

What are cookies?

Cookies are small text files that Web sites place in your computer to help your browsers remember specific information. For example, they might store your passwords and user IDs. They are also used to store your preferences for content or personalized pages. Most shopping carts use cookies. These allow you to choose items and leave the virtual store, then return later and find that all the items are still in your shopping cart. Cookies are also used to build a profile of which sites you visit and which banner ads you click on. Advertisers use this information to deliver targeted ads directly to your computer. Some sites save your preferences on the cookie itself. Other sites assign users ID numbers or encoded passwords and keep records of your preferences at their end. Some sites use temporary cookies (called session cookies) that are deleted when you exit your browser. Others place persistent cookies, which stay on your hard drive for long periods.

Another definition:

A cookie is a small piece of textual information, sent to your browser from the website or web server you are visiting. If a site you visit uses cookies, that site's web server queries your browser for permission to pass a cookie to your browser's directory. At a minimum, any cookie saved in your browser's directory is stored in RAM during your session. Many sites also store the cookie on your hard drive in a text file after you leave (log off) their site. Cookies are used for many purposes such as website tracking, shopping cart identification, ascertaining information about the machine you are using, personalizing your site visit, and storing information like passwords and user ID's for a particular site. The web server issuing the cookie, is the only server that can read that particular cookie. Cookies cannot retrieve information from your hard drive or profile your system.

Another definition:

A cookie is a text file placed on your hard drive by some Web pages that you visit. The cookie allows the Webmaster to track your visits to their Website as well as correlate that information with other information such as the previous page you visited, your operating system, your browser plus any information that you volunteer via a form. When you return to that Website the site will retrieve your cookie file from your hard drive and use whatever information is stored to target content and advertising to both your stated preferences (where asked) and the behavior that you exhibited. This technology allows you to store items in an electronic shopping basket and "remember" other useful pieces of information such as passwords.

What are Temporary Internet Files (Cache)?

The cache or Temporary Internet Files are files like graphics, Web pages, cookies, and so forth, stored on your computer's hard disk to speed up surfing. The idea is that when you surf to <http://www.ohcu.ohiohealth.com>, your browser will take certain files from that site and store them on your computer's hard drive. Next time you surf to <http://www.ohcu.ohiohealth.com>, the page should load faster because you already have some of the information stored on your computer's hard disk as Temporary Internet Files.