



What Information Do Websites and Apps Collect

KS4 COMPUTER SCIENCE

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What Data Do Websites Collect?

Every time you visit a website or use an app, companies collect information about you. This **data** might seem invisible, but it's constantly being gathered. They collect things like your **location**, what you click on, how long you spend on pages, and sometimes even information you type in search boxes.

Some websites ask you directly for information. When you sign up for an account, you might give your name, email address, age, and interests. But companies also collect information without asking. They use special tracking tools called **cookies** and **pixels** that follow you around the internet.

Think of it like leaving footprints in the sand. Every website you visit is like a footprint, and companies are collecting these footprints to build a map of where you go and what you do online.

Why Do Companies Collect Your Data?

Companies collect your data for several reasons. The main reason is **advertising**. If they know you like football, they can show you football ads instead of random ones. This is called **targeted advertising**, and it helps companies sell more products because the ads are more relevant to you.

They also use your data to improve their services. If millions of people click the same button, the company knows that button is in a good place. Your data helps them understand what features work well.

Think of it like a teacher watching how students use the classroom. If everyone crowds near one door, the teacher knows that door is popular and might make it wider.

What Should You Know About Your Data?

Your data is very valuable. Companies can sell it to other businesses or use it to predict your behaviour. This is why you should be careful about what information you share online.

Most countries now have **privacy laws** that try to protect you. In Europe, **GDPR** rules say companies must tell you what data they collect and ask for your permission. In the UK, the **Data Protection Act** protects your information.

You can protect yourself by reading **privacy policies**, using privacy settings on social media, and not sharing personal information with websites you don't trust.

Remember: if a service is free, you might be the product being sold.