# Don't choke on 'cookies'

When one browses the Internet and finally finds the website they're looking for, one will likely come across cookies, the fear inducing pop-up windows that generally offer two different browsing options if one wants to navigate the website.

*Cookies* contain the information that one generates when browsing the Internet, such as: frequently visited websites, login details, configuration details from browsing online, products saved in favourites, characteristics of the device being used and even location and search history. They are small pieces of information that are generated when visiting a website.

At the same time, *cookies* interpret one's preferences and the way one interacts online, carrying out an analysis that can optimise searches to more easily find the products, categories, or type of information being sought out.

## Reject or accept, that is the question

Recently, the Spanish Data Protection Authority (AEPD) presented its 2024 Guide, a document which states that it is legal to offer the option of paying so that users can browse without *cookies*. Meaning if a user rejects *cookies,* they may not be able to access the website free of charge.

For that reason, and taking into account the new regulation, there are several options when browsing the Internet:

1: Reject *cookies* and pay for privacy. One gains privacy in exchange for a monthly cost. In addition, it should be noted that browsing will be less comfortable and less personalised. Also, paying to reject *cookies* does not result in completely anonymous browsing, since there are other ways of monitoring and collecting data, such as IP address or the browser's digital fingerprints.

2: Accept cookies and browse free of charge. Using this option, one can access how one's browsing is tracked without paying with money. Of course, one pays with data and provides information on one's behaviour and interests that is used for purposes which one is not always aware of.

## How to properly manage cookies

With respect to the dilemma of whether to accept or reject *cookies*, there is a third option: making good use of *cookies* and protecting one's data. To do so, follow these recommendations:

- **Select only the strictly necessary cookies**, namely those relating to the website's function.
- **Read the privacy policy,** which indicates what use is made of the data provided when accepting *cookies.*
- **Adjust your privacy configuration** so that web browsers can filter and protect the data provided when making a search.
- **Delete *cookies* on a regular** basis so that browsing history is clean, and one is less likely to receive personalised advertising.

**A cookie for every function**

*Cookies* and the data that they generate can be obtained through the websites visited or generated through third parties in different ways. *Own cookies* are those a user encounters when visiting a website, and they store user data based on simple functions such as adding a product to a shopping basket or logging in.

Furthermore, *third-party cookies* are managed by creating user profiles on the Internet, which are the *cookies* most frequently used by advertisers to personalise advertising shown. Because of these *cookies*, advertising will often relate to airlines, heavenly travel destinations or sites for contracting hotel services when summer is near.

Greater information facilitates decision-making in line with the user's needs, so one should find out in greater detail what websites do with data and read the privacy terms,conditions, and policies. One can also find out more about secure browsing on CaixaBank's website, which has a section on [security](#) that provides comprehensive information on good practices for a secure online experience.

Regularly deleting cookies from one's browsing history is also recommended. The leading web browsers provide configurations that allow for deleting stored data, history, cookies or open logins whenever the user closes the browser.