

Cookie controls

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES	TRADE-OFF
Block third-party cookies	Stops outside companies from setting cookies they read across sites	Some embedded logins or comments may break
Separate cookies per site	The same company gets a different cookie on each site, so it cannot match them	Depends on your browser
Clear cookies	Resets IDs and signs you out	You sign in again
Choose Reject on banners	Turns off optional cookies	Banners can be confusing
Global Privacy Control	Asks sites not to sell or share your data	A request that depends on law and company
Separate profiles	Keeps school, work and shopping apart	A little extra effort

Browsers differ. Check your own settings, because defaults change between browsers and versions.

The user agent **string**

```
Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64)
AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko)
Chrome/143.0.0.0 Safari/537.36
```

READING IT

- Mozilla/5.0: a historical token almost every browser sends
- System details: the operating system
- Engine, browser and version

- Sent with every request, without asking you
- Used for compatibility and statistics
- Some browsers now hide exact OS version, device model and minor version
- Sites that need more can request Client Hints
- It adds to your fingerprint, and it can be changed

It is a label, not a secret. Changing it can make you stand out more, not less.

Browser fingerprinting

MANY SMALL DETAILS

User agent

Language

Time zone

Screen size

Fonts

Canvas drawing

Graphics hardware

Add-ons and settings



combined into

bfdd 9c48 0a00
cfc1

- Needs no cookie, so deleting cookies does not remove it
- A 2010 EFF study of 470,161 browsers found 83.6% had a unique fingerprint
- Fingerprints drift, so trackers match similar ones
- Help: common settings, a browser with built-in protection, fewer add-ons
- Test yours, and treat the result as an estimate

Blend in, do not stand out. Random spoofing and unusual add-ons can make you more unique.

Your cookie plan

- ☐ Look at the cookies on a site you use
- ☐ Check your browser's third-party cookie setting
- ☐ Clear cookies you do not need
- ☐ Choose Reject on cookie banners when you can
- ☐ Turn on the Global Privacy Control if offered
- ☐ Test your browser's fingerprint
- ☐ Keep your browser updated, with few unusual add-ons
- ☐ Use separate profiles for school, work and home

DISCUSSION

Cookie banners are meant to give you a choice. Do they? What would a better design look like?

A fingerprint works without cookies and is hard to stop. Who else should act: browser makers, websites or lawmakers?