

Microsoft says Google is bypassing its cookie stopping technology too

21 February 2012, by Bob Yirka



(PhysOrg.com) -- Shortly after the world [learned](#) that Google has been bypassing user preferences on Safari based browsers to allow advertisers to leave unwanted cookies on their devices, Microsoft put out a press release deploring the practice and gleefully announced that devices running Internet Explorer had no such problems. Microsoft is now backtracking on that announcement and has put out a new one declaring that Google is in fact doing the same thing with Internet Explorer 9 that it has been doing with Safari.

But of course, it's not that simple. With [Safari](#), it was a very clear situation of using a sneaky method to bypass users wishing to prevent [cookies](#) being placed on their devices. While the same result can be had by Google, or other companies to circumvent IE9's blocking schemes, the reasoning for doing so is not necessarily the same. It all comes down to how [Microsoft](#) goes about disallowing vendors from leaving cookies. Specifically, IE9 follows the P3P Compact Policy Statement, which is basically the honor system. Sites that wish to leave a cookie send a little tiny message to the browser promising that they won't

use them to gather personal information.

Unfortunately, the sending machine can simply lie to bypass the blocking facility. Or, they can simply send a nonsensical message if they choose. Either will work just as well. Thus, it appears that not only Google, but virtually any other site that wishes too can very easily bypass the IE9 cookie blocking feature.

But, of course that's not the end of the story. Google says that P3P is outdated and Microsoft should stop using it because other sites are forced to try to bypass the control feature if they wish to allow users to use modern browser features such as those provided by Google+ or popular facilities like Facebook's "like" button.

In response, Microsoft says it has contacted representatives at Google and asked them to stop circumventing their privacy controls and has created a "fix" for users that wish to stop cookies being placed on their IE9 devices, and as an aside said they believe Facebook is just as guilty as [Google](#) in trying to circumvent its blocking facilities. They also point out that users can use IE9's Tracking Protection Lists feature to block specific websites from leaving cookies on their machines.

It's not clear at this point if Microsoft, or Apple for that matter will institute permanent changes into their software, but it seems likely as lawmakers have begun looking into the issue and may force changes if they are not made willingly.

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