CFR.org

For CFR.org, the Council’s website, this past year has been transformative, with a major redesign released in August 2005 and the arrival of a new executive editor: veteran online journalist Michael Moran, who joined the Council after nine years at MSNBC.com. CFR.org has emerged as a respected online publication on foreign policy, national security, and geoeconomic issues that is attracting a fast-growing audience.

The goal is to make CFR.org the “editor of the Internet,” serving as a first-stop resource for anyone looking for authoritative information on and analysis of U.S. foreign policy and international affairs. The site offers not only original content, but also the best material from other sources, including think tanks, government agencies, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations, to deliver a wide range of timely, high-quality information and insight.

In addition to the popular Background Q&As and Expert Interviews, CFR.org’s editorial franchises now include new, more accessible Daily Analysis Briefs, audio podcasts on selected topics, “The Daily Brief” email newsletter, Online Debates between noted experts, and, where appropriate, News Briefings on newsmakers’ appearances at the Council. The growth in traffic on the website has translated into more frequent links to and citations of information on CFR.org (and, in turn, of other Council content) by major Internet news aggregators (such as Google News and Yahoo! News), by search engines, and in the roiling conversation that is the “blogosphere.” As Jacob Weisberg, editor of the online magazine Slate, noted, “CFR.org is rapidly becoming the Google for the foreign policy set.” And Washington Post White House columnist Daniel Froomkin says that CFR.org “is an Internet hotspot for intellectual foment about foreign policy in general and Iraq in particular.”

The site also plays a central role in supporting the Council’s outreach initiatives, with two sections, “For Educators” and “For the Media,” designed to meet the needs of these important constituencies. In addition, CFR.org offers audio and video of on-the-record events and, for members, improved online registration for Council meetings. This year, members were also able to cast their votes online for the Board election.

In the coming year, a small pilot program will introduce edited ten-to-fifteen-minute highlight packages of on-the-record Council meetings, an offering that could make some of the Council’s most valuable work more accessible. Additionally, CFR.org is pursuing several new partnerships aimed at putting CFR.org headlines on major media sites, plus a new multimedia effort to create interactive “conflict” and “crisis” guides to the world’s hotspots. All of these new efforts will draw heavily on expertise and content already being created by CFR.org or by other Council departments as they pursue their traditional missions.