



Internet Cookies

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What are Internet Cookies?

A handle, transaction ID, or other token of agreement between cooperating programs. "I give him a packet, he gives me back a cookie".

The claim check you get from a dry-cleaning shop is a perfect mundane example of a cookie; the only thing it's useful for is to relate a later transaction to this one (so you get the same clothes back).

Typically cookies are used to authenticate or identify a registered user of a web site without requiring them to sign in again every time they access that site. Other uses are, e.g. maintaining a "shopping basket" of goods you have selected to purchase during a session at a site, site personalisation (presenting different pages to different users), tracking a particular user's access to a site. **Cookies are not dangerous, but simply allow for easier surfing.**

However, if you wish to disable cookies, here are the procedures:

You should tell your browser that you don't want cookies. If you're using a major browser numbered below 4.0 it probably only gives you the option to refuse each cookie at the time it is pushed at you: you have to keep saying no every time.

- On Netscape 3.0, try the **Options** menu: go to **Network Preferences**, then **Protocols**. Under **Show an alert before** check **Accepting a cookie**. (Don't forget to **Save** your option settings.)
- On Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0, try **View**, then **Options**, then **Advanced**, check the box **Warn before accepting cookies**.
- On Netscape Communicator 4.0b2, go to **Edit**, then **Preferences**, then **Advanced**, click on **Never accept cookies** (or **Warn me before accepting a cookie**).
- For MS-IE 4.0: **View**, **Internet Options**, **Advanced**, scroll down to **Security**, **Cookies**, **Disable all cookie use**; alternatively: Right click **IE shortcut**, select **Properties**, select **Advanced**, scroll down to **Cookies**, select options.
- We know of no way to stop cookies on Web TV's browser or Juno Web.
- Cookies are also supported in Opera and the latest version of Lynx.

Your browser may be different: it may not support cookies, or it may not allow you to stop them. Even if it does, you may have to click on **cancel** each time a web site wants to push a cookie on you. (Some set several per page.)

One method that works with some browsers (such as Netscape) is making the cookies file read only.

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(right click, choose **properties**) or creating a directory of that name. (On Macs, remove the MagicCookie file and create an empty folder of the same name.) However, any browser could cache cookies even when it can't write them to a file. If you remove the file your browser will probably just quietly make a new one. Some people use a batch file to delete the file on start-up.

We have had reports of the following undocumented methods for stopping cookies permanently under Windows, but haven't tried them ourselves.

- For MS-IE, delete the following entry in the Registry:
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Internet Settings\Cache\Special Paths\Cookies] Next reboot and delete the **WINDOWS\COOKIES** directory.
- For Netscape delete the following entry in the Registry:
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Netscape\Netscape Navigator\Cookies]
"Cookie File"="C:\\DECODER\\Netscape\\Cookies.txt" then delete the **COOKIES.TXT** file.