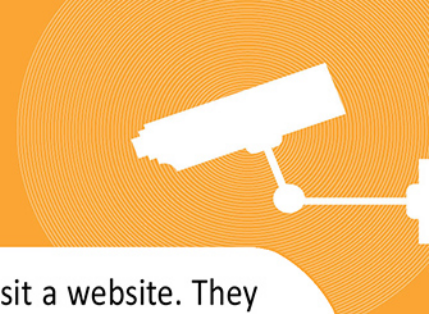# Cookies
Privacy Factsheet

A COOKIE is a piece of code stored on your computer everytime you visit a website. They help make websites work and help us by remembering information we have given, but they can also be intrusive. Cookies can track your behaviour, monitor what you do and follow what you look at online.

* *

How do cookies work?

When you visit a website a cookie is placed onto the system of the device you are using. This code behaves like a memory, recalling what you have looked at on a webpage.

If you fill in a form online, login to an online account, put something into an online shopping basket or give your credit card details to a website, a cookie is used to remember that information. This is helpful as it stops you having to repeat the action.

* *

What types of cookies are there?

Tracker cookies:
- Also known as third party cookies and are a type of persistent cookie.
- Are not necessary to make the internet work.
- Are used by advertisers and third parties to monitor and track your online activity.
- Are used to target specific adverts at you, based on what you have looked at online.
- Any personal data gathered by them can be sold to other companies.

Browser cookies:
- Also known as an HTTP cookie, first-party cookie, web cookie or internet cookie.
- Are essential to making the internet work.
- Allow a website to identify you every time you visit the site.
- Store information about your previous activity on the site; pages you have read, login information such as usernames and passwords and saved items, for example what is in your online shopping basket.
- Are not blocked by anti-spyware software.

Authentication cookies:
- Are used to confirm the website address (URL) by dropping a unique user identifier (cookie) onto your device; such as computer, laptop, smartphone, tablet or smart TV.

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How long do cookies last?

Cookies stored on your internet browser (Safari, Firefox, Chrome, etc.) are called session cookies. There are two types of session cookie:
- **Temporary cookies** exist only when you are on a website. As soon as you leave the website the cookie is deleted.
- **Persistent cookies** exist even after you have left a website. For example if you choose for a website to remember your login details so you are automatically logged in next time, a persistent cookie will be created. The life of a persistent cookie is chosen by the website.
  Tracker cookies are often persistent cookies, without you knowing they allow third party companies and advertisers to continually monitor your online behaviour.

BIG BROTHER WATCH
DEFENDING CIVIL LIBERTIES, PROTECTING PRIVACY

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What is the cookie law?

Websites which use cookies are required by law to tell you that cookies are being used, explain why and get consent for the cookie to be used on your device.

- Websites do not have to get your consent for cookies that are strictly necessary for the website to function.
- Websites have to alert you to all cookies that are not integral to making the site work and offer you the option.
- The alert usually appears as a pop-up on the page where you can choose to accept or refuse.
- If you ignore the alert the website assumes that you consent to the use of cookies.
- Refusing to give consent should not prevent the website from working.
- The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, which the UK will impliment in 2018, will require that these laws change again to comply with new standards for personal data.

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How to control cookies

Safari: Safari -> Preferences -> Privacy -> Select "Block cookies" and "Do not track".

Chrome: Menu -> Settings -> Show advanced settings -> Click on "Content settings" box -> Block third-party cookies and site data.

Internet Explorer: Settings -> Safety -> Webpage privacy policy -> Settings -> Advanced -> Check "Override automatic cookie handling" -> Choose your preferred options.

Firefox: Home -> Settings -> Privacy -> Click on "Remember history" and select "Use custom settings for history"-> Uncheck "Accept third-party cookies".

* *

Can I see what cookies are being used?

Yes, you can see which websites use which cookies. These are three examples of sites which can help you.

Cookiepedia provides a list of cookies used on particular websites: https://cookiepedia.co.uk/

Ghostery is a downloadable tool which helps you control what cookies and trackers you are happy to be used: https://ghostery.com/

Privacy Badger is an extension for Chrome and Firefox that blocks tracker cookies: https://eff.org/privacybadger

* *

Don't forget

- As soon as you visit a website it will drop a cookie onto your computer.
- Cookies help make the internet work, but they can also track and monitor your activity.

- You can block and delete cookies on your browser and device.
- Some cookies last until you close your browser, others last indefinitely.