Clear your Cookies & Improve your System

Want to skip the explanation and disclaimers? Go to Page 2 to start cleanup!

I know it is Girl Scout Cookie Season, but please... make sure to share the Thin Mints and pass over a Somoas or two! I typically have to hide my cookies; somehow sharing tends to trigger my "cookie famine response." It always feels like YEARS before I find another Girl Scout!

But in this case, I am really talking about clearing out some of the spaces on your computer that are likely hoarding cookies, slowing down your system, your browsing experiences, and maybe even causing your next travel ticket to jump up in price when you wait more than 5 minutes to make a decision!

What are cookies?

Web cookies, or internet cookies, are fragments of data about your visit to a website. They are a big deal when the website needs to retain information on you during a process like filling out a form, providing parameters for a search, or making a purchase. They also can hold information about you for FUTURE visits. Have you ever been searching for girl scout cookies on google, then suddenly the ads you see on a website are showing you hoards of delectable chocolate mint slathered grahams? Facebook might even point out your addiction to Thin Mints by suggesting you find a local cookie dealer! The magic of the web is often dependent on those little crumbs of data you leave behind.

Just the same, it is growing more and more important to safeguard your privacy and take care of your system, to ensure websites are not using your cookie addiction against you! Additionally, things slow down when the cookie a site needs, specifically about your "crunch tolerance," is lost as it sifts through years and years of cookie hoarding. Imagine trying to find a single psychedelic hippie marble in a dumpster of colored marbles... it will take a lot more time than if you have an empty dumpster with just a few handfuls of marbles!

How do I clean up my cookies?

There are a lot of software tools that can help clean things up all at once, BUT, be warned! When cleaning up cookies, you are likely to clear out information that made things easier for you (until the next time you use a site and leave a crumb of info.) For example, you wander to your online email account, and usually it has your email address already prepared for signing in, but suddenly that convenience, and the fact that it "just took me to my email" no longer happens. You have to dig out your password list, and log in like you have never been there! YES! That is exactly right... clearing cookies clears a lot of data. This isn't a bad thing, just an inconvenience. You are also clearing all those marbles in the dumpster, remember!

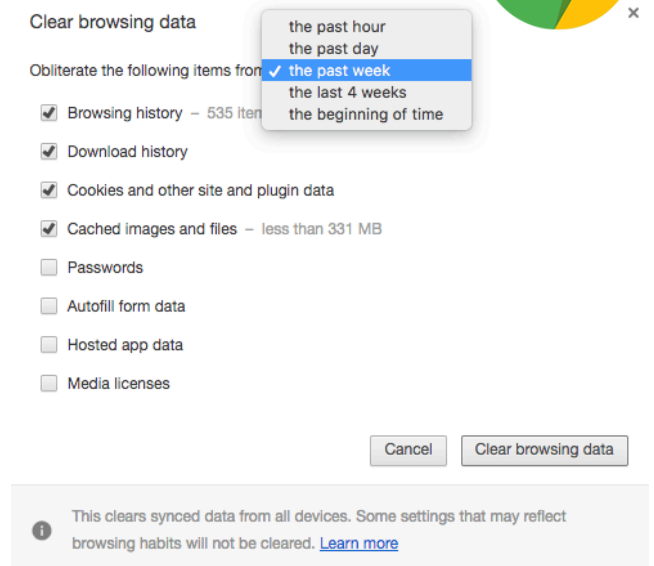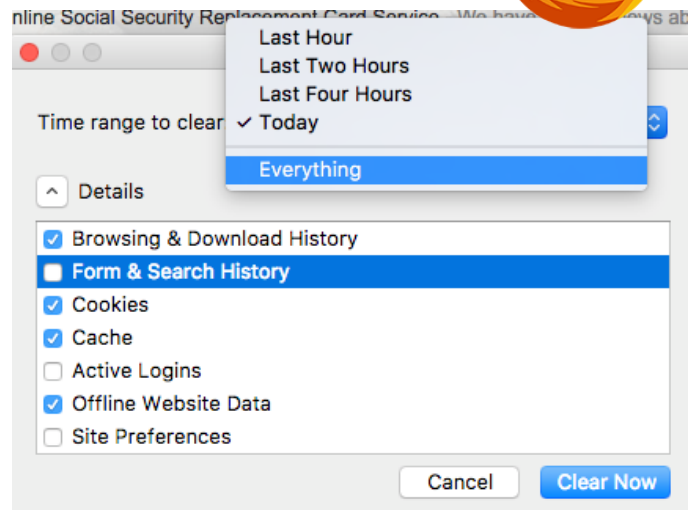*Let's start with your browser! What you use determines how you clean it!*

Google Chrome Browser (my favorite)

1. Open Chrome.

2. On your browser toolbar, click **More** ⋮ .
3. Point to **More tools**, and then click **Clear browsing data**.
4. Choose how far back to clear. If you have never done this, lets clear your plate "from the beginning of time"
5. In the "Clear browsing data" box, **click the checkboxes** for **Cookies** and other site and **plug-in data** and **Cached images and files**.
   - I clear my Browsing History & Download History occasionally.
   - IF you use Chrome and sign in to the browser, this will also clear web data on other devices also signing in to Chrome.

Clear browsing data

| the past hour |
| the past day |
| ✓ the past week |
| the last 4 weeks |
| the beginning of time |

Obliterate the following item

- ☑ Browsing history – 535 item
- ☑ Download history
- ☑ Cookies and other site and plugin data
- ☑ Cached images and files – less than 331 MB
- ☐ Passwords
- ☐ Autofill form data
- ☐ Hosted app data
- ☐ Media licenses

Cancel   Clear browsing data

ⓘ This clears synced data from all devices. Some settings that may reflect browsing habits will not be cleared. Learn more

If you are a Firefox Fan (my 2nd favorite choice)

1. In the menu bar, click on **History** > **Clear Recent History**...
2. In the window that appears, click on the dropdown menu to the right of Time range to clear and select **Everything**.
3. If necessary, expand the Details section and check both **Cookies** and **Cache**.
4. I make it a habit to clear my **Browsing & Download History** regularly as well as my **Offline Website Data**
5. Click Clear Now.

nline Social Security Replacement Card Service

| Last Hour |
| Last Two Hours |
| Last Four Hours |
| ✓ Today |
| Everything |

Time range to clear

∧ Details

- ☑ Browsing & Download History
- ☐ Form & Search History
- ☑ Cookies
- ☑ Cache
- ☐ Active Logins
- ☑ Offline Website Data
- ☐ Site Preferences

Cancel   Clear Now

My Computer Angel
Techie Tips: How to...

Safari is the default on Mac

1. Pull down "Safari" menu and click "**Preferences**"
2. Choose the "**Privacy**" tab
3. Click the "**Manage Website Data**" button in the section "**Cookies and other website data**"
4. Confirm at the popup to "**Remove All**" cookies
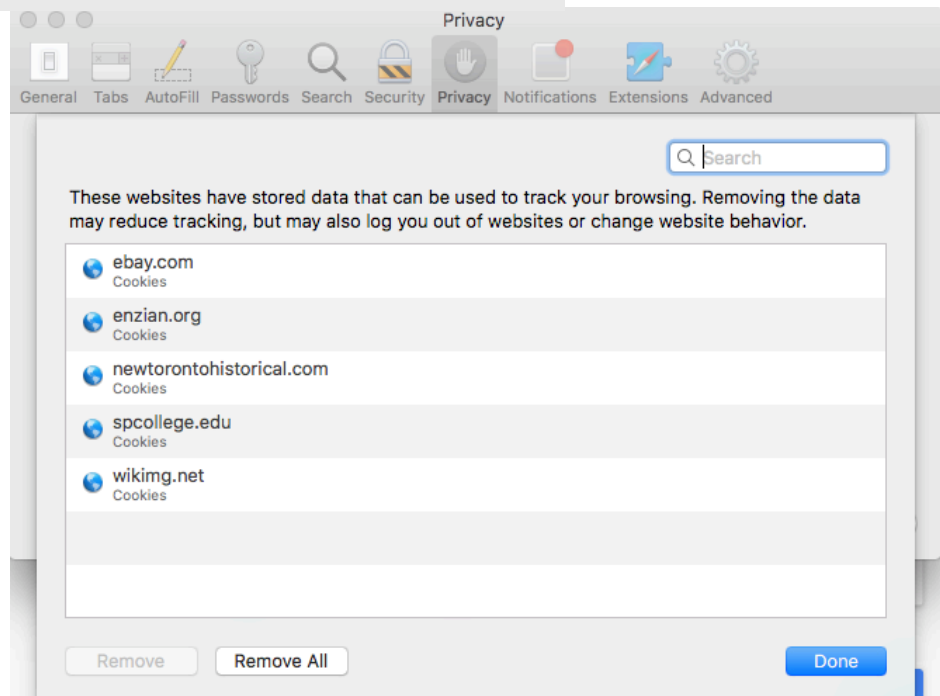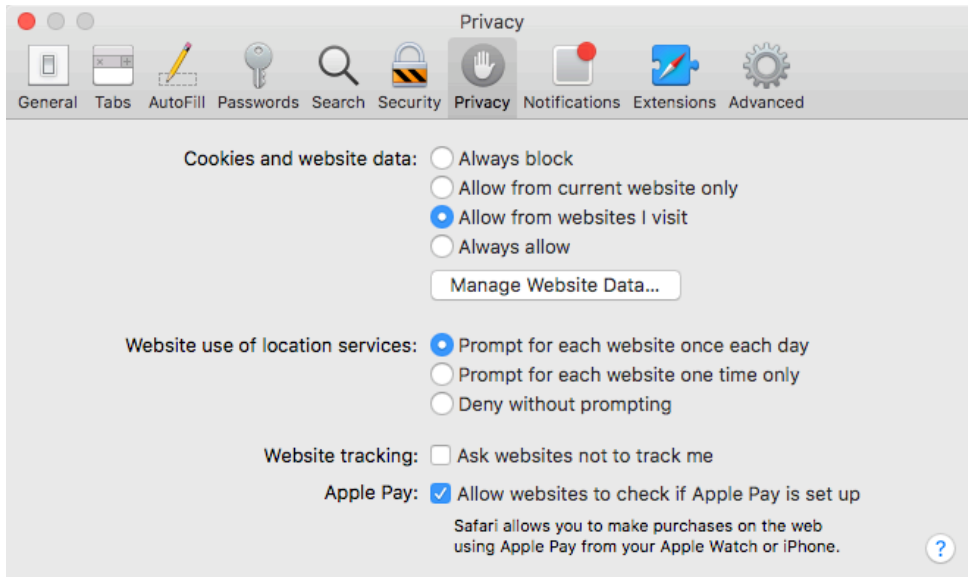
My Computer Angel
Techie Tips: How to...

Internet Exploiter or Microsoft Edge

1.   Select the **...** icon in the top right corner of the browser window to get to the settings menu.
2.   In the **settings** menu, towards the bottom, click on **Choose what to clear.**
3. Select **Cookies and saved website data** and **Cached data and files**. After the two are marked click on clear.
4. I also clear **Browsing History** and the **Download History** occasionally
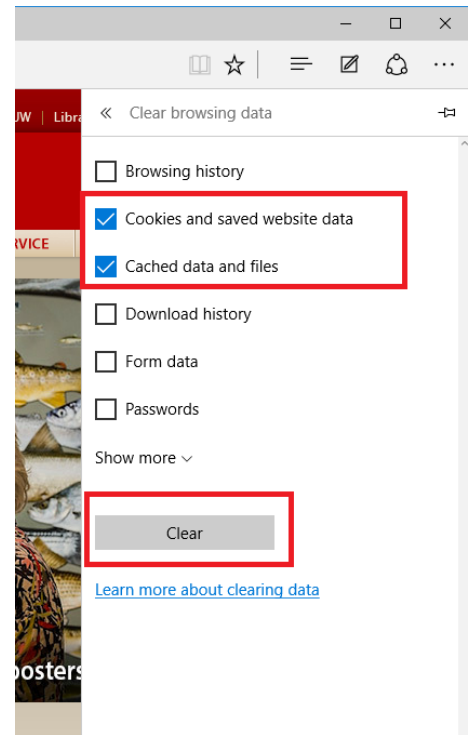
Some Helpful and Final Steps to a cleaner system

▪   **Empty your trash**: Just like your home, you toss things in the trash but eventually you need to take it out to the road for final disposal. Make it a habit to empty out that "trash" or "Recycle" bin from your computer.

▪   **Clear out your Downloads folder**: Every time you download that statement, picture, or funky video (among other things) your computer tosses it into a "downloads" folder for later retrieval. Many clients of mine never really look there, and have years of duplicates for each time they went back to the email to see that "funny office party fiasco photo" for the fifth time. Go ahead, take a peek... and toss all those extras in the trash!

▪   **Turn off your computer, and sometimes LEAVE IT ON!** On many systems today, there are processes that run at night while you sleep. Leaving your computer on is vital to the restorative health it needs. Meanwhile, **turning it OFF** is ALSO a huge benefit. Turning a system off allows it to completely clear its internal cache (similar to cookies) of the many things you ask it to do, and all the things it does on its own. Make it a habit to completely shut it off at least once a week. If your computer is acting wonky, I always suggest shutting it down (completely) and turning it back on to see if that corrects the problem.

If you ever need a hand with this kind of computer care, and reaping the benefits of a deeper system clean up, give me a call!