

cultural results. The Camino demonstrates how tradition and innovation can coexist, ensuring both efficiency and sustainability.

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COOKIES: BETWEEN FEARS AND REALITY

In today's digital world, advertising has long gone beyond billboards and television commercials. Today, user data that is collected using cookies has become a key tool for targeting and personalization. These small pieces of data stored by the browser allow companies to track a person's online behavior: which sites they visit, what they search for, and what products they pay attention to. For businesses, this is an opportunity to show relevant ads and increase the effectiveness of marketing investments. However, for users, active data collection raises questions about the privacy and security of personal information.

The purpose of this article is to explore users' attitudes towards cookies as an advertising tool and determine the extent to which their concerns are justified, taking into account the legal framework surrounding cookies.

Historically, the Internet has developed as a free space, and for a long time data collection has remained in the shadows. However, with the increasing number of information leaks and awareness of the value of personal data, attitudes towards privacy in the world have changed dramatically. In order for the site to recognize the user on repeat visits, download his personal account, Favorites, or settings, the following mechanism is used: on the first visit, the site sends a small portion of data to the browser for storage. When the user visits this resource again, the browser returns this data back, and the site identifies the visitor as an "old acquaintance". It works simply: the information is stored directly in the browser as a text.

International studies show varying degrees of trust in cookie-based advertising. In the Didomi report "The State of Data Privacy in 2026," the level of consent shows a very contrasting picture between Europe and North America. In Europe, the level of consent to cookies has remained relatively stable over the past four years. However, the study revealed noticeable geographical differences: Eastern and Northern Europe have the highest rates of consent, reaching about 89% and 85%, respectively. Western Europe has the lowest rates (about 75%), and this trend is strongly influenced by markets such as France. From a technical point of view, it should be noted that consent is easier to obtain on mobile devices than on connected TVs or desktop computers. The average adoption rate in the United States decreased slightly to 94.2% [1].

In order to understand the attitude towards cookies in Belarus, especially among the younger audience, we conducted our own research. 74 respondents took part in the survey. The study was aimed at examining the level of users' awareness of cookie technology, their attitude to data collection, and behavior when interacting with consent banners. Despite the widespread distribution of privacy notices (43.2% of respondents encounter a confirmation banner every day), only a third of respondents have a clear understanding of the nature of cookies. 67.6% of respondents have a general understanding of technology, but they do not have accurate knowledge. User perception is biased towards "surveillance" (62.2%) and advertising (59.5%). The data show a split between a conscious refusal of surveillance and a quick acceptance of conditions for the sake of access to content. 37.8% of respondents immediately click "Allow all" or "OK" to close the banner faster. 36.5% try to refuse all cookies, and if the site does not provide such an opportunity, they leave it. 21.6% agree only with mandatory cookies without reading. Only 4.1% carefully read the terms and conditions and manually disable unnecessary settings. Assessing potential threats, 59.5% of respondents believe that data theft via cookies is possible, but it can be avoided by following basic security rules. According to 20.3% of respondents, they were divided into those who see this as a real threat, and those who are sure that cookies are absolutely safe, since they are only text files.

Thus, opinions about cookies are divided: some consider them to be a surveillance tool, while others consider them to be harmless text. The reality today is determined not so much by technology as by legal norms, which have transformed data collection from a gray area into a transparent process. The European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which entered into force in 2018, played a key role here [2]. It introduced the principle of informed consent: websites are required not only to warn about cookies, but also to obtain the user's active permission to process their data, as well as to disclose in detail who exactly (advertising networks, analytical platforms) will use them. At the same time, it is required that the rejection of optional files be no more difficult than consent. As a result, the legal landscape has shifted: silence no longer means consent, and users have real control tools. Therefore, cookies themselves are not dangerous — the threat is created only by those companies that ignore the law or try to circumvent privacy settings. If legal regulations and basic digital hygiene are followed, the risk of data theft through cookies is minimal.

In conclusion, there are several key aspects concerning society's attitude towards cookies: there is a steady trend towards differentiation of approaches in the world. Thus, answering the question of whether cookies are worth being afraid of, it can be argued that they themselves do not pose a threat — they are just a tool for storing text information. Subject to applicable legal regulations and reasonable care, cookies remain a secure mechanism that ensures the convenience of interacting with websites.

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PROTEIN MARKETING

In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in interest in a healthy lifestyle, sports, and balanced nutrition. The transformation of consumer habits has led to the so-called high-protein sports nutrition evolving from a niche product for athletes to a staple in the consumer basket. The high-protein market is growing at an incredible rate, with new products claiming to be high in protein appearing on supermarket shelves every month.

The aim of this study is to understand and explain how "protein" and "high-protein" labels influence food sales and consumer choice.

The high-protein market has grown significantly due to the trend for its consumption. While previously sold only in specialized sports stores, they can now be found in every supermarket. Brands actively use high-protein labels to signal the product's health benefits. Besides, "protein" or "high protein" labels are often combined with "0% fat" and "sugar-free" statements, creating the image of a super-healthy product. Coupled with the trend toward a fit and healthy body, demand for such products is growing year after year. Consumers also believe that protein not only helps maintain muscle mass but also improves mental clarity and increases lifespan. A PubMed Central survey found that 36.7% of consumers choose such products solely because they believe they are healthy. However, the sources of information about the health benefits of protein products are store shelves (37.4%) and social media ads (36.7%), not doctor recommendations [1]. An interesting fact is the age of the target audience for protein products: according to the