

# Cookie Policy

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## Introduction

Connect Research (the “Site”) is a global research platform that uses cookies to provide and improve our services. This Cookie Policy explains what cookies are, how and why we use them, and your choices regarding their use. We aim to use cookies in a transparent and privacy-respecting manner in compliance with applicable laws worldwide.

## What Are Cookies?

Cookies are small text files placed on your device when you visit a website. They contain information (often a string of letters and numbers) that allows the website to recognize your browser or remember your preferences on subsequent visits. Cookies help ensure a consistent and efficient user experience and perform essential functions such as keeping you logged into your account.

Cookies can be “session” cookies or “persistent” cookies. Session cookies last only for the duration of your visit and are deleted when you close your browser, while persistent cookies remain on your device for a set period and enable the site to remember you on future visits. Cookies may be set directly by the website you’re visiting (known as first-party cookies) or by third-party services that the website uses (known as third-party cookies).

## Types of Cookies We Use

Connect Research uses cookies that fall into the following categories:

### Essential Cookies

Essential cookies are necessary for the website to function properly. They enable core features such as user login, account navigation, and security measures. Without these cookies, certain services on the Site (like accessing your account or making payments) may not work correctly. For example, when you log in, our site platform sets a cookie to maintain your session, so you don’t have to re-enter your credentials on every page. Essential cookies also help us protect your account by enabling security features (for instance, preventing unauthorized access or detecting fraud).

Some essential cookies may be provided by our trusted service partners to support site functionality. For example, if you make a payment on Connect Research, our payment processor may set cookies to process the transaction and help with fraud prevention. These cookies are considered essential because they ensure payments are handled safely and reliably. You cannot

opt out of essential cookies, as the website cannot function properly without them, but they are used only for the purposes of delivering our core services to you.

## Functional Cookies

Functional cookies enable enhanced features and personalization on our Site. These cookies remember choices you make (such as your language preference or other settings) to provide a more tailored experience. For instance, a functional cookie might remember your preferred display settings or that you've already completed a certain tutorial, so you don't see it again. While not strictly necessary for the basic operation of the Site, functional cookies make your user experience smoother and more convenient. If you disable these cookies, some of our Site's interactive features or remembered preferences may not work or will reset, and you may need to re-enter information each time you visit.

## Analytics Cookies

We use analytics cookies to understand how users engage with Connect Research and to improve our platform's performance. These cookies collect **anonymous** information about website traffic and user behavior – for example, counting visits to different pages, recording navigation patterns, and gathering other usage statistics. The data collected through analytics cookies is aggregated and does not identify you personally; it helps us see overall trends and site usage metrics (such as which research articles are most read or how users navigate the site). This information is crucial for us to optimize content and user experience.

To achieve this, we utilize a trusted analytics service (Jetpack by Automattic) that sets cookies on our behalf to generate these statistics. Jetpack's analytics cookies allow us to gauge things like the number of visitors and popular content, while employing anonymization so that we gain insights without learning any individual's personal details. We **do not** use analytics cookies to track you across other websites, nor do we use them for advertising purposes. You can disable analytics cookies if you wish (see **Managing Cookies & Preferences** below), though doing so may limit our ability to understand and improve your experience on Connect Research.

## Third-Party Cookies

In addition to the cookies our own platform sets, certain third-party services we rely on may set their own cookies. These third-party cookies are placed by external providers that help us deliver specific functionalities on the Site. We use third-party cookies in the following limited ways:

- **Payment Processing (Stripe):** When you engage in paid services or make a purchase on Connect Research, our payment provider, Stripe, may set cookies on your device. These cookies allow Stripe to remember your session details and perform essential security checks, such as fraud detection and prevention, during the payment process. Stripe's cookies are used only to facilitate payments and protect against fraudulent transactions; they are not used for marketing. Without these cookies, we would not be able to offer online payment functionality safely and reliably.

- **Analytics (Jetpack):** As noted above, we use Jetpack for site analytics. Jetpack may place cookies to collect anonymized statistical data about how visitors use our Site (e.g. which pages are visited, in what order, and what errors might occur). These cookies help us improve site performance and understand user needs. The information collected by Jetpack’s cookies is aggregated and does not include personally identifying information. It is used strictly for our internal analysis to make Connect Research better for our users.

We do **not** use any third-party advertising networks or social media plugins that set cookies on Connect Research, and thus we do not have marketing or targeting cookies on our Site. All third-party cookies in use are there to support core functionality (like payments) or to enhance our understanding of site usage (analytics), as described above. The third-party providers have committed to using any information collected via cookies solely for providing their services to us. We recommend reviewing Stripe’s and Automattic’s (Jetpack’s parent company) own privacy/cookie notices for more details on how they handle the data collected via their cookies.

## Managing Cookies & Preferences

You have the right to control how cookies are used on your device. Most web browsers allow you to manage or delete cookies through the browser settings. For example, you can typically configure your browser to notify you when a cookie is being set, to block certain or all cookies, or to delete cookies periodically. Please refer to your browser’s help documentation for specific instructions on adjusting cookie settings (for example, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, and other browsers provide step-by-step guides on managing cookies).

If you decide to disable or block certain cookies, be aware that some parts of our Site may not function as intended. Essential features – such as staying logged in, adding items to a cart, or completing a payment – may be impaired if essential or functional cookies are turned off. In particular, blocking **essential cookies** will likely prevent you from logging into your account or using key services on Connect Research. Likewise, disabling **functional cookies** might require you to re-enter preferences each time you visit, and turning off **analytics cookies** will make it harder for us to improve our services based on your experience. We will not restrict your access to the Site if you choose to disable non-essential cookies, but please understand the potential impact on usability.

At this time, Connect Research does not utilize a dedicated on-site cookie preference manager or pop-up for you to accept/reject cookies on your first visit. We respect browser-level controls (so if you have set your browser to reject cookies, our Site will abide by that setting). We are actively exploring the implementation of a cookie consent tool to give you more direct and granular control over which cookies you accept. Until such a system is in place, managing cookies via your browser settings is the primary way to control our use of cookies on your device.

*(Note: Some browsers offer a “Do Not Track” (DNT) signal that can indicate your preference regarding tracking. Currently, our Site does not respond differently to DNT signals, because we do not use cookies for cross-site tracking or advertising. We continue to monitor developments around DNT and may revisit this in the future.)*

## Your Privacy Rights

Connect Research is committed to respecting your privacy rights in relation to cookies and similar technologies. Because we operate globally, we adhere to key principles from international privacy laws, especially those in the European Union (EU)/United Kingdom and the United States, to ensure that your rights are protected.

**Canada (PIPEDA & Provincial Privacy Laws, including Québec Law 25):** If you reside in Canada, the collection of data via cookies is governed by the federal **Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)** and, in some provinces, stricter statutes such as **Québec’s Law 25**. Under these laws we must obtain *meaningful consent* for any cookie that captures personal information. Essential cookies—those strictly required to keep you logged in, secure payments, or maintain site integrity—rely on implied consent because they are clearly necessary to deliver the service you request. All other cookies, including those we use for first-party analytics, require express consent or a simple and effective way for you to opt out.

Canadian users therefore have the right to (i) know what categories of personal information our cookies collect, (ii) withdraw or modify consent for non-essential cookies at any time, and (iii) request access to, correction of, or deletion of any personal information derived from cookies, subject to limited legal exceptions. Québec residents enjoy additional safeguards under Law 25: any tracking technology that can identify, locate, or profile a user must be **disabled by default** until the user explicitly opts in.

To honour these rights, we will shortly deploy a cookie-consent banner that (a) installs only essential cookies by default, (b) lets you accept or reject analytics cookies with one click, and (c) keeps a record of your choice so you can revise it at any time. Until that banner is live, you can prevent non-essential cookies by adjusting your browser settings or using a tracking-blocker extension; this will not affect essential cookies needed for log-in or payments but may limit certain analytic and personalization features.

**EU/EEA and UK Users:** If you are in the European Economic Area or the UK, the use of cookies is subject to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national laws implementing the ePrivacy Directive (the “cookie law”). Under these laws, we will not set any non-essential cookies on your device without your prior consent. In practice, this means features that use analytics or other optional cookies are either **opt-in** or designed in a privacy-friendly way. We only use analytics cookies that collect anonymized data, and we treat your continued use of our Site as consent to these minimal, non-identifying analytics in the interim. However, where explicit consent is required, we strive to meet that standard and are working to implement a robust consent mechanism (as noted above). You also have the right to withdraw consent for cookies at any time once given. We will make it as easy as possible for you to change your cookie preferences or revoke consent, in accordance with GDPR requirements that consent must be as easily withdrawn as it is given. With our planned cookie consent tool, you will be able to review and modify your preferences freely. Even now, you can always delete cookies from your browser or use browser settings to refuse new cookies – this will effectively withdraw consent for our Site to place cookies going forward (beyond those strictly necessary).

In addition to consent rights, EU/EEA/UK individuals have data protection rights (such as the right to access or delete personal data) which may apply to information collected via cookies if it can be linked to you. For example, cookies that identify your device could be considered personal data. Connect Research's use of cookies, however, is designed to avoid processing identifiable personal data wherever possible (e.g., we do not store names or emails in cookies, only random IDs). If you have any concerns or requests regarding personal data and cookies (for instance, if you believe our cookies have captured personal information about you), please refer to our Privacy Policy and contact us as described below. We will assist you in exercising your rights under GDPR or applicable law.

**United States Users (including California):** U.S. privacy law currently does not require the same explicit cookie consent as EU law, but it does provide certain rights to users, especially under state laws like the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and its amendment, the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA). Under the CCPA/CPRA, cookies and similar online identifiers are considered part of "personal information". Connect Research does not sell personal information, and this includes information collected through cookies. We do not share data from our cookies with third parties for their own marketing or advertising purposes. Therefore, we do not provide a "Do Not Sell My Personal Information" link, as our cookie usage falls under permissible purposes (such as service provision, analytics for our internal use, and fraud prevention) and is not used to monetize your data.

California residents have the right to know what categories of personal information we collect (see our Privacy Policy for a full description) and the right to request deletion or correction of personal information that we have collected, subject to certain exceptions. To the extent cookie data is considered personal information under California law, you can request that we delete personal data collected via cookies (though note that some cookies are essential for security and functionality, so deleting their data might, for example, log you out or reset preferences). If you wish to make any requests under CCPA/CPRA regarding data collected by cookies, you can contact us as described in the **Contact Us** section of this policy or refer to our Privacy Policy for more details. We extend similar privacy principles to users in other U.S. states with privacy laws (such as Colorado, Virginia, etc.), even if those laws have different requirements. In short, regardless of your location, we want you to have control over your personal information and will honor legitimate requests concerning your data.

## **Cookie Consent and Future Changes**

The landscape of privacy and cookie regulation is evolving. Connect Research is committed to adapting to legal requirements and user expectations. We are in the process of developing a comprehensive cookie consent management system for the Site. Once implemented, this will allow you to conveniently choose which categories of cookies you want to accept or reject when you first visit the Site (beyond those that are strictly necessary). This added control will ensure that we obtain your explicit consent for cookies in line with legal requirements and your personal preferences. Until such a system is live, we operate under this Cookie Policy and your browser settings to manage cookie consent, as described above.

We may update this Cookie Policy from time to time to reflect changes in our use of cookies, advancements in technology, or changes in legal requirements. If we make significant changes, we will notify users by updating the “Last Updated” date at the top of the policy and, where required, by additional means (such as a notice on our website or an email notification). We encourage you to review this policy periodically to stay informed about how we use cookies. Your continued use of Connect Research after any changes to this policy will be subject to the updated terms. If the changes are material, we may seek your re-consent to the updated policy, especially if they involve new cookie practices that require consent.

## **Contact Us**

If you have any questions, concerns, or requests regarding this Cookie Policy or our use of cookies and similar technologies, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach us by email at **Contact-us@connectresearch.ca** or through the contact form on our website. We value your feedback and privacy, and we will respond to your inquiries as promptly as possible.

*By using the Connect Research site, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this Cookie Policy. We appreciate your trust in us to handle your data responsibly and transparently.*