or local employment studies typically highlight Metro Vancouver-specific figures.

Why does this matter? Because the Creative BC figures capture creative economic contributions from communities like Victoria, Kelowna, Kamloops, and Surrey—not just Vancouver. For example, specialized VFX studios or game developers based in smaller cities contribute to BC's aggregated GDP and job counts. Ignoring this can lead to overemphasizing Vancouver's role and underestimating the full scope of BC's creative industries.

How Digitization is Changing BC's Film and TV Workflows

The digitization of film and TV production workflows is a cornerstone theme for explaining both the provincial scale of creative industry growth and the geographic spread of economic activity.

To unpack this:

- **Digitization** means moving from film reels and practical sets towards computer-based tools for shooting, editing, effects, and collaboration.
- This includes everything from using high-speed cloud data transfers for dailies (daily footage checks) to adopting sophisticated software pipelines for animation and post-production.
- Such digital workflows enable smaller studios and remote locations within BC to connect and contribute seamlessly, instead of centralizing all activity in Vancouver studios.

For example, a VFX company in Victoria can receive real-time feedback from producers based in Vancouver or Toronto thanks to these workflows, making physical distance less of a barrier.

Virtual Production and Real-Time Visualization: Revolutionizing Creativity Across BC

Virtual production—in which digital environments, actors, and camera angles are combined in live, interactive sessions—and **real-time visualization** are rapidly gaining ground in BC’s entertainment sectors. Understanding these tools can help clarify the expanding economic figures you see in Creative BC’s reports.

What Is Virtual Production?

Virtual production uses LED volume stages, game engines, and motion-capture technology to merge physical and digital worlds during filming. Instead of shooting on location or building physical sets, creators project digital backgrounds or elements around performers in real time.



Real-Time Visualization

Real-time visualization refers to the ability to render computer graphics instantly as they’re created or adjusted, often via game <https://vancouverguardian.com/how-vancouvers-entertainment-industry-is-changing-in-the-digital-age/> engines like Unreal Engine. This means directors and VFX artists can see final or near-final visuals live on set or in collaborative sessions, speeding up decisions and iterations.

Why These Matter for BC vs Vancouver GDP Discussions

- Virtual production hubs are spreading beyond Vancouver to suburbs and other BC cities, helping diversify economic activity.
- Real-time visualization tools facilitate collaboration with international clients, increasing BC’s competitiveness globally and boosting GDP figures without concentrating all expenditures in Vancouver.
- The high capital investment for LED stages typically locates companies near Vancouver for logistical reasons, but service providers, freelancers, and smaller studios across BC benefit indirectly.

Thus, when Creative BC reports rising GDP or jobs supported in film and TV, part of the story is the tech-driven decentralization enabled by these innovations.

VFX and Animation as BC’s Competitive Advantages

The **visual effects (VFX)** and **animation** sectors are two of BC’s strongest creative industry pillars that significantly affect GDP results and employment numbers.

Why? Because:

- BC's tax incentives and skilled talent pool attract major VFX studios working on Hollywood blockbusters and streaming series.
- Animation studios benefit from digital workflows and cloud-based collaboration to serve clients worldwide.
- These sectors require highly specialized, often tech-heavy work that commands higher wages and contributes disproportionately to GDP figures.

While many big VFX and animation facilities are headquartered in Metro Vancouver, many satellite teams, freelancers, and emerging studios are spread throughout BC. As Creative BC's figures reflect all these contributors, understanding the province-wide distribution avoids mistakenly attributing the entire GDP and jobs supported numbers to the city of Vancouver alone.

Interactive Digital Media: A Major BC Creative Industry Beyond Film and TV

Often overlooked when focusing solely on film and TV, **interactive digital media**—including video games, XR (extended reality), and immersive experiences—is a booming sector across BC.

Here's what makes interactive media another critical driver of provincial GDP and employment:

- Game development studios, many located outside Vancouver's core, contribute substantial economic activity through creation, publishing, and service platforms.
- Technologies like virtual production and real-time visualization increasingly cross over with immersive content for games and interactive media, blurring industry boundaries.
- Jobs supported in this sector are growing rapidly, and because the work is often remote-friendly, smaller cities in BC can compete for talent and contracts.

This means Creative BC's provincial figures incorporate a broad array of creative digital businesses, not just traditional film and TV studios clustered in Vancouver.

Summarizing BC vs Vancouver GDP Explained and Jobs Supported

To recap key points that will help accurately explain 2024's creative sector economic numbers without mixing up BC and Vancouver:



1. **BC includes much more than Vancouver:** GDP and jobs numbers from Creative BC reflect the entire province’s creative industry footprint.
2. **Digitization enables distributed workflows:** Virtual production, real-time visualization, and cloud tools connect creators provincially, expanding economic impact geographically.
3. **VFX and animation are key drivers:** Their high-value contributions span many BC communities, elevating total provincial GDP.
4. **Interactive digital media is a major growth area:** It boosts provincial figures and is not confined to Vancouver’s urban core.
5. **Understanding these nuances prevents oversight:** It ensures credit is given province-wide for the creative sector’s impressive economic and jobs supported milestones in 2024.

How to Use These Insights in Your Reporting or Presentations

- When quoting Creative BC GDP figures, specify whether data is provincial or Vancouver-centric.
- Highlight case studies or examples from outside Vancouver – such as a VFX studio in Victoria or a game developer in Kelowna – to illustrate geographic spread.
- Explain how emerging technologies like virtual production shift the creative economy landscape, rooting economic gains beyond metro hubs.
- When discussing jobs supported, mention the diversity of roles and locations, including freelancers and smaller towns benefiting from digital connectivity.

By weaving these points together, your explanation will be clear, accurate, and reflective of BC’s dynamic creative ecosystem as shown in the 2024 GDP numbers.

Table: BC vs Vancouver Creative Industry Economic Impact — Key Differences

Aspect	British Columbia (Province-wide)	Vancouver (City/Metro Area)	Population Covered	5+ million	~2.6 million
(Metro Vancouver) GDP Figures	Includes all creative activities in province, including smaller communities	Concentrated but excludes other BC creative hubs	Jobs Supported	Includes jobs in smaller cities plus Vancouver	

Focuses on urban and suburban Metro Vancouver role Technology Adoption Distributed via digital and cloud workflows Clusters virtual production infrastructure Key Industries Film, TV, VFX, animation, interactive media broadly distributed Heavy concentration in VFX, animation, film production services

Final Thoughts

Explaining BC's 2024 GDP numbers confidently means knowing what those numbers represent—and what they don't. By distinguishing the provincial scope from Vancouver's local economy, and showcasing how digitization and cutting-edge tools like virtual production and real-time visualization enable a broad creative cluster across BC, you provide a clear, honest, and informative narrative.

Ultimately, the creative sector's contribution to BC's economy is a province-wide success story enriched by many communities, technological innovation, and a vibrant mix of film, TV, VFX, animation, and interactive media talents.