COOKIES!

What are cookies?

- Cookies are bits of data that a web application can use to store information in the user's browser and retrieve it every time the user requests the page.

Why would this be beneficial?

- It's a simple text string that is stored by the browser as a name or value pair. So when a browser requests a web site the server can create a cookie for the browser to refer to in order to navigate the rest of the site. Making the browsing experience faster as well as better. Lets look at some examples…

Typical Uses for Cookies

- Cookies can store data such as usernames, passwords, address', and even credit cards. This helps the user skip the login and registration forms.

- Cookies allows customization of pages to the user. Displaying local interests such as weather and sport scores.

- Last but not least, focused advertising. Banner ads showing items that you recently searched for.

Some think COOKIES are harmful because of the reasons above. Since cookies are made of plain text, they cannot directly modify a users computer, generate spam, or more importantly steal files.

Cookies do have a shelf life…

- By default cookies only last till the user closes their browser window.
- Cookies can be set to last in a users browser for up to three years.
- Can’t always count on cookies, there are users who have them disabled on their browser.
- Also browsers generally have a limit of 20 cookies per site and 300 total. The browser can also limit each cookie to 4 kilobytes.

How to make a COOKIE!

- Here is the syntax of the setcookie function:
  - setcookie($name, $value, $expire, $path, $domain, $secure, $httponly)
  - This function needs to be called before any HTML output is sent from the application.
- Parameter Descriptions:
  - $name = Name of the cookie.
  - $value = Value of the cookie. Default is an empty string.
  - $expire = The expiration date of the cookie has a timestamp. If set to 0 the cookie expires when the user closes the browser window.
    - Per-session Cookie: Expires when user closes browser.
    - Persistent Cookie: Expires at the specified expiration date.

Parameters Continued…

- $path = The path on the server the cookie is available to. If set to ‘/’ the cookie will have access to all directories on the current server. The default is the current directory of the PHP file the cookie was created.
- $domain = The domain the cookie is available to. The default is the server that’s setting the cookie.
- $secure = If TRUE, the cookie is available only if it is sent using HTTPS. Default if FALSE.
- $httponly = If TRUE, the cookie is only made available through the HTTP protocol and not through client-side script such as JavaScript. Default is FALSE.

Getting the value of a cookie from the browser.

- Once a cookie has been set, you can get it the next time the browser requests a page. Just use the variable $_COOKIE, this is an associative array.
  - $userid = $_COOKIE[‘userid’];

Example of how to make a COOKIE.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<?php
$cookie_name = "user";
$cookie_value = "John Doe";
setcookie($cookie_name, $cookie_value, time() + (86400 * 30), "/"); // 86400 = 1 day; It runs on seconds.
?>
<html>
<body>

<?php
if(!isset($_COOKIE[$cookie_name])) {
    echo "Cookie named '" . $cookie_name . "' is not set!";
} else {
    echo "Cookie '" . $cookie_name . "' is set!<br>";
    echo "Value is: " . $_COOKIE[$cookie_name];
}
?>

</body>
</html>
```

Helpful Resources

- http://www.w3schools.com/php/php_cookies.asp
- Murach Text Book – Pg. 348-353