The National Endowment for the Arts recently released 2008 Public Participation in the Arts reported, 'Relatively fewer adults attend performing arts events in 2008 than in previous years. The percentage of adults attending at least one arts activity declined from 39% to 35% since the previous study in 2006 (pg 2). Not surprisingly, the study also reported, 'Many Americans use the Internet to engage with artworks or performances, and those who participate via the Internet do so frequently.' (Pg 4.) The study went on to say, 'about 1 in 5 adults reported using the Internet to watch, listen to, or download live or recorded music, theater, or dance performances' (pg 41). While those who track web usage may not finding these statistics surprising their impact on performing arts organizations across the nation are profound. With live attendance declining and Internet access increasing, it becomes imperative to create pathways to transform these brick and mortar institutions to the new broadband reality if they are to thrive in the new creative economy. Compounding this situation is the adoption and growth of creative enterprise zones throughout the country as the cornerstone for redevelopment projects. The potential threats to the economic health of these communities are profound: if seats are not filled at arts events local small businesses like restaurants, boutiques, and bookstores loose income, municipalities tax bases shrink, and real estate values may decline. The need to generate renewed and new interest in these organizations can best be served through Internet innovations for program delivery and to spark interest in live performance. In the midst of this exists a growing need to train America’s labor force, many of whom have been unemployed for two years or more, with 21st century skills that equip them for the expanding creative sector workforce. This workforce extends beyond performing arts organizations as schools, hospitals, and government agencies increasingly rely on websites to communicate their programs and services to the communities they serve. This confluence of creative sector enterprise and workforce development is at the heart of the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture’s (NAMAC) and comScore’s Developing Creative Sector Skills for the Broadband Workforce Project. Background Information on Partnership Institutions The National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC) is a national arts service organization for the media arts that includes film, video, audio and digital technologies. Their mission is to foster and fortify the culture of independent media arts. Through dialogue, collaboration, research and training they connect, organize and develop creative organizations. comScore is a global leader in measuring the digital world and a preferred source of digital marketing intelligence. comScore provides syndicated and custom solutions in online audience measurement, e-commerce, advertising, search, video and mobile technology. It has been recognized for its leadership in research as a World Economic Forum Technology Pioneer and a Honomichl Global
Top 25 market research firm. comScore has 1,100+ clients, over 500 employees, is headquartered in Herndon, VA, and is publically traded (NASDAQ: SCOR). comScore has worked with all ten of the top ISPs and providing market sizing and share tracking solutions for over five years. In addition to the 1,100+ clients that they serve, comScore has an established government practice. Within this vertical, they service clients such as the U.S. Army, FCC, FTC, USPS, NIH and the Dept. of Justice. comScore also has a non-exclusive arrangement with the FCC to provide data in support of the National Broadband Plan, with reporting focused on Internet throughput speeds, application usage and data consumption, at the ZIP Code level. comScore has a vast amount of expertise in navigating broadband space; as such, comScore is well-positioned to measure and increase broadband adoption in the joint Developing Creative Sector Skills for the Broadband Workforce Project. Like comScore, NAMAC is an expert in what it offers to the Developing Creative Sector Skills Project. In 2010, NAMAC will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary of providing service and support to the media arts community. Founded in 1980 out of a shared impulse of the then young but burgeoning media arts field, NAMAC was created by an eclectic group of media arts organizations from different regions who realized that together they represented a stronger social and cultural force than alone. The organization that the media arts field envisioned 30 years ago is today a national intermediary support organization representing over 300 institutional members. NAMAC is central to a network that reflects America's ethnic and geographic diversity throughout the public media environment. Their membership roster includes artist service organizations, community-based digital media and technology centers, public media (television, radio, web) broadcasters, K-12 youth media and digital literacy programs, film exhibitors, and university programs. Although the public may not be aware of it, much of the noncommercial and independently produced media they see on public television, in schools and community centers, and through online streaming has been supported by NAMAC member organizations. The Developing Creative Sector Skills of the Broadband Workforce Project Core to the first phases of the Developing Creative Sector Skills for the Broadband Workforce Project is comScore's ability to report broadband adoption at the local market level. comScore observes Internet connectivity across the country and can pinpoint the precise geographic and demographic areas in need of broadband outreach programming. This measurement capability is crucial not only in the early stages of determining what areas to target, but, for long-term and a barometer for success in promoting broadband adoption. comScore will report to NAMAC the following at the local market level: broadband penetration, broadband technology share, and average speed achieved. This information will be leveraged to: 1) identify markets that need to be targeted with outreach; 2) monitor monthly to evaluate change; and 3) to educate the end users. NAMAC's local partner Minneapolis Neighborhood Network is a highly-visible organization with extensive community outreach capabilities. comScore and NAMAC will provide a unique and powerful combination of precise broadband availability and usage data, with a focused public awareness program, that will target the struggling arts community and provide quantifiable results that meet and exceed the Recovery Act's statutory goals. Using comScore's data, NAMAC will develop a scalable pilot in that will train cultural sector organizations in broadband adaptability and usage to strengthen the creative sectors. Developing Creative Sector Skills for the Broadband Workforce will place a broadband trainer in NAMAC members media arts organizations to provide training and support to cultural organizations based in these communities to engage their audiences and communities through the Internet. A secondary goal of this project is to train under- and unemployed workers with new media technologies to make them better
equipped for 21st century jobs in their communities. This synergetic approach will help organizations transform into 21st century ones, where the Internet becomes a vehicle to promote their work as well as the platform to launch their ecommerce ventures such as selling downloadable works they create. Simultaneously, it will forge relationships between these organizations and the workers in training with a desired outcome of creating new jobs in these organizations. The innovative partnership between NAMAC and comScore will provide durable and robust broadband adoption that’s deeply embedded in the underserved arts community. comScore is able to signal areas with low broadband penetration and NAMAC is able to reach out to the arts community and ensure broadband adoption. With collaboration under the BTOP grant, NAMAC and comScore will work together to increase broadband awareness and create a virtual artistic community at a time when we all need greater access to cultural materials.