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The cookie notice and consent: what your site collects without you knowing

Security

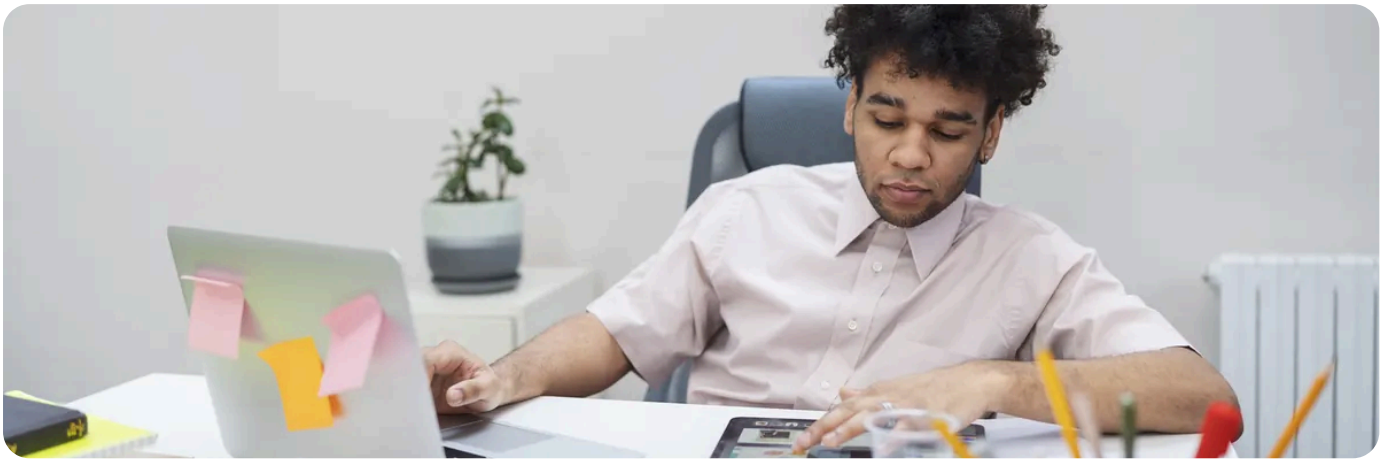
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The cookie notice and consent: what your site collects without you knowing

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That bar appearing on nearly every site asking you to accept cookies is neither decoration nor a European fashion. It is the consequence of something simple: **most sites collect visitor data without the visitor noticing** - and yours probably does too.

What a cookie is, in two lines

It is a piece of text the site stores in the visitor's browser so it can recognise them later. Some are indispensable - without them there is no shopping cart and no login session. Others exist only to count visits or to follow people from site to site. The difference between those two groups is the whole question.

Type	Needs consent?
Essential	Login session, cart, language preference. **No.** Without them the site does not work, and nobody could meaningfully refuse them.
Measurement	Google Analytics and similar. **Yes** - and consent has to be given *before* the code runs.
Advertising	Social network pixels, remarketing. **Yes**, and they cause the most trouble.
Third-party ones you did not know you had	An embedded YouTube video, a map, a font loaded from outside. **Yes**, and these are the forgotten ones.

What the law says, here

Mozambique has, to this day, no standalone data protection law: what applies is **article 71 of the Constitution** and **Law 3/2017** on electronic transactions, with a bill in progress. That does not let you off: if you sell to or receive visitors from Europe, it is *their* law that applies to *their* data.

And one point applies to everyone, whichever country: if your site has visitors in the **European Union** - emigrants, customers, partners - the handling of their data falls under the rules there. You do not need an office in Europe for that to happen. See **personal data protection: what applies to your website**.

First: find out what your site already does

Before putting up any banner, it is worth knowing what there is to declare. It is nearly always more than the owner imagines.

1. Open the site in a private window.
2. Open the browser's developer tools (the F12 key) and go to the storage or application tab.
3. Look at the cookie list **before clicking anything at all**. Everything there that is not essential has already been stored without permission.
4. Notice too what the site loads from outside: maps, videos, fonts, social buttons. Each of those can leave a trace.

A notice that actually does something

The bar only does its job with these four characteristics. A notice that merely informs is not consent - it is decoration with a legal look:

1. **Refusing is as easy as accepting.** If there is a big «Accept» button and «Reject» is hidden behind two clicks, it does not count.
2. **Nothing runs before the choice.** The commonest mistake of all: putting up the banner and letting Analytics load anyway as the page opens.
3. **The choice is remembered** and can be changed later, without clearing the browser history.
4. **There is a page explaining** which cookies exist, what they are for and how long they last.

The bar on its own solves nothing.

Installing a cookie plugin and not configuring it is the commonest scenario we find - and it is the worst of both worlds: it annoys the visitor and complies with nothing, because the scripts still run before they choose. If you only have time for one thing, do number 2 on the list above.

If you want none of this

There is a route many people forget, and for a company website it is perfectly reasonable: **collect nothing**. No Analytics, no pixels, no videos embedded from outside - and then there is no consent to ask for and no bar to show.

And you can still know how many visits you get: the panel's statistics count them on the server, without touching anyone's browser and without a single cookie - see **how to monitor your site performance in cPanel**. For most of the sites we host, that is entirely enough.

What has nothing to do with cookies

These get confused a lot: a contact form or a shop collects personal data **because the person types it in**, and that needs no banner - it needs something else. It needs you to say what it is for, keep it carefully, not use it for anything not agreed, and delete it once it is no longer needed. If you sell, see **an online shop with local payment methods**; if you keep customer data, **personal data protection**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure what your site is collecting? We can look at it with you.

Talk to us →

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