IS117 Section 004

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Assignment 10 – Create and Display Cookies (Ethics)

Due April 9th

Cookies are data that store information inside of text files, which live on your computer. Web servers forget all the information users input each time the connection is shut down. Therefore, cookies were made to store this information for use when a user accesses the same web page in the future. Name-value pairs are how cookies store data in text files, for example the “username” variable will have the users name stored so if I were to access a website and enter my name the username would equal Jake. These pairs are in the format username = Jake. Similarly, other data such as passwords, display settings, payment information, privacy preferences, and so on can all be stored as a cookie in text files locally on the user’s computer.

Cookies make life easier for users across the internet. Some positives cookies provide enhanced user experience, by allowing users to tailor the content a website provides to their interests thus creating a more personalized experience. In addition, cookies allow a website to track user interactions and gather data which can improve the site in the future. Lastly, advertisements displayed on the website can be targeted toward the user so they may find products or content they are interested in.

On the other hand, there are some negative aspects about cookies. Privacy concerns are always on the forefront of discussion when it comes to cookies, they store sensitive personal information. There are also security risks associated with cookies, various forms of cyber-attacks can abuse the data in cookies such as session hijacking. Lastly, there can be performance issues on a website if too many cookies are stored or if they are not managed correctly.

Overall, cookies are ethical because the positives do outweigh the negatives. However, cookies are only ethical if web pages provide proper transparency about what data their cookies store and the purpose of collecting the data. Additionally, web pages must receive consent from the user to store their data using cookies and there must be a layer of user control. Users should be able to manage their cookies as it is their data being stored. Lastly, web pages need to implement proper security protocols to protect their user’s data! If the proper ground is covered cookies are ethical.