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Cookies are pieces of data that a web page uses to ‘remember’ a user’s information. When a user goes onto any web page, certain information is saved and stored, these being the cookies. This info can be anything from answers to forms, login information, and items in a shopping cart. This information is then placed into a text file on the user’s computer. When the user goes back onto the webpage anytime later, the info stored in the cookies are automatically filled. For example, if the user said that their name was ‘Daniel’, then the website will refer to them as ‘Daniel’ every time they start up a session. The cookies are then deleted when the user manually deletes them, time expires on the cookies, or the user no longer needs the cookies.

The main positive use of cookies is that it saves information between sessions. The web server forgets everything about the user the moment a connection is shut down, so cookies speed up and improve the overall user experience by not having them fill out their information every time they start up a session. Another benefit is that because cookies are stored locally, there is less of a burden being placed on the server. The server does not need to take a part of itself for user cookies, which frees up resources and storage for the server. The same cannot be said for the user’s computer however, as the cookies need to be stored locally. This takes up space on the computer, especially if the user goes onto multiple websites and accumulates a ton of cookies. There is also the security and privacy problems that cookies have. Not only are the cookies accessible in the computer storage by anyone, but a main use of cookies is also to give that information to advertisers, who may send it to other advertisers, meaning all your information can be tracked online. Overall, I don’t think cookies are ethical, but there is little we can do against it at this point. As unethical as they are, the benefit of cookies far outweighs the cons. While the info can easily be taken or misused, the only other options are to strain the server or have users fill their information every time they go on a webpage.