

Befriending the Big Hairy Beast - Tip No. 28

Clean up your cookies in Internet Explorer

by Tammy Schubert

June 2007

Cookies! We all love them, and they don't make much of a mess. Peanut butter, chocolate chip, computer file, oatmeal...

But wait a minute! A computer file? Not exactly what you expect to find in a list of yummy snacks, but they are cookies—just a different kind. According to Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, one definition of a cookie is:

"a small file or part of a file stored on a World Wide Web user's computer, created and subsequently read by a Web site server, and containing personal information (as a user identification code, customized preferences, or a record of pages visited)"¹

As the definition states, these cookies are stored on the user's computer. That's right, they are stored on your hard drive. This means it is using up some of your disk space. Over time, if you don't delete the cookies, you will most likely accumulate a lot of them and waste a considerable amount of storage space. If your system is running low on disk space, deleting cookies is one of the first actions you should take to start cleaning up your hard drive, especially if this isn't something you do routinely.

To clean up your cookies:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Click on the **Tools** menu and select **Options**.
3. On the General tab, click the **Delete Cookies** button.
4. In the Delete Cookies prompt, click the **OK** button.
5. Once the system has stopped running, click the **OK** button in the Options dialog box.

The length of time the system needs to run the delete process depends on how many cookies are saved on your hard drive. Don't stress out if the system seems like it is taking forever. It is a good idea to make this a monthly habit.

This tip was tested using Internet Explorer v6.0.

¹ Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary Retrieved 22 May 2007 from <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=cookie>

A special thanks to Michael Schubert for reviewing this tip.

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