Should you be concerned about internet cookies that give advertisers unauthorised access to your computer?

With the endless number of online hoaxes, viruses, phishing scams and other threats, many people are suspicious of ANY online programmes that share their personal information with the rest of the world – and rightfully so. However, cookies are not the menacing tools of surveillance many people believe them to be, and in most cases they do more good than evil.

Unlikes viruses and spyware, cookies are not programmes that allow unauthorised access to your computer. They are simple text files that, on their own, can't do much of anything.

Most cookies are designed to enhance web browsing. On a shopping site, they can store a list of items you've selected to buy as you browse through an online catalogue. They can also remember your web browsing preferences whenever you revisit a particular site.

Types of internet cookie you do want to block

Most web browsers allow cookies to be read only by the website to which they belong to prevent other sites from tracking your online activities. However, some advertisers will put cookies on your computer as a way to recognise your computer

at other websites associated with that advertiser. These are called "third-party cookies" and they allow advertisers to track your online activities.

Blocking third-party cookies is easy. In Internet Explorer, click the "Tools" menu and then choose "Internet Options". Then click the "Privacy" tab and then the "Advanced" button. Make sure the checkbox "Override automatic cookie handling" is checked. You'll see options for first-party and third-party cookies. In the third-party cookie options, select "Block". Then click OK.

Of course, you should always use a firewall, an up-to-date anti-virus programme and anti-spyware software to protect yourself from REAL online threats.

For more information about us and what we can do for you contact us:

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