



## **Writers Guild of Canada Presents New Ideas for More Canadian Stories Online.**

**February 24, 2009 – Gatineau** – The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) appeared before the CRTC today to advocate for a strengthened presence for Canadian programming online. The WGC asked the commission to recognize that consumer behaviour has changed, and that the Internet is now an integral part of the Canadian broadcasting system. They can do this, asserts the WGC, by implementing a new framework bringing more Canadian TV programming online and fostering the creation of original online content.

“Canadian audiences want to be able to access Canadian television content on any platform,” says Rebecca Schechter, President, WGC. “Their demand has pushed ISPs to become part of the Canadian broadcasting system. Yet only a fraction of Canadian TV content is available online – and just try to find it, buried as it is under mountains of U.S. programming.”

The WGC is advocating for a minimum level of 60% streamed Canadian TV content on broadcasters’ websites and branded channels, and policies ensuring Canadian content is more accessible. In addition, the WGC is proposing incentives and other ideas to foster promotion of Canadian content online. Despite the ISPs claims that they are not broadcasters, the cultural relevance of the Canadian broadcasting system is not diminished because there is a new pipeline.

The WGC made it clear that it has no desire to see user-generated content regulated, and its proposal will in no way restrict what people can see and do on the Internet.

The WGC is also calling for the creation of a new fund – established through a modest ISP levy – to support the development of professionally produced Canadian new media content.

“Because Canadians want this content,” says Maureen Parker, Executive Director, WGC, “the few public funds devoted to new media in Canada are drastically oversubscribed. The levy will support new original programming, and strengthen the ISPs’ offering to their customers, Canadian audiences. The ISPs are the gateway to the Internet. They are protected from foreign competition, but are completely unregulated and charge whatever they want for Internet services. We are asking for 1.5% of their total revenues – which last year was \$5.7 billion. This will not break the bank or the Internet.”

For more information, please contact David Kinahan, Director of Communications, Writers Guild of Canada, at 416-979-7907 or 1-800-567-9974, or by email at [d.kinahan@wgc.ca](mailto:d.kinahan@wgc.ca)