

## Catholic Relief Services Resource Center: Search Engine Optimization Plan

### Background

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. This non-profit agency provides emergency relief and long-term aid to nearly one hundred countries outside of the United States. CRS currently runs over twenty program-specific microsites along with the company's main website, hosted at <http://www.crs.org/>.

In an effort to house all of their downloadable resources in one location, CRS wants to create an online resource center. Currently, resources are hosted in various places, mainly on microsites for specific programs. However, some resources are also hosted on the company's internal SharePoint intranet (CRS Global) and some employees' computer hard drives. Overall, CRS wants the resource center to house resources from the following sources:

- CRS Microsites
  - Operation Rice Bowl - <http://orb.crs.org/>
  - Food Fast - <http://www.foodfast.org/>
  - CRS College - <http://crscollege.org/>
  - Global Solidarity Network - <http://gsn.crs.org/content/home.asp>
  - Going Global with Youth - <http://education.crs.org/>
  - Fair Trade - <http://www.crsfairtrade.org/>
  - Global Fellows - <http://crs.org/global-fellows/>
  - CRS Advocacy Action Center - <http://actioncenter.crs.org/>
  - CRS Policy Center - <http://crs.org/public-policy/>
  - U.S. Partners/Dioceses Resources - <http://uspartners.crs.org/>
  - Expert Corner - <http://www.crsprogramquality.org/>
  - Haiti Emergency - <http://crs.org/emergency/haiti/>
  - Sudan Emergency- <http://peaceinsudan.crs.org/>
- CRS Global
  - Speaker Tours
  - US Operations Internal Materials and Resources
- Offline Documents
  - Prayers without Borders

This paper outlines the research, strategy, implementation and analysis of a search engine optimization plan for the proposed resource center website.

### Target Market Research

According to a general web survey of crs.org conducted in 2010, the average website visitor is a highly educated Catholic male or female in his or her 30's or 40's. In depth, the largest proportion of web visitors was younger than 35 years old; the median age group was 35 to 44 years old. Additionally, the visitors were evenly split between male and female. Seventy-seven percent of visitors identified themselves as Catholics and nearly half had at least some post-graduate education. From a technical standpoint, over half the visitors viewed the website using a version of Internet Explorer.

Specifically for the resource center, the target market focuses on members of the Catholic community, more precisely members of churches, schools and families. The church segment of this target market focuses on diocese and parish professionals such as youth ministers, clergy, and parish administrators. The school segment of this audience includes school and college professionals, such as campus ministers, university faculty, and teachers and principals at Catholic schools. The last

segment of this target audience includes Catholic families or individuals who want to engage their faith to understand global poverty and support people overseas.

## Competitors

Being a non-profit, CRS does not compete for sales. It does, however, compete against other non-profits with a similar goal and message. The four top competitors that CRS measures itself against is One (<http://www.one.org/us/>), CARE (<http://www.care.org>), Oxfam (<http://www.oxfam.org>) and WorldVision (<http://www.worldvision.org>).

The following can be said about each competitor, regarding their websites:

- ONE: The “Hot Topics” and “The Issues” section provides a user-friendly layout that allows for visual and textual cues without overwhelming the user.
- CARE: The Web Features section highlights various multimedia content and the layout offers hand-picked features.
- Oxfam: The search results page is a good example of a simple filtering mechanism that helps the users refine their search based on options relevant to the content.
- WorldVision: The advanced search presents a good range of options to consider for the CRS Resource web site

These highlights from competitors were studied and applied to the design of the CRS resource center.

## Current Situation: SWOT Analysis

The following chart outlines the strengths and weaknesses of CRS' current position and the opportunities and threats of and for the resource center.

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety of resources</li><li>• Good reputation among Catholic community regarding Catholic social teachings and advocacy</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No central place to find resources</li><li>• SEO is divided amongst several websites and is therefore weaker</li><li>• Some resources are not available online</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering resources in one place can increase consumption</li><li>• Increasing SEO can attract new visitors to website</li><li>• Resource center could encourage repeat visitors and referrals</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resource center needs to be maintained and updated on a regular basis</li><li>• Existing websites housing current resources need to be updated to link to the resource center, otherwise there will be duplicate content</li></ul>

## Resource Center Goals: SMART Plan

These goals for the resource center are based on client wishes, user feedback and a S.M.A.R.T. plan (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).

1. To create a central location for members of the Catholic community to download resources from CRS.
2. To create a central hub where members of CRS can upload and store their resources made for public consumption.
3. To provide a topic and audience driven search function on the website that allows users to find relevant resources with ease.
4. To promote CRS as a provider of high quality education and advocacy resources by increasing in-bound links and referrals.
5. To reach decision makers within the Catholic community with need for education and advocacy resources through search, email and online promotion... and fulfill their need through the resource center offerings.
6. To increase the consumption of CRS resources through increase new and repeat web traffic.

## Website Structure

Engel et al (2010) stated that logical category based flow on “crafting a logical, hierarchical structure for content” (pg.187). User research indicated that browsing the website should be driven by topic and target audience.

Therefore the information architecture of the website will be divided by audience: Dioceses, Parishes, Schools, Universities, Families and Individuals.



And the search function will be faceted by content topic.

The screenshot shows the CRS Resource Library website. The header includes the CRS logo and the text 'RESOURCE LIBRARY An archive of educational and advocacy resources for the Catholic community'. Below the header is a navigation menu with tabs for 'DIOCESES', 'PARISHES', 'SCHOOLS', 'UNIVERSITIES', 'FAMILIES', and 'INDIVIDUALS'. The 'PARISHES' tab is selected. On the left is a sidebar with a search bar and several filter sections: 'APPLIED FILTERS' (Parishes), 'FILTER BY' (Current Issue, General Topic, Type of Resource), and 'APPLIED FILTERS' (Prayers and Services, Lessons, Activities, Advocacy, Training, Planning Guides, Clergy Resources). The main content area is titled 'Resources for Parishes' and includes a 'Jump to:' list, a featured resource 'Operation Rice Bowl' with a photo of a child, and sections for 'Prayers and Services' and 'Activities'.

Each resource will have an individual webpage that describes it. According to the user experience strategy created by the Berndt Group (2011), “the general approach to content should be a consistent, focused, terse approach—each item having a clear title, synoptic short description written for the resource site audience, labeled link or links to where content ultimately resides, calls to action (if any), and information about who to contact about the program for more information. In addition, all content will need to be tagged in terms of topics and audiences, so that the content management system can create various searches and browse experiences automatically” (pg. 2).

The screenshot shows the CRS Resource Library website. The header includes the CRS logo and the text 'RESOURCE LIBRARY An archive of educational and advocacy resources for the Catholic community'. Below the header is a navigation menu with tabs for 'DIOCESES', 'PARISHES', 'SCHOOLS', 'UNIVERSITIES', 'FAMILIES', and 'INDIVIDUALS'. The 'PARISHES' tab is selected. On the left is a sidebar with a search bar and several filter sections: 'APPLIED FILTERS' ('help sudan'), 'FILTER BY' (Current Issue, General Topic, Type of Resource, Age Group, Region), and 'APPLIED FILTERS' (Prayers and Services, Lessons, Activities, Advocacy, Training, Planning Guides, Clergy Resources). The main content area is titled 'A Helping Hand for Sudan' and includes a date and author, a photo of people, a description, and a 'Download PDF' button.

Bread crumbs would be used so that a user can back track their navigation pathway.

## Search Engine Strategy

To make sure search engine are crawling the correct pages, an XML sitemap should be submitted. An XML sitemap “can result in pages that are not otherwise discovered or indexed by the search engine getting crawled and indexed” (Enge, Spencer, Fishkin, Stricchiola, & Battelle, 2010, pg. 184). The XML sitemap should be uploaded to the root directory and only the canonical version of each URL should be included in the sitemap. The following websites can be used to generate a base XML sitemap, but it should be checked manually to make sure all the URLs are correct:

- <http://sourceforge.net>
- <http://rorweb.com/rormap.htm>
- <http://xml-sitemaps.com>
- <http://www.sitemapspal.com/>
- <http://www.xmlcho.org/>

A robots.txt file should also be included. If the resource center has content that CRS does not want Google or other search engines to access, they can use a robots.txt file to specify how search engines should crawl the site's content.

## Content and Metadata Strategy

The content of the site will mainly consist of descriptions of downloadable resources created by CRS. Descriptions should be labeled using the following Dublin Core metadata:

- dc:title
- dc:subject
- dc:description
- dc:type
- dc:relation
- dc:coverage
- dc:date
- dc:format
- dc:language

Since content will be generated by a CMS, the content pages need to focus on unique URL's, titles, headings and keyword content. Therefore, every content page needs to have the following:

1. **A unique URL that contains keywords.** Use hyphens to separate words. Don't be case sensitive.
2. **A unique page title tag that contains keywords.** This refers to the title tag of the page that appears on the header section of the HTML. This is also what shows up as the key reference in a person's web browser.
3. **A 160-character meta description that contains keywords.** The meta-description can be less than 160 characters. This is the meta description that is in the header of the HTML and is what search engines like Google will show when the page appears in search results.
4. **A filename that is optimized with keywords (if applicable).** Filenames should follow the same standards as URL names.

5. **A heading title.** This is the title that appears on the page. It can be the same as the title tag, but may be longer. It should be enclosed in H1 tags.
6. **A 100-word or longer description of the content that contains keywords.** This is the description that a user will see on the webpage. It will usually be longer than the meta description.
7. **Title tag and alt attribute.** File and image links need a 65-character (or less) title tag and alt attribute that contains keywords.
8. **Keyword anchor text.** Links should use anchor text that describes the content and uses keywords. Do not use generic anchor text like "Click here" or "Download PDF."
9. **Related links.** Based on target audience feedback, the content pages should also include links to related sources and websites where applicable. (The related sources should be covered by the Dublin Core description.)
10. **Contact for more information or problems with the downloaded material.** This could be the resource center manager or the author of the resource.

The naming conventions for URLs, titles, and files should follow the following format:

*Content Keywords - Program Name/File Title (abbreviated if needed)*

Keywords should always go before the program or file name. Use dashes to separate words; do not use spaces or underscores.

### **Keyword Strategy**

The keyword strategy focuses on three parts of the website: 1) the homepage, 2) the audience landing pages and 3) the content description pages. Keywords for the homepage describe the overall purpose of the website e.g. resource center. Keywords for the audience landing pages describe the content for particular audiences e.g. catholic school resources. Keywords for the description pages highlight the current content topics and types.

The current content topics of the resources are outlined below:

- Emergency Updates
  - Haiti
- Hunger
  - Operation Rice Bowl
  - Food Fast
- Poverty
- Migration
- Water
- Fair Trade
  - Chocolate
  - Coffee
- Health
  - World Aids Day
- Solidarity
  - Youth Education
  - Global Solidarity

- Global Fellows
- Peace
  - Catholic social teaching
- Lessons
- Planning Guides
- Advocacy
- Prayers
- Training
- Clergy Resources

Keyword research has been completed for the current content offerings (see excel spreadsheet). As new content is added, additional keyword research will need to be conducted.

The keywords were chosen using the following steps:

1. Identify content topics within 1-3 keywords
2. Look up the keywords in Google Insights for Search (<http://www.google.com/insights/search/>) to see popularity, trend data and related keywords.
3. Based on information from Google Insights, look up chosen keywords in Google Adwords (<https://adwords.google.com/>) Keyword Tool (located under Tools and Analysis drop down menu).
4. Pull competition, search numbers and CPC from Google Adwords.
5. Narrow keywords down to Low-Medium competition, 20,000-100,000 global monthly searches and less than \$2 CPC. These keywords will be easier for CRS to rank for since it cannot compete with more competitive keywords without paid search ads.
- 6.

### **Link Building Strategy**

Search engines “hypothesize that high-quality links will point to high quality content, and that great content and positive user experiences will be rewarded with more links than poor user experiences” (Enge, Spencer, Fishkin, Stricchiola, & Battelle, 2010, pg. 188). The resource center will already have a lot of outbound links to other CRS websites as well as related websites. To build inbound link presence, CRS should request that outside sites link back to the resource center if they use any CRS content or participate in CRS programs.

### **Implementation**

Below outlines the person responsibility for each task in the SEO plan:

- XML Site Map – Programmer
- Robots.txt file – Programmer
- Dublin Core
  - CMS Programming – Programmer
  - Data entry – Resource Center Manager
- Content Data – Writer/Resource Center Manager

- Keyword Strategy – SEO Specialist
- Link Building Strategy – Writer/Programmer

## Budget

The creation of this resource center will be handled in-house so the budget is unlimited.

## Timeline

Below is a preliminary timeline for the build of the resource center from build to launch. This timeline assumes that 1) the resources have all been gathered and 2) the information architecture and design for the website has been approved.

1 month	Build CMS for resource center
2 weeks	Write titles and descriptions for all resource offerings
2 weeks	Determine Dublin Core data for all resource offerings
2 weeks	Load content into resource library
1 month	Promote resource center via email, crs.org website and other outlets
6 months	Monitor web traffic and analyze goal success

## Analysis and Evaluation

After the launch of the resource center, analytics should be used to determine whether the goals of the center are successful. The goals should be measured quarterly using the following key performance indicators.

1. Create a central location for members of the Catholic community to download resources from CRS.
  - a. Measure Google Analytics web traffic and downloads.
2. Create a central hub where members of CRS can upload and store their resources made for public consumption.
  - a. Ensure that resource center is being kept up-to-date with new resources.
3. Provide a topic and audience driven search function on the website that allows users to find relevant resources with ease.
  - a. Conduct a user survey regarding search function.
4. Promote CRS as a provider of high quality education and advocacy resources by increasing in-bound links and referrals.
  - a. Measure traffic created from email and website promotions.
  - b. Measure in-bound links.
  - c. Measure referral traffic.



5. Reach decision makers within the Catholic community with need for education and advocacy resources through search, email and online promotion... and fulfill their need through the resource center offerings.
  - a. Measure traffic sources.
  - b. Set up a funnel to time-specific resources and measure downloads.
6. To increase the consumption of CRS resources through increase new and repeat web traffic.
  - a. Increased web traffic.
  - b. Increased repeat visitor traffic.

### Works Cited

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Keywords	Competition	Global Monthly Searches
<b>HAITI</b>		
relief for Haiti	Medium	18,100
Haiti information	Medium	12,100
facts about Haiti	Medium	40,500
<b>HUNGER, ORB and FOOD FAST</b>		
activities for Lent	Low	9,900
fasting for Lent	Low	60,500
Lent for children	Low	14,800
action against hunger	Low	33,100
global hunger	Medium	74,000
<b>POVERTY, CCGP</b>		
education and poverty	Low	27,100
global poverty	Low	49,500
poverty alleviation	Low	33,100
<b>WATER</b>		
water in africa	Medium	110,000
water and sanitation	Low	90,500
<b>FAIR TRADE</b>		
fair trade chocolate	Medium	27,100
fair trade coffee	Medium	40,500
global crafts	Low	5,400
<b>HEALTH</b>		
world aids day	Low	49,500
<b>SOLIDARITY</b>		
global community	Low	60,500
international solidarity	Low	9,900
<b>PEACE</b>		
the conflict in afghanistan	Low	74,000
peace building	Low	33,100
education for peace	Low	40,500
<b>CONTENT TYPE KEYWORDS</b>		
catholic social teaching	Low	22,200
free lesson plan	Medium	74,000
advocacy	Low	673,000
catholic prayers	Low	135,000

Keywords	Competition	Global Monthly Searches
<b>DIOCESES/PARISHES</b>		
catholic church resources	Low	320
<b>SCHOOLS/UNIVERSITIES</b>		
catholic school resources	Low	590
<b>FAMILIES</b>		
catholic family resources	Low	46
<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>		
catholic resources	Low	8,100

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Competition</b>	<b>Global Monthly Searches</b>
Catholic Relief Services	Low	22,200
CRS	Low	823,000
resource library	Low	60,500
online resource	Low	135,000
catholic community	Low	74,000
education and advocacy resources	Low	14,800