Analytics Tracking:

*I work for the website owner to see how many people are visiting the site (visits and unique visitors; new and returning), or where they’re coming from. I help a website owner understand a customer’s website experience. I’m a persistent, usually first party, cookie that is set the first time when you visit the website, and I remain there for the duration that the website determines, often 18 months.*

Session Management Tracking:

*I’m a cookie that is needed to make the website function technically. I’m set when you visit the site and I disappear when you leave. I’m a transient cookie, stored on the client side in temporary memory and not on your hard drive. I’m happy to date, but am not looking for a long-term relationship and I won’t invade your privacy.*

Ecommerce Tracking:

*I’m used for shopping cart management and “quick checkout” options when you buy something on your favourite website. My cookies store ID values that help the website keep track of you as you add different things to your cart. Everything you add to your cart gets stored with your ID value, so that when you check out, the website knows what is in your cart. I can be a session cookie that disappears when you leave, or a persistent cookie that keeps your shopping cart items for you when you return later. Without me, online shopping would be far less convenient.*

Location Tracking:

*I’m the spy in your pocket. I’m on your computers, mobile phones, and tablets. Since I often go with you, I can record your location all the time, even when you’re not connected to the Internet. I can can reveal not just where you live and work, but also where you visit. I can make your daily routine and any deviations from it clear. I can also be used to infer your relationships to other people.*

Third Party Tracking:

*I get stored on your device when you visit a website. You often won’t know I’m there. The website decides how many of my friends are invited. I often have a lot of friends. There may be 60 of us or more on one page. But I’m sometimes seen alone or not seen at all. I like to track your browsing habits and tell others. I guess you could say I’m a bit of a gossip. One of my jobs is to work for companies who want to build up a profile of who you are: how old you are, where you live, what you read, and what you’re interested in. The companies I work for can package and sell this information to theirs: advertisers, other companies, or governments. I’m often hidden, but when I work for well known companies, you can see me as a brightly coloured button.*

Browser Fingerprinting:

*I started out in banking to help prevent fraud, but now I work in lots of areas. My friends tell me things about you, like your IP address, browser history, screen size, time-zone, plug-ins, and operating system. I pull together information that alone doesn’t seem identifying, but because I put all these things together, I can identify you across the Internet and can be used as an alternative to cookies. The more uniquely your system is configured, the easier it for me to identify you. Don’t believe me? Try Panopticlick. EFF has been measuring me since 2010.*