

Should you accept “cookies” on a website? I’ve been asked this by multiple people who say they either “always accept cookies”, or “never accept cookies”. Most don’t even know what cookies are and what they do. Are there downsides? Upsides? This is Privacy 101: Cookies

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0-8 Jamey Tucker/whatthetech.tv

ON-CAMERA TEASE

When was the last time you were offered a cookie? Probably earlier today when you were browsing the internet? Why are we all having to accept cookies all of a sudden? I’m Jamey Tucker, the sweet and no so sweet answer is coming up.

ANCHOR INTRO

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED A LOT MORE COOKIES WHEN YOU’RE BROWSING WEBSITES. NOT THE OREO KIND, BUT THE ONES THAT FORCE YOU TO ACCEPT OR DECLINE BEFORE VISITING A WEBSITE.

ALL THIS WEEK OUR CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY REPORTER JAMEY TUCKER IS LOOKING AT SOME ONLINE PRIVACY BASICS. THIS TIME, EXPLAINING THOSE MYSTERIOUS ‘COOKIES’ AND WHETHER IT’S A GOOD IDEA TO ACCEPT THEM.

PACKAGE SCRIPT

We all love cookies. If you’re watching what you eat you might ask yourself, should I accept a cookie, or turn it down. The same can be said for website cookies. When you’re offered should you accept, or turn it down?

On most websites you visit for the first time, you’ll see a popup like this: prompting you to accept cookies. While these cookies have been around for decades asking for our permission is relatively new. Cookies are bits of computer code that websites leave on your computer and devices. Part of the reason is convenience and will keep you logged in after you leave and pick up where you left off. They’re also used to sell advertising.

You might think of them as ‘cookie crumbs’ as in leaving a trail. 6 years ago the European Union began requiring websites to ask for permission to leave cookies behind. And that’s why you’re seeing the notifications.

Your question then is: should I accept them?

You don't have a choice but to accept some cookies in order to view the site. You can also decline non-essential cookies used for marketing or targeting, and social media cookies.

There are some cookies you should never accept.

Cookies on sketchy websites that aren't encrypted to protect your information. Click on the icon next to the search bar to see if it's secure.

You also want to reject cookies from 3rd parties since you don't know what those 3rd parties are and what they do your information.

To set your mind at ease: cookies on reputable websites are no big deal. Safari and the Firefox browsers banned the use of third-party cookies and Google says it will follow suit sometime in the next year. That's What the Tech, I'm Jamey Tucker

ANCHOR TAG

FIVE STATES MADE IT MANDATORY FOR COMPANIES TO GET CONSENT BEFORE USING COOKIES ON THEIR WEBSITES. THOSE STATES ARE CALIFORNIA, VIRGINIA, UTAH, COLORADO, AND CONNECTICUT. AS OF NOW, THERE IS NOT A FEDERAL COOKIE LAW IN THE UNITED STATES.

WEB STORY

We all love cookies. But not all cookies are the sweet treats we enjoy with a glass of milk. In the digital realm, **website cookies** play a crucial role in our online experiences. So, when you encounter that familiar pop-up asking whether you accept cookies, what should you do? Let's dive into the world of cookies and explore the choices you have.

When you visit a website for the first time, you're likely to encounter a pop-up notification about cookies. But what exactly are these mysterious bits of code?

- **Cookies** are small text files that websites leave on your computer or device. They serve various purposes, from enhancing convenience to enabling personalized experiences.
- **Convenience:** Ever logged into a website and found yourself still logged in the next day? That's thanks to cookies. They remember your session, allowing you to pick up where you left off.
- **Advertising:** Cookies also play a role in targeted advertising. If you've ever shopped for shoes online, you've probably noticed shoe ads following you around on other sites, social media, and even in your email inbox. These are the digital equivalent of leaving "cookie crumbs" behind.

So, should you accept cookies? Here's what you need to consider:

1. **Essential Cookies:** Some cookies are necessary for the website to function properly. Without them, you might not be able to view the site at all. These essential cookies are like the basic ingredients in a cookie recipe—you can't skip them.
2. **Non-Essential Cookies:** These cookies are optional. They include marketing cookies (which track your preferences and show you relevant ads) and social media cookies (which allow you to share content on social platforms). You have the choice to decline these.
3. **The Bargain Hunt:** Imagine you were shopping for shoes, and a cookie led you to a fantastic bargain. Some people appreciate personalized ads based on their interests. If that's you, accepting non-essential cookies might be worthwhile.
4. **The Sketchy Side:** Not all cookies are created equal. Avoid accepting cookies from sketchy websites that lack encryption. How can you tell? Look for the icon next to the search bar—secure sites have a padlock symbol.
5. **Third-Party Cookies:** These come from external sources (not the website you're currently on). Rejecting third-party cookies is a smart move because you don't always know what those third parties do with your information.

Reputable websites generally handle cookies responsibly. However, changes are afoot:

- **Safari** and **Firefox** have already banned third-party cookies.
- **Google** plans to follow suit in the coming year.

So, the next time you encounter that cookie pop-up, consider your options. Whether you're protecting your privacy or hunting for bargains, your choice matters in the digital cookie jar!