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What are session cookies? Do they need consent?

By [Kavya](#) June 2, 2025

What are session cookies?



CookieYes

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Cookies are small text files that a website stores on your device (smartphones, computers etc.) when you browse the internet. They are created when your browser loads a particular website, and the site sends information to your browser which then creates a text file. Cookies can store a range of information, including personal data (such as name, home address, email address) and information about your preferred language or location etc. that allows the site to present you with information customized to fit your needs.

What are session cookies?

Session cookies are cookies that **last for a session**. A session starts when you launch a website or web app and ends when you leave the website or close your browser window. Session cookies contain information that is **stored in a temporary memory location** which is deleted after the session ends. Unlike other cookies, session cookies are never stored on your device. Therefore, they are also known as transient cookies, non-persistent cookies, or temporary cookies.

RavenWhite EX2008
Home Depot v. RavenWhite
IPR2024-01316

How do session cookies work?

The session cookie is a server-specific cookie that cannot be passed to any machine other than the one that generated the cookie. The server creates a “**session ID**” which is a randomly generated number that temporarily stores the session cookie. This cookie stores information such as the user’s input and tracks the movements of the user within the website. There is no other information stored in the session cookie.



Session cookies are set on a device's temporary memory when a browser session starts.

What is the purpose of session cookies?

A website itself cannot track a user’s movement on its webpage and treats each new page request as a new request from a new user. Session cookies **allow websites to remember users** within a website when they move between web pages. These cookies tell the server what pages to show the user so the user doesn’t have to remember where they left off or start navigating the site all over again. Therefore, without session cookies, websites have no memory. Session cookies are **vital for user experience** on online shops and websites when the functionalities depend on users’ activities.

What are session cookies examples?

The most common example of a session cookie in action is the **shopping cart on eCommerce websites**. When you visit an online shop and add items to your shopping cart, the session cookie remembers your selection so your shopping cart will have the items you selected when you are ready to checkout. Without session cookies, the checkout page will not remember your selection and your shopping cart will be empty.

Session cookies also help users to browse and add items to the shopping cart without logging in on an eCommerce site. Only when users checkout, do they have to add their name, address, and payment information.

Are session cookies GDPR compliant?

Session cookies fall under the categorization of strictly necessary cookies under the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) applicable in the European Union and the UK. Strictly necessary cookies like session cookies are exempt from the consent requirements underlined in the GDPR. Therefore, session cookies are GDPR compliant.

[Strictly necessary cookies](#) are essential to navigate a website and use its features and functionalities. Without them, you wouldn't be able to use basic services like logging in on a website or adding items to a shopping cart etc. GDPR exempts cookies from consent requirements as they do not gather any personal information about users.

To find an extensive list of necessary cookies set by websites, check out [CookieSearch](#), an open-source database of 100,000+ cookies.

Do you need consent for session cookies?

As session cookies are **set by the first party** (the website you visit) and are necessary to keep track of your navigation through the website and remember user inputs, they do not require consent under GDPR. Websites can set session cookies on a user's device without consent but should provide information on what these cookies do and why they are necessary. This is usually done via [cookie consent banners](#).

We value your privacy

We use cookies to enhance your browsing experience, serve personalized ads or content, and analyze our traffic. By clicking "Accept All", you consent to our use of cookies.

Customize ▾

Reject All

Accept All

Necessary ☒

Analytics ☐

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Advertisement ☐

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Cookie banner from CookieYes indicating that necessary cookies are enabled.

Generate a custom cookie banner for your website

Try it for free

How to check if my website uses session cookies?

Most websites use cookies. The easiest way to find out if your site uses cookies is to conduct a cookie scan. You can use the free cookie scanner from CookieYes. The scanner will crawl through your websites, activate hidden cookies and trackers, identify and categorize them and generate a cookie audit report.

Scan website for cookies

Get cookie consent with CookieYes

Now that you've scanned your website and have detailed information about cookies on your website, it's time to take a step towards privacy law compliance. [CookieYes](#) is a cookie consent solution that helps over **1 million websites** worldwide to get GDPR, LGPD, CNIL and CCPA compliant.

In the EU and UK, all cookies other than strictly necessary cookies require explicit consent from users. CookieYes will help you collect valid consent on your website as per [GDPR cookie consent](#). It will take 3 simple steps!

How to setup a cookie consent banner in 2 mins? CookieYes Cookie Consent for Wix, Sho...



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- Cookie banner with full customization
- Auto-translation of cookie banner in 30+ languages
- Cookie scanner to keep your cookie list up-to-date
- Granular control feature to selectively enable or disable cookies
- Automatic Third-party cookie blocking prior to getting consent
- In-built privacy and cookie policy generator
- Record of user consents and their cookie preferences
- Geo-targeting banner for GDPR and CCPA compliance

Try CookieYes for free

FAQ on session cookies

What is the difference between cookies and sessions?

Cookies and sessions are used by websites to store users' data across different pages of the site. The key difference between sessions and cookies is that sessions are saved on the server side while cookies are saved on the client side.

Cookies	Session
Cookies are small text files used to store user information on the user's computer.	Sessions are used to store user information on the user's server side.
Cookies expire after a specified lifetime or duration.	A session ends when the user closes the browser or logs out.

Cookies can only store a limited amount of data of 4KB in a browser.	Sessions have a 128 MB size to store data for one time.
Cookies store information in a text file.	Session stores data in an encrypted format.

Why do cookies require consent?

Online identifiers like cookies, IP addresses, advertising IDs, pixel tags, account handles, device fingerprints, and radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, can be used in combination and used to create profiles of individuals and identify them. Hence, cookies can be considered personal data and are subject to privacy laws like the GDPR, LGPD (Brazil), CCPA etc.



What are performance cookies?

Performance cookies allow websites to provide an enhanced user experience by remembering the users. These cookies evaluate the performance of a website by collecting information on how visitors use the website.



What are functional cookies?

Functional cookies are cookies that ensure a website functions properly. Cookies that allow user registration or remember usernames and passwords for automatic login and a user's site preferences (such as the language preference) are examples of functional cookies.

What are analytics cookies?

Analytics cookies are used to count the number of visitors on a website and track how users navigate and interact with a website i.e. they study a user's activity on your site. Analytics cookies like Google Analytics, and Hotjar, help website owners improve their websites.

What are advertisement cookies?

Advertisement or [tracking cookies](#) are used by websites to track the activities and behaviours of users online so as to provide them with personalized advertisements. These types of cookies are often persistent in nature and are usually installed on a user's browser by third parties.

What are persistent cookies?

Persistent cookies are cookies that are stored on a user's device for a considerably longer time. Therefore, they are also known as permanent cookies. Persistent cookies recognize users and remember their browser settings or preferences on their subsequent visits and help websites provide better user experiences.

What are first-party cookies?

First-party cookies are placed on a user's browser by a website or a domain the user visits directly. These kinds of cookies are being set for purposes like collecting analytics data, remembering browsing options such as language or location settings, and carrying out other activities that improve the browsing experience of users.

What are third-party cookies?

[Third-party cookies](#) are issued by any party apart from the website or a domain that a user visits directly. A third party can be referred to as an advertiser who provides targeted ads; or services that help website operators add third-party elements (e.g. live chat, social-media buttons, Google Maps element, etc.) on their site.

How do I stop blocking session cookies?

If you have cookie blockers or enabled cookie blocking via browser settings, sometimes you may not be able to use certain websites or their functionalities. In that case, you can modify cookie settings on browsers using our guide: [How to check cookies on your website manually](#).

What is the difference between session cookies and persistent cookies?

Session cookies do not retain any information on your device or send information from your device. These cookies are deleted when the session expires or terminated when the browser window is closed.

Persistent cookies remain on the device until you erase them or they expire. They are ideal for storing information, for instance, persistent cookies help you stay logged in on a website even if you close your browser window.



Should I always allow session cookies?

Session cookies are essential for a website's functionalities or for it to deliver a service that it intends to. They are also exempt from consent requirements under privacy regulations like the GDPR. Privacy-conscious users can therefore allow session cookies as they do not store any information/personal data and help the website to operate without any troubles.



Where are session cookies stored?

Session cookies are stored in the computer's memory temporarily and are never stored in the disk.

Where are non-session cookies stored?

Persistent Cookies are stored on a user's device i.e. placed on the device's hard disk.

Do session cookies expire?

Session cookies usually expire at the end of an internet browser session i.e. when the user closes a browser or tab. By default, there is no timeout or expiration timestamp for the session cookies

What information does a session cookie contain?

No personally identifiable data is collected by session cookies. They contain only a random number identifier that is used to index the server's session cache.



Kavya

Kavya is a content designer who works across marketing, and product to create simple, user-first content. She brings expertise in long-form content, UX writing, and copywriting for B2C and B2B brands. In her downtime, she's probably watching re-runs of mobster dramas and baking.



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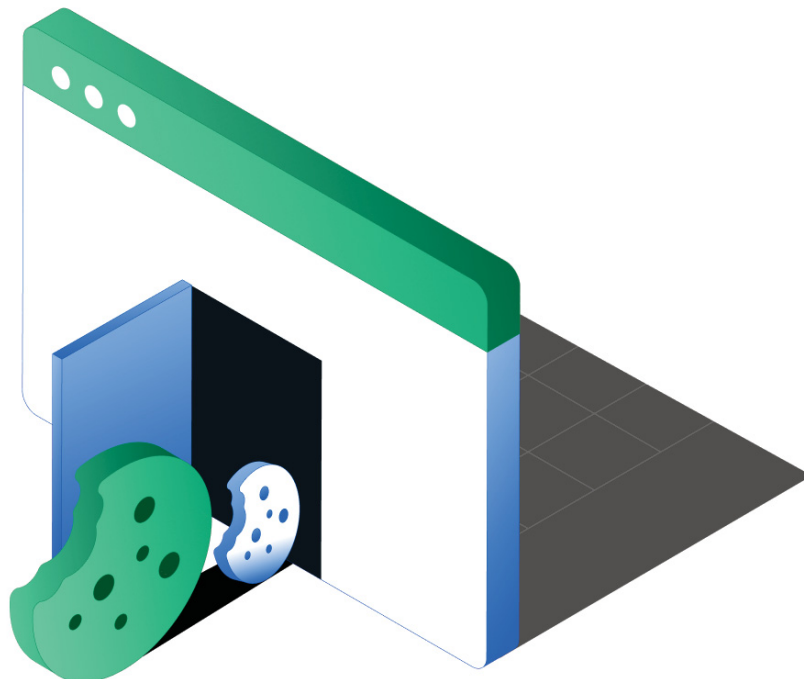


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Facebook Cookies: How They Work, Power Ads & Affect Compliance

In this guide, we will explain exactly what Facebook cookies do for advertisers, how to integrate them correctly and how to stay compliant without sacrificing ad performance.

By Shreya • June 11, 2025 • 11 min



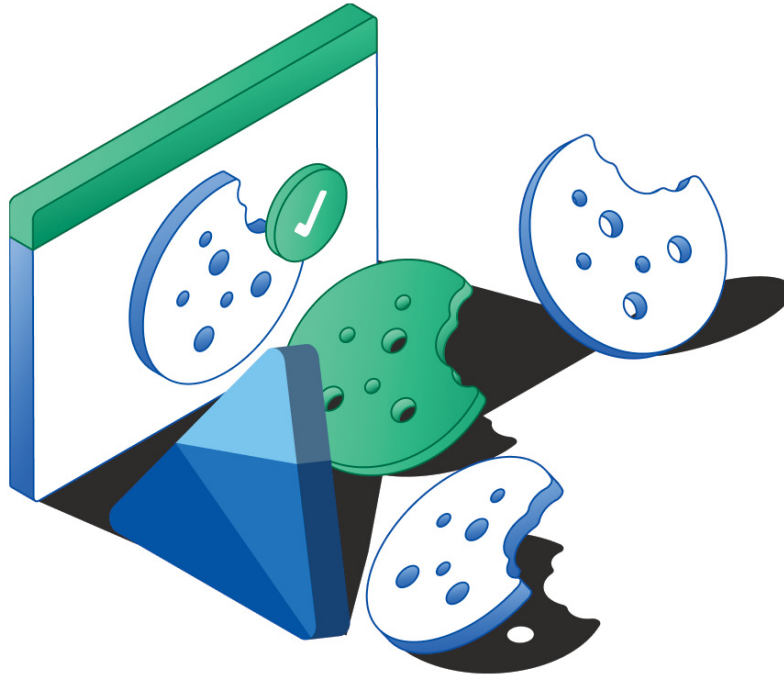
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COOKIES

Microsoft Clarity Cookies: What They Are & How to Stay GDPR-Compliant

Websites are silent conversations. Tools like Microsoft Clarity use cookies to understand user behavior respectfully and with consent. This guide explores its cookies through a privacy-first lens.

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