

# Does it Matter Who Has Your Data?

## \* DID YOU KNOW ...

Cookies (the nonedible kind!) are data files that are stored on your computer when you visit certain sites. They are often used by companies to identify repeat customers and to personalize visitors' experiences. Cookies can be really helpful. For example, it's because of cookies that you don't always have to retype your passwords on different websites. But cookies also help websites keep track of where you've been and what you've clicked on, which can allow advertisers to target you more directly (ever notice that you see an ad on Facebook for something you considered buying on a different site a few days earlier?).

## Word Search

```

e r e y a a n o o e
i k i w e s s o o p
p r t r r r r s t y
t e y i t r i y t t
e e r y e r x n t o
t e t s a e i e t e
t w i a i s i r n r
e e a r s s i g n e
e p e c s r t y n t
w c o n t e x t n s
    
```

persist      context      stereotype      synergy      wiki

## \* WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What information about your demographic group and online behavior might websites collect about you?

## 1. Family Activity

**\* DO YOU REMEMBER ...**  
What the upsides and downsides are of companies collecting your data online?

Everett really wanted to try a new app -- one that supposedly matched you up with cute girls in your neighborhood -- but there was one major problem. Actually, there were two problems. The first was that his mom had said, "Absolutely not," when he asked her if he could download it. The second was that the app required users to confirm that they were over the age of 18 ... and Everett had just turned 17 last week. He tried to let it go, but soon all his friends were using it and he decided he would just download it to check it out. The app seemed pretty cool, but soon he was getting tons of ads and spam in his regular browser -- ads clearly meant for adults. Everett wasn't totally sure how the app influenced what he was seeing on other sites, couldn't figure out how to stop it, and didn't know whether or not he should 'fess up to his mom.

## 2. Think Out Loud!

- ~ What is your immediate reaction to this situation?
- ~ What do you think about Everett lying about his age on the platform? What are some of the risks?
- ~ Why do you think the app required users to be over the age of 18?
- ~ Do you think Everett downloading the app could have anything to do with the ads he's seeing on his main Internet browser? Why, or why not?
- ~ What would you advise Everett? Should he tell his mom? Delete the app? Get advice from a friend?

## 3. Common Sense Says ...

Don't be fooled into thinking that the ads you see online are random! Advertisements on your Facebook page, for example, are displayed based on demographic information about you and your previous searches. So, if you search for a pair of Nikes, you might start seeing Nike ads on your Facebook page. Stay alert and remember that advertisers are clever about trying to reach you and make you want to buy their products. Tracking, cookies, and targeting all facilitate strategic efforts to reach potential customers.