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A cookie is a file containing an identifier (a string of letters and numbers) that is sent by a web server to a web browser and is stored by the browser. The identifier is then sent back to the server each time the browser requests a page from the server.

Cookies may be either "persistent" cookies or "session" cookies: a persistent cookie will be stored by a web browser and will remain valid until its set expiry date, unless deleted by the user before the expiry date; a session cookie, on the other hand, will expire at the end of the user session, when the web browser is closed.

Cookies do not typically contain any information that personally identifies a user, but personal information that we store about you may be linked to the information stored in and obtained from cookies.

How are Cookies used?

These pieces of information are used to improve services for you through, for example:

- enabling a service to recognise your device so you don't have to give the same information several times during one task
- recognising that you may already have given a username and password so you don't need to do it for every web page requested
- measuring how many people are using services, so they can be made easier to use and there's enough capacity to ensure they are fast
- analysing anonymised data to help us understand how people interact with govt services so we can make them

You can manage these small files and learn more about them here All About Cookies.org. There's also a cookies awareness video (below) and further information on how to remove cookies at About Cookies: how to control cookies.

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Alternatively, you may wish to visit the About Cookies website, which contains comprehensive information on how to do this on a wide variety of browsers. You will also find details on how to delete cookies from your machine as well as more general information about cookies.

Please be aware that restricting cookies may have an impact upon the functionality of our website. If you wish to view your cookie code, just click on a cookie to open it. You'll see a short string of text and numbers. The numbers are your identification card, which can only be seen by the server that gave you the cookie.

For information on how to do this on the browser of your mobile phone you will need to refer to your handset manual. To opt-out of third-parties collecting any data regarding your interaction on our website, please refer to their websites for further information

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Cookie Name: _utma

Expires: 2 years from set/update

Cookie Name: _utmb

Expires: 30 mins from set/update

Cookie Name: _utmc

Expires: End of browser session

Cookie Name: _utmz

Expires: 6 months from set/update

For further details on the cookies set by Google Analytics, please refer to the Google Code website