

Cookies

In This Module

- What are cookies?
- What types of cookies are there?
- How can we manage cookies?

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

Types of Cookies

There are various types 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

Types of Cookies

First-party cookies match the domain of the website that you are using:

- **Session cookies** (also known as **temporary cookies**) help 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** 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

Types of Cookies

Third-party 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** track your behavior and activity on different sites and can follow you around the web, logging your behavior
- **Zombie cookies** are a security concern. They make copies of themselves and can be difficult to delete
- **Supercookies** can be hard to delete and manage. Supercookies are stored differently than regular cookies and can be hidden in things

Discussion

What do you make of the cookie preferences banners on websites these days?

Does knowing which types of cookies exist make a difference in how you will approach them going forward?

What's In a Cookie?

An internet cookie is comprised 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

What Tasks Do Cookies Perform?

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

- Session management
- Personalization
- Tracking

How To 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

How To Manage Cookies

Look for ways to block third-party cookies to avoid tracking, targeted ads, and other, more invasive practices:

- Use a browser that automatically blocks third-party cookies
- Adjust your browser security settings to block third-party cookies
- Consider a browser extension that block third-party tracking cookies
- Consider using a VPN for added security and privacy

Activity

Do you remember which cookies perform what tasks? Let's test your memory with a fun challenge

Discussion

What did you learn when working through this game?

Resources

“Why every website wants you to accept its cookies?” from *Vox Media* ([link](#))

“What are Cookies?” from *Kaspersky* ([link](#))

“Internet Cookies” from the Federal Trade Commission ([link](#))

“Using HTTP cookies” from Mozilla ([link](#))

Questions?

NYC Digital Safety

Privacy & Security