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IS 117 004

Cookies

This is a two part assignment.

PART 1:

- a. In a word document write a short Narrative (one or two paragraphs) on how cookies can be used to record information about you as you use a web site.
- b. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of this.
- c. You must answer the question: Is the use of cookies ethical?
- d. Upload the Word file to Canvas.

PART 2:

- a. Create a simple HTML page with any necessary CSS and Javascript that will set a cookie and then display the cookie on reloading the page.
- b. You may refer to the discussion in class and also this page from www.w3schools.com

Cookies are an essential part of today's internet, facilitating ways for websites to produce user-generated content and individualized experiences. According to W3Schools, Cookies are small text files invented so that websites could remember information about their users.

Technically, cookies are akin to key-value dictionaries for developers but its integration to HTTP requests enhances this feature. This allows for important web-development features such as server-side rendering. This feature allows websites to use user settings to "render" a web page before the user can access it. Cookies also facilitate features such as session management, user authentication, and cross-site identification. Features such as user authentication and session

management are important for social media websites. Features such as cross-site identification are fundamental of today's ad-ridden internet.

With the internet's growth came commercialization, leading all websites to prioritize squeezing as much value from their users as possible, down to a mere portion of a penny. While Cookies have led to super-individualized apps such as TikTok, it has led to users being tracked across websites and virtually spied upon as mega corporations collect their information. These companies can collect information such as browsing history and online behaviors to further "target" users with ads. With that in mind, it is hard to decide if the use of cookies is ethical. This question is similar to asking whether it's acceptable for humans to consume. I believe the answer to be the same: it is ethical because it is necessary. Cookies are most ethical when used transparently and with consent, but can be easily misused to digitally harm users.