

WEB/MULTIMEDIA

BACKGROUND

Since the launch of CRS.org in February 1999, the CRS online experience has grown from a single website to 14 different Web properties, including various program-specific websites, online fundraising properties and resource libraries. Social media channels are also part of the CRS online experience, and, along with an e-mail marketing program, are managed in conjunction with the Charitable Giving Division.

The goal of all online outreach is to raise awareness of and engagement with CRS. Web traffic and online donations are often influenced by emergencies and the accompanying waves of coverage in the mainstream media, which result in drastic spikes in traffic and donations. The CRS online experience delivers content relevant to CRS and our mission through stories from the field, video, photos and photo galleries, audio slideshows and other types of interactive multimedia, as well as online donation and advocacy opportunities. In calendar year 2011, CRS.org had 1,020,982 unique visitors, generating about 2.9 million page views. (See Appendix H for more information about Web traffic and online revenue.)

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most significant challenges facing the team is the need to cater to audiences with conflicting needs in a way that allows each segment to easily find its information and engagement paths. Prime examples are two groups of supporters: Catholics in the United States, who prefer that their engagement be connected to their faith, and institutional donors (e.g., the U.S. government, large foundations), who prefer a secular tone in the information provided. Web/Multimedia can best manage this polarity via a Web governance policy that offers guidelines about audiences and messages on CRS.org. The current effort to create a competitive market positioning for CRS will provide a clear point of difference with broad appeal; we can then customize messages to different audience segments that deliver the positioning in each segment's preferred voice.

Opportunities include proactively pushing content out to target segments rather than waiting for them to find their way to content available on CRS.org. A key opportunity in development is providing content to major Catholic online publishers (e.g., bloggers, websites, media sites), many of whom have larger audiences than CRS does. These publishers might not normally seek out international relief and development content, but would be open to linking to or posting such content that is written from the perspective of the Catholic faith. A related opportunity is to create topic-specific, narrow-focus blogs that reach specific audience segments with relevant content based on the specific area of interest (e.g., emergencies). Such an approach allows visitors to subscribe to the specific content stream in which they are interested, allowing us to deliver the content to their e-mail inbox and provide additional engagement opportunities.

This year, we will begin a much-needed overhaul of CRS.org. The reimagined site will be a gateway that connects CRS with constituents via content tailored to audience segments. As the competition for online attention escalates, our ability to reach out with clarity and focus is the most effective way to engage users. Because so much Web browsing is occurring via mobile devices, CRS.org—and our other Web properties—will be mobile optimized.