

# European Union Cookie Regulations May Change Online Shopping



Released on: June 08, 2011, 8:40 am

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Industry: [Apparel & Fashion](#), [Retail](#)

The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) have recently (26 th May) a mandate which dictating that website operators with the EU gain explicit consent from their visitors before using cookies to track their interaction with the site.

Cookies are, at their most basic, a short line of text placed on to your computer when you access specific sites. The text file is then used to help the browser remember details about the visitor such as what items are held in the basket or whether this is a first time visit or a returning customer.

Forcing visitors to consent to these cookies is designed to make the internet safer. However, many argue this will come at the expense of functionality. It is currently unclear what form displaying consent will come in, it may simply be an opt-in box.

Simon Crisp, Director of [shopsafe.co.uk](http://shopsafe.co.uk) has voiced his concern about this directive, "This is going to add a regulatory and cost burden to digital economy at a time when we don't need it" Crisp felt that further cookie regulations may add further complications to online shopping which users, new to online retail, would be put off by.

Further issues have been raised by those online experts who use these tracking methods to prove return on investment for their campaigns. Matthew Barker, managing partner of Hit Riddle was keen to mention that without being able to measure the performance of selected ads internet marketers may begin to struggle proving the efficacy of their campaigns.

Without clear indication of how this mandate will be instigated it's difficult to know what the effect will be. However, it's clear smaller online retailers may struggle to cover the cost of a 'cookie audit' to prove they are in line with the latest regulations.

It is unlikely this will cause online shopping to stumble but rather to shift towards larger retailers. With more and more brands launching their products online (such as the recent [FitFlop Rokkit](#) launch from online footwear retailer FitFlop) customers will still be able to get the brands they're searching for but it maybe that this latest EU regulation causes the smaller independent to abandon traditional online advertising.

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