Cookies

An overview

What good are they

- Cookies are essential but can be a vulnerability to your privacy.

- Give you a more personal, convenient website visit.

- Cookies let websites remember you, your website logins, shopping carts and more.

- They can also be a _treasure trove_ of private info for criminals to spy on you.

- Guarding your privacy online can be overwhelming.

What good are they

- With a basic understanding you can help keep unwanted eyes off your internet activity.

- Most cookies are perfectly safe. Others can be used to track you without your consent.

- Worse, legitimate cookies can be spied upon if a criminal gets access.

introduction

- What are cookies?
- What are cookies used for?
- Advantages of Cookies?
- Disadvantages of Cookies?
- What to do?

What are Cookies

Cookies are generally a file present on your device.

They store information related to sessions on the browser (Mostly in the form of text documents).

Such information includes:

- remembering username
- passwords
- server settings
- and other commonly used surfing habits.

What are Cookies?

- The information is used by the websites to understand their visitors better.

- Whenever a user browses the same page, they will be interacted based on their surfing history.

- With all the benefits, cookies don't contain many drawbacks.

- Learning the pros and cons will help you use cookies in the right way.

Advantages of Cookies

1. User Friendly

Cookies are **extremely user friendly**.

The client can choose what they need to do with cookies.

All browsers come with settings to clear history including the cookies.

Manually users could find the cookies text files stored on the device.

Users can choose to edit and delete them.

Advantages of Cookies

2. Availability

Cookies can also set to be made available for a longer period of time.

Once the cookies are stored on the user's device, they are available until the user deletes them manually.

Even if the server fails, information can be retrieved from the cookies.

Advantages of Cookies

3. Convenience

Besides websites, cookies can also remember information related to forms.

Each time the user visits the site, the address form will be filled automatically.

Cookies **will not** remember confidential information such as credit card info.

Advantages of Cookies

4. Marketing

Most companies, especially, e-commerce sites tends to use cookies to target products to their customers.

Information such as search term, keywords and geographical locations are gathered for their marketing campaign.

Even social networking sites like Facebook use cookies to show relevant ads.

Advantages of Cookies

5. Configurations

Cookies can also be configured as per the requirement. For an example, it can be made to expire once the user closes the browser tab or set to exist only for a specific period of time.

Advantages of Cookies

6. Server Requirement

All the data related to cookies are stored on the device without the use of server resources.

No extra load or weight is added to the server. Therefore, less burden is placed on them which makes cookies easier to implement.

Disadvantages of Cookies

1. Browser Impacts

Cookies are not restricted based on internet usage.

Whenever a user surfs the web, more and more cookies will be accumulated.

Unless the user deletes them, these cookies will be a part of the device space.

This eventually slows down or lags the browser.

Disadvantages of Cookies

2. Security Risks

Since cookies are stored on the device as text files,

They posses some serious security risks.

Any intruder can easily open these files and view the information.

Not all the sites that collect information from cookies are legitimate.

Some of them can be malicious that uses cookies for the purpose of hacking.

Disadvantages of Cookies

3. Size Limitations

Size limitations also exist on cookies.

They cannot store large amount of information.

Most cookies are able to store information only up to 4kb.

Browsers too pose restrictions when it comes to number of cookies.

Except **internet explorer**, all other browsers only allow up to 20 cookies for a single website.

Disadvantages of Cookies

4. Privacy Concerns

Apart from security, privacy is another concern for users in cookies.

Whenever the user browses the internet, the cookie enabled sites will be recording all the online activities.

Most users are unaware that such information is stored on their device.

As a result, this information can be accessed by any third parties including government agencies and businesses.

Disadvantages of Cookies

5. Manual Disabling

Browsers also come with the option to disable cookies.

Users who are highly security conscious could simply disable them.

Some browsers disable cookies automatically if the security level is set to high.

Therefore, web applications will not work without cookies.

What to do

- **Periodically** clear cookies from your Device.

- **Delete Cookies** within your web browser – Settings…..Privacy..

- Removing cookies can help you mitigate your risks of privacy breaches.

- It can also reset your browser tracking and personalization.

Cookies – Now What?

Questions and Made-up Answers ☺