

# Cookies on Polish Geoportal

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Despite the lack of a legal definition of „cookies”, there is no dispute in the doctrine as to the definition of this concept, deriving its meaning from a term with a strictly technical meaning. As commentators point out, the term cookies should be understood as IT data saved in the form of text files placed on users' end devices (e.g. their smartphones, laptops). These files are placed when the user connects to a given website (e.g. search engine, information pages). Cookies, consisting of a series of letters and numbers, store information about the user (e.g. about the websites he visits). This information can be read each time you connect to a given website. The user's internet browser is responsible for managing cookies. In the field of privacy protection regulations connected with cookies, [Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament of the Council of 12 July 2002](#) on the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (the Privacy Directive) and the provisions on the protection of personal data are of key importance.

Under Polish law, the issue of cookies relates in particular to [the provisions of the Telecommunications Law](#), which regulates issues related to access to information contained in the telecommunications end device of the subscriber or end user (hereinafter: user device). The functional criterion is the basis for the distinction between session cookies and persistent cookies. A „session cookie” is a file automatically deleted when the user closes the browser, while a „persistent cookie” is a file that is stored on the user's end device until a defined expiry date (it can be minutes, days or years). Administrator session cookies with user input are usually used to observe user input when filling out online forms on several pages or in the case of a shopping cart – to remember items selected by the user by clicking on a field, e.g. add to cart. There are also third party cookies e.g. cookies of Google.

Websites of public administration, such as the Surveyor General of Poland, also use cookies. Public administration websites do not have a single universal standard for the use of cookies. Privacy policies differ from one another also when it comes to the types of cookies.



The rules concerning the data processing on the [www.geoportal.gov.pl](#) website are set out in [Privacy Policy of the Surveyor General of Poland](#). According to this policy the Website uses cookies, among others, to adjust the Website to the needs of users and for statistical purposes. Cookies are small text files sent by the website you visit to your device (e.g. computer or smartphone). The geoportal.gov.pl website uses the following cookies: performance cookies used to collect information on how to improve the website performance, and functional ones to "remember" the user's settings (e.g. to remember the user's map settings). These are, inter alia:

- **cookies of google-analytics.com** – statistics for the widok.gov.pl website. If the user wants to obtain information about these cookies the details are placed in the Google Analytics privacy policy.
- **session cookies** (expiring after the session)

It should be indicated that the user should give prior consent to third party files, hence the referral to the Google page may be problematic.

According to Privacy Policy the users can set the level of protection against cookies in their web browser – also completely block the cookies. This increases the level of security and data protection, but may also prevent certain functions, such as saving map context. It is worth pointing out that in accordance with the applicable ePrivacy Directive, the use of cookie walls as such is not prohibited, but the European Data Protection Board issued an opinion on the ePrivacy regulation, in which you can read that the currently used cookie banners on many websites are contrary to the General Regulation about personal data protection.

If the user wants to change the cookie settings, he must do so in the browser settings. There are links to pages describing cookie management in different browsers:

-  <https://support.microsoft.com/pl-pl/windows/usuwanie-plik%C3%B3w-cookie-i-zarz%C4%85dzenie-nimi-168-dab11-0753-043d-7c16-ede5947fc64d>
-  <https://support.mozilla.org/pl/kb/ciasteczka>
-  <https://help.opera.com/pl/latest/security-and-privacy/>
-  [https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/95647?hl=pl&ref\\_topic=7438325](https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/95647?hl=pl&ref_topic=7438325)
-  <https://support.apple.com/pl-pl/guide/safari/sfri11471/mac>