

Supplementary Topic

BROWSER COOKIES

What are they?

- Cookies are a small piece of data sent from a website and stored in the user's web browser while the user is browsing
- Every time the user loads the website, the browser sends the cookie back to the server to notify the user's previous activity
- Cookies were designed to be a reliable mechanism for websites to remember information (such as items added in the shopping cart) or to record the user's browsing activity (including clicking particular buttons, logging in, or recording which pages were visited in the past)
- Cookies can also store passwords and online form information a user has previously entered, such as a credit card number or an address
- Cookies are browser-specific – each browser (Edge, Chrome etc.) maintains its own cookies

Types of cookie

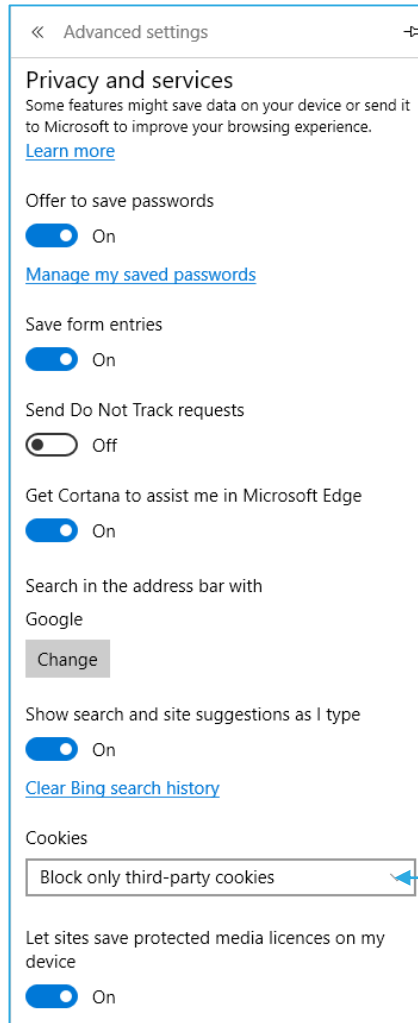
Session cookie - exists only in temporary memory while the user navigates the website. Web browsers normally delete session cookies when the user closes the browser

Persistent cookie (sometimes referred to as tracking cookies) expire at a specific date or after a specific length of time. They can be used by advertisers to record information about a user's web browsing habits over an extended period of time. However, they are also used for "legitimate" reasons as well (such as keeping users logged into their accounts on websites, to avoid re-entering login credentials at every visit).

Third-party cookie - normally, a cookie's domain will match the domain that is shown in the web browser's address bar. This is called a **first-party cookie**. Third-party cookies, however, belong to domains *different* from the one shown in the address bar. This opens up the potential for tracking the user's browsing history, and is often used by advertisers in an effort to serve relevant advertisements to each user. Since 2011, European law requires all websites targeting European Union member states to gain "informed consent" from users before storing non-essential cookies on their device.

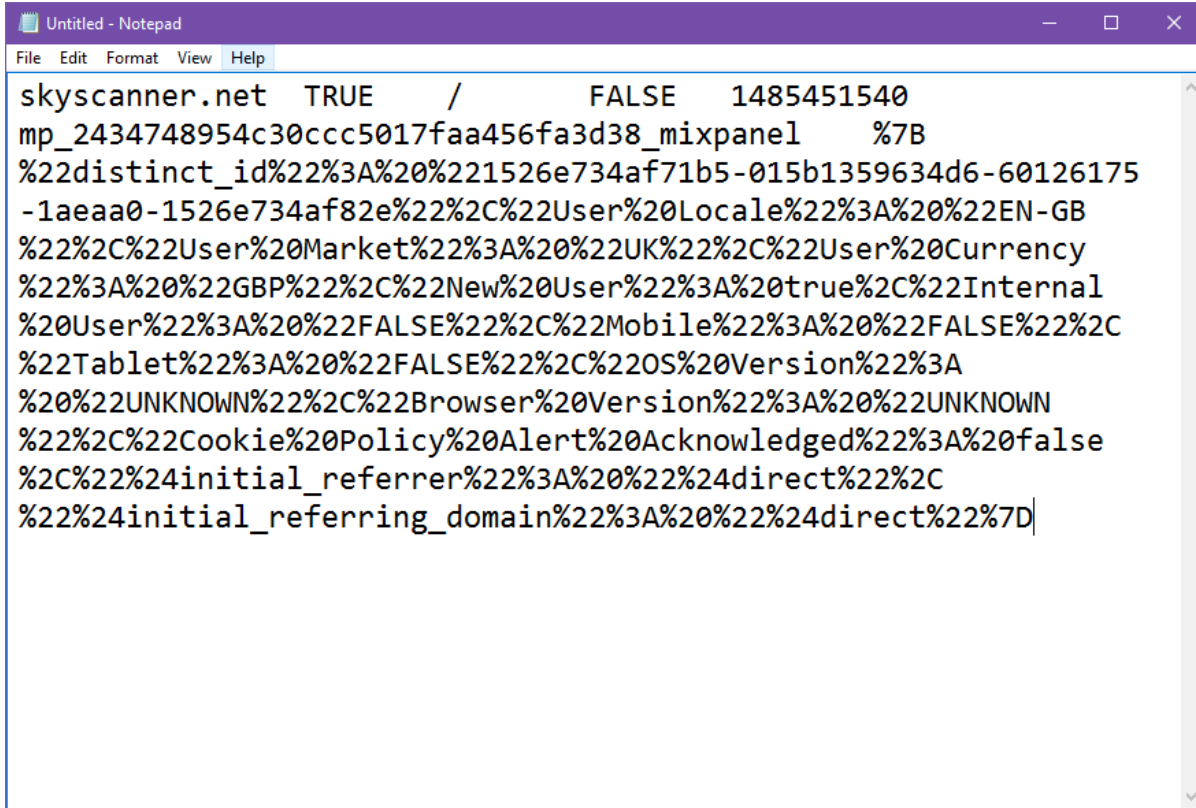
Most modern web browsers contain **privacy settings** that can block third-party cookies.

Managing cookies – e.g. Microsoft Edge



Block third-party cookies

What do they contain?

A screenshot of a Notepad window titled "Untitled - Notepad". The window contains a single line of text representing a cookie string. The text is: "skyscanner.net TRUE / FALSE 1485451540 mp_2434748954c30ccc5017faa456fa3d38_mixpanel %7B %22distinct_id%22%3A%20%221526e734af71b5-015b1359634d6-60126175-1aeaa0-1526e734af82e%22%2C%22User%20Locale%22%3A%20%22EN-GB%22%2C%22User%20Market%22%3A%20%22UK%22%2C%22User%20Currency%22%3A%20%22GBP%22%2C%22New%20User%22%3A%20true%2C%22Internal%20User%22%3A%20%22FALSE%22%2C%22Mobile%22%3A%20%22FALSE%22%2C%22Tablet%22%3A%20%22FALSE%22%2C%22OS%20Version%22%3A%20%22UNKNOWN%22%2C%22Browser%20Version%22%3A%20%22UNKNOWN%22%2C%22Cookie%20Policy%20Alert%20Acknowledged%22%3A%20false%2C%22%24initial_referrer%22%3A%20%22%24direct%22%2C%22%24initial_referring_domain%22%3A%20%22%24direct%22%7D". The text is displayed in a monospaced font.

```
skyscanner.net TRUE / FALSE 1485451540
mp_2434748954c30ccc5017faa456fa3d38_mixpanel %7B
%22distinct_id%22%3A%20%221526e734af71b5-015b1359634d6-60126175
-1aeaa0-1526e734af82e%22%2C%22User%20Locale%22%3A%20%22EN-GB
%22%2C%22User%20Market%22%3A%20%22UK%22%2C%22User%20Currency
%22%3A%20%22GBP%22%2C%22New%20User%22%3A%20true%2C%22Internal
%20User%22%3A%20%22FALSE%22%2C%22Mobile%22%3A%20%22FALSE%22%2C
%22Tablet%22%3A%20%22FALSE%22%2C%22OS%20Version%22%3A
%20%22UNKNOWN%22%2C%22Browser%20Version%22%3A%20%22UNKNOWN
%22%2C%22Cookie%20Policy%20Alert%20Acknowledged%22%3A%20false
%2C%22%24initial_referrer%22%3A%20%22%24direct%22%2C
%22%24initial_referring_domain%22%3A%20%22%24direct%22%7D
```

Nothing too intelligible!