

# “RETAINING YOUR PRIVACY”

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**B**ill Gates was once quoted as saying “not even I really know all that ‘Windows 95’ is capable of”. Well, with that astonishing statement in mind, if you delve deep into his Windows 95 CD you’ll find a small program on that CD called ‘TweakUI’ (pronounced *tweek you e*), that is not even supported by Microsoft; and not at all known by many as to exist at all.

It is there, and although it has a lot of bugs and problems of its own, it is quite useful! I would not recommend looking for, nor using this program because it was obviously published while still in Beta, and can cause a lot of damage to your Registry. I can, however give you step-by-step information to do basically the same thing that this well-intentioned program was meant to do, and that is *retain your privacy*! I won’t be able to tell you how to do these things with the pushing of one icon on your desktop like TweakUI does, but the effort I suggest you put forth is worth it if you want to *retain your privacy*.

There are plenty of reasons for wanting to destroy all paths leading to where you’ve been, from paranoia to sharing a PC with someone who doesn’t share the same ‘views’ as you. Whatever your reason, there are some very simple ways to get rid of these ‘footprints’ in History, Cookies, Temporary Internet Files, Documents Menu and AOL’s own History Trail.

**Cookies** are small, diminutive files that enable several things to happen when you visit a website. Here are some of the things they do:

- Cookies can store the address of each and every page you’ve visited; including a sites sub-pages.
- Cookies can be dated so that they expire in as little as a day or two, or as long-dated as 20 years from now. (Comical when you realize that the ‘net won’t be anything like it is now in 20 years but some sites love doing this. Especially Adult sites)
- Cookies can store partial information about pictures and graphics from the pages you’ve visited. The purpose of this is so that the next time you visit this same website the same graphics will load quicker because ‘some’ of that picture already exists on your HD.
- These cookies can be activated and expose the pictures or addresses simply by being clicked on by any person who chooses to view your computers cookies.
- Cookies are enabled whether you are using AOL, IE, Netscape or even the less known browsers, Unix being yet another.
- Cookies are most known for storing files like pictures and movies (YES, even movies!) Again, the reason for this is so that the next time you visit ‘Disney’ you won’t have to wait 5 minutes on your snail’s paced 56.6 to download ‘101 Dalmatians’ Get it?

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- There are some good things about Cookies that you may want to consider, though you may not have much control over. When you join, for instance ‘Chase.com’ to do ‘online billing’ you can store your Chase Password and never have to type it in again. You go to their website, join their service and when you log-on for the first time a window or line of language says to you ‘*do you want Chase.com to remember your password for you?*’ When you say yes, you are storing a COOKIE on your computer. This is a COOKIE that enables this password to be stored (less some nice JavaScript form pages that I doubt you’ll really experience that much as a novice). You will have absolutely no problem logging on to this site next time simply because you’ve deleted your PASSWORD COOKIE, you’ll just have to type it in every time. There is really no way to know which COOKIE is your PASSWORD COOKIE, this would defeat the purpose of the PASSWORD in the first place; you’ll just have to type it in every time, no big deal here.

**History** is something that is used to enable both IE and Netscape users the ability to find pages they’ve viewed as far back as 999 Days (IE is 999 Days Maximum, Netscape may fluctuate from this #).

- History, in IE, can be viewed as far back as 999 days from the last time IE was used. The user can use a ‘search bot’ to look for key words in the History File, like ‘Mickey mouse’
- History can be altered to only keep track of last day, last week or last 3 weeks (ie: 20 days).
- History can be tweaked so that the viewer can see what page you visited yesterday at 12 Noon, or only the last 7 pages you’ve visited today. This type of tweaking of their search can be altered in many different ways so that the results are listed in –date, - site address, or even –day order. So clearing the screen when Mr. or Mrs. Nosey comes in the room will only enable you to prevent Nosey from seeing the screen at that moment, but this doesn’t prevent him/her from logging on next Tuesday and doing a query dated back to that day at that time to see what it was you were trying so hard to hide, or screen from his/her view.
- History can even offer your personal favorites. Nosey can do a search based on your ‘favorites’ (or most visited), and find out if you’re into Mickey or Cinderella.

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**Temporary Internet Files** are a lot like ‘Cookies’ in that they store information about the sites you’ve viewed, although *instead of storing information about* pictures, ‘net addresses, movies or files, *it can actually retain the full picture or movie*. Although JavaScript, and java can enable the storing of full-size pictures on your system, for the most part these are .gifs, .jpegs, .pngs or .bmp type files, which are compressed pictures. Compressed or not, they are complete, and viewable. Temporary Internet Files also stores what are called ‘Objects.’ These are pretty much files as well. All the extensions I’ve just listed refer to types of picture formats. Ford may have a patent on the ‘350 CC’ engine (I know I know nothing about cars, so bare with me here), and Dodge may have a patent on the ‘450 CC’ engine, but basically an engine is an engine. In the world of the Internet a picture is a picture, and no matter what type of format is being used, it is being stored on your computer for viewing by Mr. or Mrs. Nosey.

**Documents Menu** is that quick little short-cut that Microsoft was kind enough to offer you so that when you’re writing your Thesis you don’t have to keep looking for all your latest work, a shortcut has been automatically created for you just off your ‘Start’ button. When you click on “START” and hover your mouse over ‘DOCUMENTS’ you will see all the latest Documents you’ve been working on, for example Word or Excel or even Adobe Photoshop. But what this neat little doohickey also does is keep a list of all your latest saved ‘movies’ and ‘videos,’ as well as other recent items saved in various formats. By clicking on the shortcut offered, for example ‘mickey.doc’, you’ll go directly where that file is stored. This means if you attempt to ‘bury’ a file deep within the HD of your computer, one little click and on to the screen your file will pop; quick & easy!

**AOL’s History Trail** is very much like IE’s History file, though not as powerful. If you use AOL 4.0, 5.0 or now the new 6.0 you are using a watered-down and weak version of IE that is licensed to AOL. I recommend getting out of this habit very quickly. Instead, log on to the internet using AOL as your ISP, minimize AOL while it is still connected; and click on the tiny blue ‘e’ that is offered on many, if not all Windows computer desktops. This ‘e’ is IE (Internet Explorer), and much more powerful and useful than AOL’s watered-down version of the same tool. The next version of AOL which is expected to come out later this coming summer is going to do away with IE as it’s internal browser, if you will; and offer Netscape which was beaten in the ‘Browser War’ by IE. Netscape has been purchased by AOL and is expected to start another ‘Browser War.’ The History Trail is the pull-down bar in the center of your AOL toolbar that, when pulled-down exposes all the previous sites visited. The difference is it will show not only sites visited, but also Chat Rooms and other AOL places you’ve navigated toward.

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## *How to wipe all footprints from the Sand of your own personal Beach...*

Cookies are not at all needed for your computer. Deleting them is permanent (until you view the site where they came from again), and not at all harmful from your computer. There is one file in the C:\WINDOWS\Cookies directory that is of value, and when you attempt to delete it you will be warned that it cannot be deleted; therefore you'll do no harm to your PC, even if you wanted to.

Whether you are using IE or Netscape, Cookies are being stored on your computer. This is done by the website itself (the Server), and is not inclusive to IE or Netscape. In other words you are getting Cookies no matter the Browser.

Before you do any deleting of footprints from your computer, it is a good idea to reboot solely because viewing this directory can demand a lot of your memory; and if you are using only 64, or worse 32 Meg of RAM your computer may seize (harmless freeze, just reboot). It is also a good idea to reboot because all your latest cookies and other footprints will be freed from cache and stored in the HD where they must be to be deleted!

## *Now Lets Delete Cookies!*

1. Open Windows Explorer (Shortcut: Hold down the  Windows Key on your keyboard if you have a fairly recent Keyboard, then depress the 'E' button one time)
2. Direct yourself to the following sub-directory C:\WINDOWS\Cookies. You can type this address in the address window at the top of the Windows Explorer just as I've underlined above (less the period.) and hit enter; or drill down to it by hitting your C: - Then look for Windows and Click on that – Then look for Cookies and Click on that.
3. Take a look at the right pane of the Windows Explorer window. There are all those Cookies! A true footprint of just about each and every site visited; as far back as your computer has been alive! You may very well be viewing 100's of them, but don't fret there is a shortcut for deleting all of them at one time.
4. If you are doing this for the first time it would be a good idea before deleting them to use your left-right scroll bar at the bottom of the right pane and view the 'date' listings. Some expiration can be, silly, as it may seem, 2020! That's the Year 2020. Your computer and the Internet as we know it will be nothing like it is today; and will be stationed under your kitchen cabinets or on your wrist where these cookies would be totally useless; but some webmasters want to make sure you come back again and again, even when your 86, and your interest in Disney is nothing like it is today!

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5. To actually delete all Cookies, go to your right pane and scroll all the way up to make sure you are viewing the First cookie. Click this Cookie one time to highlight it. Once it is highlighted, use your right up-down scroll bar to scroll all the way down and expose your LAST Cookie. (There is no significance to First or Last; they are usually stored in alphabetical order by default). Before you click on your LAST Cookie, hold down your left SHIFT KEY on your keyboard (just to the left of the letter ‘Z’) While still holding down this key, click on the LAST Cookie with your mouse one time. This should highlight each and every Cookie you have on your HD.

This ‘highlight’ may not be visible for as many as 30 or 40 seconds, depending on how many Cookies you have; be patient.

6. Once you see all Cookies highlighted, bring your mouse up to the Menu Bar and click on Edit (shortcut: Alt Key & the letter “E”). One of the choices under the Edit Menu will be Delete. Click one time on DELETE and watch all your Cookies go away! This too could take several seconds depending on the amount of Cookies on your HD.

7. INDEX.DAT is a file that is stored in your Cookies directory, and is part of your computers Registry (the Heart & Soul of your Windows O/S – Operating System). This file is quite important and should not be messed with! Yet here is the good news: When you do the Highlight trick I showed you in step 5 you will likely attempt to delete this file. Don’t fret because WINDOWS will not let you delete it, and pop up with a warning telling you this. Just agree with any dialog box that pops up and you’ll be good to go! It is quite difficult to intentionally or unintentionally delete this file, so don’t be afraid.

8. Since you now know where Cookies are stored, go ahead and visit merely one page of your favorite website and then come back to this Cookies directory. You’ll see the list building up already!

### Now lets clear your History File

History is quite easy to clear and you can even tweak its settings so that you don’t have to come back too often. In other words you can tell your IE (Netscape too, but I’m not familiar with this) to store History for 1 Day, 1 Week or as much as the 999 Days maximum it allows. When you tell it to store 20 days it will delete the oldest History files when you’ve come to the 21<sup>st</sup> day.

1. Click on the “START” button and hover your mouse over the SETTINGS button.

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2. When you hover over SETTINGS, ‘CONTROL PANEL’ will be one of the options offered to the right. Click on ‘Control Panel’ and this will open a new window.

3. No matter the view settings that are enabled in the ‘CONTROL PANEL’ window, you’ll see among the choices ‘INTERNET OPTIONS,’ click on that.

4. This next window that opens will be called ‘Internet Options’ (name is visible along top bar). You should see six tabs along the top, the first being ‘General’ Make sure ‘General’ is chosen and look all the way down at the bottom; there is your HISTORY settings!

5. The default for IE is ‘Days to keep pages in History – 20’ You may see something different here, but what ever it is now simply change it to the number you want using the tiny up-down scroll arrows to the right of the number.

6. Next, looking just to the right of the scroll arrows you should see a button that says ‘Clear History’ Clicking on this button would do just that. You may get a pop-up dialog box asking you if you ‘are sure.’ Answer it as you will ☺

7. Before we leave this step in “Retaining Your Privacy’ take another look at the same ‘Internet Properties’ dialog box. You’ll notice just above ‘History’ is ‘Temporary Internet files’. We’re going there next, so don’t close this Dialog Box!

### Now let’s clear your ‘Temporary Internet Files’

1. If you accidentally closed the Dialog Box you opened in the above procedure, simply follow step #1 through #4 to get to the ‘Internet Options’ Dialog Box.

2. The first tab, GENERAL, should show between the other 2 ‘Temporary Internet Files’.

3. You have two buttons to choose from here, the ‘Settings’ button is not going to help you much and I’m therefore not going to go in to it’s significance. You can’t tell this setting to NOT store these files, and viewing them will bog down your computer or maybe freeze it while you’re attempting to list them for viewing. If this is something you are interested in, remember where it is and go back to it later.

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4. The other button offered there is the ‘Delete Files’ button. When you click on this your computer may bog down considerably, and may even seize on you. This is because there’re some rather large files in this directory that are very demanding on your RAM. (none of them significant, so again don’t fret!) If you are not doing this procedure fresh after a reboot, step back – click cancel and consider rebooting and coming back to this procedure afterwards.


5. If you are sure that your computers ‘System Resources’ are better than 80% than go ahead and click ‘Delete’

6. When you click ‘Delete’ a new dialog box will pop-up offering to also delete all your ‘offline’ files. If you have ‘offline’ files then you shouldn’t be using my instructions and are far too advanced for this ‘cheat sheet.’ But, if you’re so inclined.. Sure! Delete your ‘offline’ files as well; What the Hell!

### Now let’s delete your Documents File!

1. The good news here is doing this is even easier than all prior steps in your quest for “Retaining Your Privacy”

2. Click on the “START” button, and bring your mouse up to “Settings” .

3. While hovering your mouse over ‘Settings’ one of the choices that come up on the right will be ‘Taskbar & Start Menu’ with the Windows graphic ().

4. Choose the ‘Taskbar & Start Menu’ option and a dialog box named ‘Taskbar Properties’ will pop-up.

5. Click on the Tab for ‘Start Menu Programs’

6. The lower frame is entitled ‘Documents Menu’

7. Simply click on the ‘Clear’ button. This will <NOT> delete the file it refers to as mentioned earlier when we first discussed ‘Documents Menu’ at the start of this paper, it will <ONLY> delete the shortcut itself. No Harm – No Foul!

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## *Finally, your AOL History*

1. The function of History in AOL is, as I stated earlier, much like the function of History in IE & Netscape and not at all necessary or needed to operate your Browser, or AOL.
2. No matter what version of AOL you are using (albeit 4.0, 5.0 or 6.0) you will have a ‘keyword’ button toward the top right of your AOL window. This button is not active unless you are logged-on, so make sure you are in fact logged-on.
3. Click on the ‘Keyword’ button and another window, called ‘Keywords’ will pop-up. You’ll be offered a white bar where you can type your ‘keyword.’ Ignore all other information in that window and type in the word ‘preferences’ (exactly as I have there, less the quotation marks) hit ‘Enter’ on your keyboard.
4. Among all the choices that will be offered in the next window, disregard them all and click on the words ‘Toolbar & Sound’
5. This will open yet another window (AOL doesn’t like Microsoft, but loves Windows! Go Figure?) called ‘Toolbar & Sound Preferences’
6. Amongst the list you’ll see what is called a ‘radio button’ you can check to ‘Clear History....’ I put those dots there because the language is different for every version of AOL. What is important is that you don’t have to check this or not, but to the right of that choice is a button that says ‘Clear History..’ When you click on this button you will in fact clear your History! AOL offers little hearts you can drag to your toolbar when you want to save a ‘favorite location’ from anywhere in AOL or on the ‘net, but not for this very useful window! You’ll have to therefore remember this location for next time. Or, just refer back to this useful paper I’ve written for you.

I have gotten many inquiries about all that is written here, especially from someone who has just gotten their first computer. I have also gotten this request for information from people who tell me their woeful tale of unwanted e-mail (SPAM!) from sites they’ve sworn to have never visited; yet their e-mail was strangely solicited by these sometimes untowardly websites (nice way of saying Slime-like sites). Think of this, every person who has an AOL membership is entitled to a free website under AOL. These websites are all under the same internet address; [http://members.aol.com/your\\_aol\\_name\\_here](http://members.aol.com/your_aol_name_here). This means everybody who wants to find you will simply has to do a random search of that address to see if you have a website, then they delete the url from your name < <http://members.aol.com/>> and add an <@aol.com> to it. There it is < [your\\_aol\\_name\\_here@aol.com](mailto:your_aol_name_here@aol.com) > Get it?

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I always suggest to people when they get a new computer that they will have to realize their curiosity for what the WWW has to offer, and be careful at the same time. If you're going to view Disney.com, and don't want to get unsolicited SPAM! From Mickey & Minnie, then use an alternative FREE Internet e-mail address like [yourname@hotmail.com](mailto:yourname@hotmail.com)! This way, when your done with Disney.com after a few hours or a few days, you can simply cancel that free e-mail account by going to hotmail.com and canceling it, or simply by leaving that account inactive for a period of time (usually several months!).

There are also ways to be so anonymous on the WWW where even the US Government would have trouble finding you. The favorite used by most WWW surfers is [www.anonymizer.com](http://www.anonymizer.com). This site acts as a firewall between you and the WWW, as well as e-mail. You can send an e-mail to Uncle Sam telling him he has a funny beard and he'd have a hard time finding you (almost impossible actually) if you sent your e-mail through anonymizer.com's encryption; just a suggestion, for the record I happen to like his beard!

I hope this information is helpful to you and aids you in your quest for PRIVACY!

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