

Clear the List of Websites Visited

How does one clear the list of websites visited? Well, that depends on which list you mean. There are several crumb trails that can reveal your Web whereabouts to others who might be snooping around your computer. Let's look at some ways to clear your digital tracks with the most popular browsers.

First, there's the address box (up near the top of the screen), where you type in web addresses (URLs) of sites that you want to visit. Those addresses accumulate in the dropdown box that shows below the address bar as you enter addresses or search terms. This can be very handy or very embarrassing, depending on who's watching over your shoulder and where you've been.

And then there's the browser history, which logs the date, time and Web address of every page you have visited. A lot of people are not aware that this history log even exists, so if it's YOU that's spying on a family member, it's the first place to look. In the Chrome, Edge or Firefox browser, just press Ctrl H and your SearchHistory panel will appear. With Safari on a Mac, click History, then Show All History.

Fortunately, it's easy to clear out the address bar entries and the browser history. On Chrome, you'll see a "Clear browsing data" link on the History tab. Click that link, and a popup will give you an array of options for clearing browsing history, download history, cookies, cached images, passwords, form data, and site settings. You can even choose a date range that lets you select just history items from the last hour, day, week or month.

Microsoft Edge hides the history management page deeper. After pressing Ctrl+H, click the "... " icon at the top of the History popup, then click "Clear browsing data". From there, it works the same as Chrome (see above).

Firefox users, click on the menu icon on the far right, select History, then Clear Recent history. Select what you want to delete (Browsing & download history, Form & search history, Cookies, Cache, Site settings, Offline website data) and a time range (last hour, 2 hours, 4 hours, last day, or Everything) and hit the OK button. That's it -- squeaky clean.

All three browsers have a "Clear browsing data on close/exit" feature, which wipes out the history each time you close the browser.

NOTE: It is NOT recommended that people delete their cookies. They're useful when it comes to customizing your browsing experience at many sites, and can save you the trouble of re-entering information on web forms. Security tools (and pundits) that identify cookies as "threats" should be avoided or ignored.