# Tags, Cookies and Key Concepts for Tag Auditor Reports

Evidon's Tag Auditor Reports combine data from multiple sources to provide the most complete picture possible of the tracking activity across your domains. Our format is designed to show which companies are present on which domains, what data these companies collect, how they use this data, and what technologies they deploy on each domain. Before you read through our report, you may find it useful to review the mechanics of how companies establish a presence on your domains, and how the terms we use in this report relate to their tracking activities. Our ability to identify a tracking company at multiple points dramatically lifts our detection rate, and also gives your web team an expanded list of signatures to look for within their own security systems.
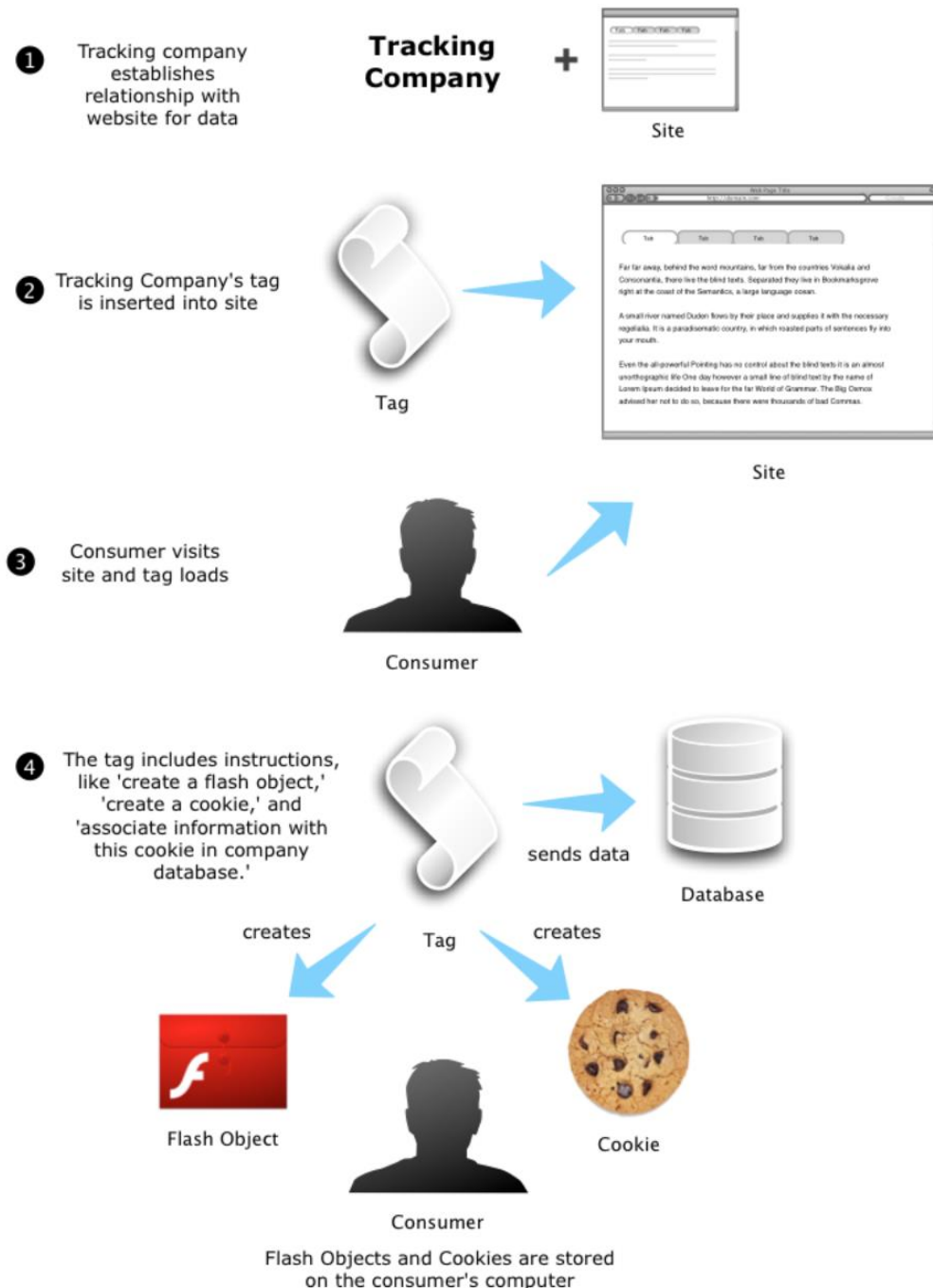
For the purposes of this document, a 'Tracking Company' is a business that is involved in the collection of data on your domains. A Tracking Company has specific business models, which we call 'Industry Categories,' and stated policies about the data they collect and how they use it. We include detailed information about each of the companies that we have seen on your domains in the 'Company Overview' section, including 'Data Collected,' 'Data Sharing,' and 'Data Retention.'

In order for a Tracking Company to collect data from consumers on your site, they need a 'Tag' with their code to load in one or more of the pages on your site. Tags come in several forms, including JavaScript tags, image tags, Flash objects (not as popular as in the past due to browsers blocking use of Flash (SWF) files, and more. For our purposes, what they share in common is that they are bit of code that loads on a page or pages with instructions that include a call to a server for further instructions. Those instructions frequently include some combination of checking for existing cookies from the Tracking Company, the setting of new cookies if none are found, and the storing of information on the server associated with unique ID's placed in each cookie.

Tags are the most critical element of any Tracking Company's efforts to track consumers on your site. No tag, no cookie. No tag, no DATA.

Tags are also very flexible instruments. Since a tag calls to a separate server for instructions, those instructions can be modified over time without your knowledge. The tag can set one cookie this month and five cookies next month. A Tracking Company can strike new business relationships and decide to embed tags from those partners in its own tag. A tag can also track the consumer without setting a cookie using various methods collectively referred to as 'browser fingerprinting.'

Tags can appear on your site through one of three methods:

1. **Direct Relationship:** These tags appear because of an intentional relationship that has been established between your company, often a business development, marketing, or IT division, and the Tracking Company. The Tracking Company provides the Tag, and your web team installs the Tag in your site to fulfill a specified purpose.
2. **Container Tag:** These tags are designed to include multiple other tags, potentially from other tracking Companies. In most cases, you will have a direct relationship with the originating container tag, but you may not know all of the companies provided in the container tag or the additional tags may change over time without your knowledge. In some cases, a Tag installed as part of a direct relationship may become a container tag at a later point in time.
3. **Advertising Redirect:** If your advertising tags include redirects to any 3rd party systems, including ad networks, sell side platforms, exchanges, etc., additional tags flow through from the multiple parties involved with each of those parties. Advertising tags are often the hardest to control, because a typical ad involves calls to multiple servers, each of which may use more than one tag, and the particular combination of tags is typically dynamic – changing on every page load.

Many Companies use several different Tags, each of which have a different purpose and write different cookies. Wherever possible, we will tell you which Tracking Company is setting each Tag, and

what the purpose of that Tag is. We will also lay out the specific cookies and flash objects that a Tracking Company's Tags are using on each of your domains.

Relationship between Tracking Company, Tag, and Cookies/Flash Objects