

OPENING REMARKS BY E. JEANNE HARNOIS  
(NWU Financial Secretary/Treasurer, Journalism Division Co-Chair, and Boston Steering  
Committee Member)

Welcome from the National Writers Union to the combined Digital Media Conference and Grassroots Use of Technology Conference, affectionately known as GUT if you've been following the signs to get here. We are excited and pleased to be working with Open Media Boston and Organizers Collaborative. We also want to thank our friends at Pen New England, Grub Street, and Women's National Book Association.

This is an exciting and troubling time to be a writer. It's exciting that there are new formats and new challenges, but troubling because it has always been difficult to make a living as a writer and now it's-while not impossible-getting to be nearly so. That's what makes our (NWU's) mission especially critical. We have put ourselves on the front line in the fight for writers to earn a living wage. So the question poised here, "How can creators make a living wage when we are expected to give away our work for free?" is especially important to us.

The quick answer is that expectations need to change. We need a new question. But clearly the old model is changing, and as writers we also need to change. Writing can no longer be a solitary occupation. More than ever, we need to make and build connections. (I'll be talking more about that tomorrow in the social media workshop.)

As writers we also need to embrace the new formats. When I think of print versus online I believe the question is misguided-remember 8-tracks and laser discs? The formats are gone, but we still have music and movies.

So the message I want to bring is: Embrace digital media, and let's figure out how to make a living at the same time. Thank you, and enjoy the conference.