

Cookie Monsters: Online Privacy and Data Gathering



Cookie

A small piece of data sent from a website and stored in a user's web browser. Every time the user loads the website, the browser sends the cookie back to the server to notify the website of the user's previous activity.



Fingerprinting

A newer tracking technique that allows web sites to collect and analyze the characteristics of a computer (plug-ins, software, screen size, time zone, fonts) in order to form a unique signature.

Differing views about data privacy

Millennials tend to feel somewhat more open to sharing data and information than older users.

■ Millennials ■ Age 35+

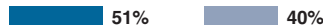
No one should ever be allowed to have access to my personal data or web behavior



I'm O.K. with trading some of my personal information in exchange for more relevant advertising



I'm O.K. with sharing with sharing information with companies as long as I get something in return



I would be willing to share my location with companies in order to receive coupons or deals for nearby businesses



Source: Bovitz, Inc., "Is Online Privacy Over? Findings from the Annenberg Center for the Digital Future Show Millennials Embrace A New Online Reality" http://annenberg.usc.edu/News%20and%20Events/News/130422CDF_Millennials.aspx

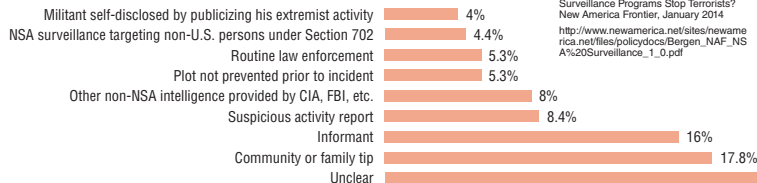
Questioning the effectiveness of NSA's metadata collection

Recently it was revealed that U.S. intelligence agencies were collecting the metadata for telephone records of U.S. citizens in bulk, under Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act. A study of 225 cases of individuals charged in the U.S. with an act of terrorism since 9/11, however, calls into question the effectiveness of massive data collection:

Percentage of 225 terrorism cases solved by which means

NSA surveillance under an unknown authority 1.3%

NSA Bulk Collection under Section 215 1.8%



Sources:

Peter Bergen et al., "Do NSA's Bulk Surveillance Programs Stop Terrorists?" *New America Frontier*, January 2014
http://www.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/Bergen_NAF_NS_A%20Surveillance_1_0.pdf

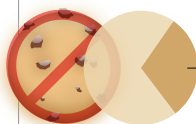
Cookies collect personal information

223 Number of cookies dropped onto visitor's computers by Dictionary.com

0 Number of cookies dropped by Wikipedia

86% Percentage of websites that drop one or more cookies on visitor's computers

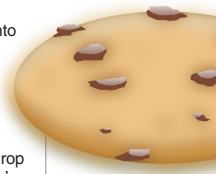
60% Percentage of respondents who said they would want a Do Not Track Law to prevent websites from collecting information from them



Users who delete their cookies every month

Sources:

<http://digiday.com/publishers/13-alarming-stats-about-cookies/>
<http://paulinternetsecurityblog.wordpress.com/2012/06/30/tracking-cookies-how-many-does-your-computer-have/>
<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748703940904575395073512989404>



Bigger web sites have bigger appetites for consumer data

40 percent of all web pages viewed by Americans come from just 50 of the most popular websites.

Those 50 websites were responsible for placing 3,180 tracking files on a test computer

One-third of those tracking files performed basic functions like remembering passwords

But two-thirds of the files were responsible for creating consumer profiles that could be tracked

Sources:

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748703940904575395073512989404>