

Introduction: This omnibus survey focused on online privacy and cookie preferences. It offers valuable insights into the public's engagement with website cookies, their attitudes towards online privacy, and their understanding of how websites and third-party organisations use their personal information.

Methodology: Savanta interviewed 2,316 UK adults aged 18+ online in March 2024. Data were weighted to be representative of the UK by age, gender, region, and social grade. Savanta is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

Results:

Q1. When visiting a new website, you are often asked to accept the website's cookies. Which of the following best describes your approach to reading the cookies preferences, policies, or settings?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Over half (56%) of UK adults claim to read the cookies preferences, policies, or settings when visiting a new website, 17% do so always. In comparison, two in five (40%) adults never read them.
- Men (61%), adults aged 25-34 (64%), those of higher socio-economic grades (AB 68%) are more likely to claim to read them compared to women (52%), other age groups (18-24 53%, 35-54 55% and 55+ 54%), and those of lower socio-economic grades (C1 49%, C2 55%, DE 52%).

Q2. Do you normally accept or reject the Cookies when visiting a new website?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- When visiting a new website, just below half (48%) of UK adults accept the cookies, about a fifth (21%) reject them, and 24% decide based on the website.
- Women (50%) and older age groups (25-34 50%, 35-54 49% and 55+ 49%) are more likely to say they accept cookies compared to men (45%) and younger adults (18-24 42%).

Q3. What would encourage you to read these cookies preferences/ policies / settings more often?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Among those who sometimes or never read cookies, having a short and concise version (53%), and using simple and clear language (46%) would encourage them to read cookie notices more often.
- However over 1 in 10 (13%) say nothing would persuade them to change their behaviour.

Q4. How would you rate your understanding of what a website does with your information once you've accepted cookies?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Almost half (47%) of UK adults report having limited to no understanding of what websites do with their information once cookies are accepted. About a third (34%) say they have a moderate understanding and 14% report a very good understanding.
- Those who always read cookies are more likely to report a very good understanding of how their information is being used (48%) compared to those who read them sometimes (9%) or never (5%).
- Younger adults (18-34 24%) are more likely to report having a very good understanding than older age groups (35-54 16% and 55+ 5%).

Q5. Thinking about cookie notices that pop-up when you visit a website, which of the following statements best describes your view?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Nearly half (46%) of UK adults accept cookies to quickly dismiss the cookie notice. About a quarter (24%) sometimes read cookie notices but find them confusing.
- About one in ten say they sometimes read cookie notices and understand what they mean (11%) and read them regularly so that they can see how their information will be used (7%).

Q6. On how many of the websites you visit is it as easy to reject cookies as it is to accept them?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- One in five (20%) adults find it as easy to reject cookies as it is to accept them on almost all websites. About a third (32%) think this is the case for most websites and 19% say this applies to about half of the websites. Only 5% say this is the case for almost none of the websites they visit.

Q7. Some organisations want more information about you so that the online advertising they give you will be more relevant to you and your interests. Would you prefer: Please select one option

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Over half (56%) of adults prefer to give organisations less information about themselves and receive less relevant advertising. A quarter (25%) prefer to give more of their information for more relevant advertising. Nearly one in five (18%) have no opinion on the subject.

Q8. When you accept cookies, your personal information (e.g. your interests, your age and where you live, and recently visited websites) is often sent to large numbers of third-party organisations in order to provide you with personalised, targeted adverts. How comfortable are you with this?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Adults have mixed comfort levels about websites sharing their personal information with third-party organisations for advertising: 32% are comfortable while 41% are not. About a quarter (23%) feel neutral.

Q9. Have you noticed any recent changes that make it easier to reject all cookies?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- About one in five (21%) adults report noticing changes that make it easier to reject all cookies. Nearly three in five (58%) say they haven't noticed any changes.
- Men (27%) and adults aged 25-34 (40%) are more likely than women (15%) and other age groups (18-24 24%, 35-54 19%, 55+ 14%) to say they have noticed such changes.

Q10. In the past month, how often have you provided more personal information than you would like in order to access a website or app? Personal information could include your name, date of birth or email address or could include accepting cookies to track your online browsing history.

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Over two in five (44%) UK adults report having shared more personal information than they would like at least once a week in the past month. One in five (21%) report doing so at least once a day in the same time period.
- However, 17% say they haven't done so in the last month and 20% don't remember.

Q11. How much control do you feel you have over cookies and online tracking (for example, allowing an organisation to access your online browsing history and habits)?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Nearly half (48%) of UK adults feel they have at least some control over cookies and online tracking, with only 13% saying they have significant control. About two in five (41%) think they have little or no control.
- Men (55%), adults aged 25-34 (63%), and those of higher socio-economic grade (AB 63%) are more likely than women (41%), other age groups (18-24 53%, 35-54 50% and 55+ 37%), and those in lower SEG grades (C1 45%, C2 42%, DE 47%) to report feeling at least some control.