What is cookie?

A **cookie**is a small piece of text file stored on user's computer in the form of name-value pair. Cookies are used by websites to keep track of visitors e.g. to keep user information like username etc. If any web application using cookies, Server send cookies and client browser will store it. The browser then returns the cookie to the server at the next time the page is requested. The most common example of using a cookie is to store User information, User preferences, Password Remember Option etc.

Benefits of cookies

Here are some of the advantages of using cookies to store session state.  
         Cookies are simple to use and implement.  
         Occupies less memory, do not require any server resources and are stored on the user's computer so no extra burden on server.  
         We can configure cookies to expire when the browser session ends (session cookies) or they can exist for a specified length of time on the client’s computer (persistent cookies).  
         Cookies persist a much longer period of time than Session state.

Drawbacks of using cookies

Here are some of the disadvantages:

         As mentioned previously, cookies are not secure as they are stored in clear text they may pose a possible security risk as anyone can open and tamper with cookies. You can manually encrypt and decrypt cookies, but it requires extra coding and can affect application performance because of the time that is required for encryption and decryption  
         Several limitations exist on the size of the cookie text(4kb in general), number of cookies(20 per site in general), etc.  
         User has the option of disabling cookies on his computer from browser’s setting .  
         Cookies will not work if the security level is set to high in the browser.  
         Users can delete a cookies.  
         Users browser can refuse cookies, so your code has to anticipate that possibility.  
         Complex type of data not allowed (e.g. dataset etc.). It allows only plain text (i.e. cookie allows only string content)