

**Middlesex Middle School**  
**Evaluating websites: the Five Fundamentals**

**Fundamental One: Authority:**

Anybody can put information on the web, so it's important to figure out who created the site. Should we believe what they say?

*Ask:*

*Yes/No/Comments*

Is the author's name and email address included?	
Is the site owned or sponsored by a known and trustworthy organization?	
Does the author or organization possess expertise in the field?	

**Fundamental Two: Accuracy**

While most books, newspapers, and magazines have editors and fact-checkers, most websites don't. Does the site contain factual errors that could hurt our research process?

*Ask:*

*Yes/No/Comments*

Are the grammar and spelling correct?	
Is it clear where the information on the site came from or how it was collected?	

**Fundamental Three: Objectivity**

Many people use the web as a place to sell their products or beliefs. Is the site giving us fair information, or is it only trying to convince us of something?

*Ask:*

*Yes/No/Comments*

Is the site's content primarily fact or opinion? If the content is mostly opinion, is there fair reference to the other side of the issue?	
Is the site trying to sell something or push a point of view?	
Is the site sponsored by an organization that usually tries to sell something or push a point of view?	

**Fundamental Four: Utility**

Some websites are created for personal use and/or do not intend to provide broad coverage on a topic. Does our site contain in-depth and useful information?

*Ask:*

*Yes/No/Comments*

Is the content in-depth?	
Are there links to other useful sites or lists of recommended reading?	
Is the content original, or is it a collection of information from other sources?	

**Fundamental Five: Currency**

A web page may remain online for years without ever being updated. Does the site contain current and relevant content, or is something crucial left out?

*Ask:*

*Yes/No/Comments*

Are the links active?	
Is there a date provided for the content?	
Has the site been updated recently?	

Comments/Notes: