The Privacy Implications of Browser Cookie Handling
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Cookies are strings sent from a server to a user's computer that websites use to keep track of information such as saved preferences as users browse their site. This has privacy implications, as an advertising site could use cookies to keep track of one's browsing behavior across different websites using the ads, and users may not realize this tracking occurs. Users may not desire to have their information saved or be tracked.

The issue of how web browsers handle cookies was examined in the 2001 article "Cookies and Web Browser Design: Toward Realizing Informed Consent Online" by Lynette Millet. The paper examined how browsers handle cookies and the ability of users to control that behavior; recommendations to improve cookie handling were then presented. My thesis will revisit this topic, examine how current browsers handle cookies, and determine whether the recommendations presented were implemented. Three of those six recommendations have been implemented in at least one browser, and some new features, such as private browsing mode, have been implemented. At present, browsers are focusing more on adding additional privacy features rather than changing how cookies are handled.

Keywords: Cookies, interface design, the Internet, personalization, privacy, security, tracking, web browsers.