

Cookies

Learn about how cookies work and how to manage cookies online.

1. What Are Cookies?

Internet cookies are small pieces of data that websites can store and access later. This data provides information about a user's experience with a site, including preferences, behavior, and activity.

There are various types (or flavors) of cookies. Some cookies ensure that a website works properly. Other cookies track user behavior and are used to deliver targeted ads to people. There are two major categories of cookies: first-party and third-party. Both of these cookie categories contain different types of cookies:

- **First-party cookies:** These cookies match the domain of the website that you are using
 - **Session cookies:** Also known as temporary cookies. This type of first-party cookie helps to manage your experience, or session, on a website. Session cookies are used to manage your shopping cart on a website, for example
 - **Persistent cookies:** These cookies are available for a set period of time and are often used to store your preferences for a website. For example, these cookies can store your login information for faster logins to a site
- **Third-party cookies:** These cookies are attached to a different domain name than the site you are visiting. Third-party cookies often serve as cross-site tracking cookies and are used to deliver targeted ads to people.
 - **Tracking cookies:** These cookies track your behavior and activity on different sites and can follow you around the web, logging your behavior
 - **Zombie cookies:** These cookies are a security concern. They make copies of themselves and can be difficult to delete
 - **Supercookies:** Another type of cookie that can be hard to delete and manage. Supercookies are stored differently than regular cookies and can be hidden in things

like Flash code, for example. Supercookies can track your behavior across different browsers as well

2. What Is In A Cookie?

An internet cookie consists of a text string. This text string is sent from a server to your browser to help it “remember” things like your username and the last time you logged into a session.

3. What Do Cookies Do?

Different categories and types of cookies perform different roles, but overall cookies perform one of three major tasks:

- Session management
- Personalization
- Tracking

4. How Can You Manage Cookies?

While it can be tempting to block all cookies, that can actually cause more problems. First-party cookies like session cookies ensure that a website is working correctly. Blocking all cookies can cause sites to break or not function properly.

A good option is to look for ways to block third-party cookies to avoid tracking, targeted ads, and other more invasive practices. Consider the following

- Use a browser that automatically blocks third-party cookies, like Firefox or Safari
- Adjust your browser security settings to block third-party cookies (search for options for your browser, such as Chrome)
- Consider a browser extension that block third-party tracking cookies
- Consider using a VPN for added security and privacy