

## GUIDANCE: Clearing Browsing History, Cache and Cookies

Sometimes when web browsers aren't displaying correctly or not connecting to web pages like they should, you may need to clear the cache or temporary internet files. Alternatively, if you find that personal info automatically completed on sites isn't correct, deleting cookies can help. Even if none of these problems affect you, periodically cleaning browser data can help protect your privacy and enhance security.

These step-by-step explanations illustrate how to delete the cache and other browsing history such as cookies, history of recent pages, and passwords and form data in the most commonly used browsers. Most browsers exist in several versions which differ in minor details, so what you see on your screen may be slightly different from the descriptions on the following pages. *Sep16*

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## Frequently asked questions

### What is “cache”?

The cache is a hardware or software component of your computer that stores data so future requests for that data can be served faster. When web browsers aren't displaying correctly or not connecting to web pages like they should it's likely that the cache has become corrupted and therefore needs to be cleared.

### What are “cookies”?

Cookies are small files or databases stored on your computer by websites to save preferences or improve web performance. However, they sometimes lead you to old versions of websites that have since undergone amendments and updates, which means you will not see the current version of a particular site.

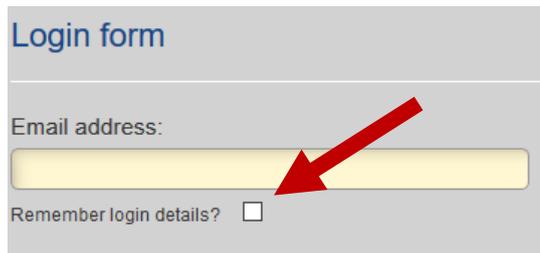
See also **TIP: Preventing future caching issues (page 5)**

### What is meant by “history”?

The history is the list of websites you have visited, or, in case of “Download history”, the list of files you have downloaded. It is specific to the browser you use, but not the device. For example, if you use Google Chrome on both your PC and your smartphone, then the history would be synchronised across these devices if you have set them up to do so. However, if you then used a different browser, such as Mozilla Firefox, none of the webpages you had opened via Google Chrome would appear in the history. This also applies to any “Favourites” or “Bookmarks” you may have saved.

### What is “form data”?

Form data is the saved information that you have typed into website forms. There is usually a tick box which, when ticked, retains the information for future use. This can cause issues if the details you have saved on a previous occasion have since changed, for example address information or credit card data.



The image shows a screenshot of a login form titled "Login form". It contains an "Email address:" label above a yellow text input field. Below the input field is a checkbox labeled "Remember login details?". A red arrow points from the top right towards the input field.

### What are “passwords”?

Saved passwords are automatically filled in when you sign in to a website that you have previously visited. This can cause a problem if you change your password and the website continues to fill in an old invalid password. To find out what's behind the dots, some browsers and websites now have an eye icon which “unmasks” passwords when clicked on. See also **TIP: Managing passwords and auto-fill (page 3)**



The image shows a screenshot of a password field. The field contains several black dots representing masked characters. To the right of the field is a blue eye icon, which is used to toggle password visibility.

### What is the difference between a search engine and a browser?

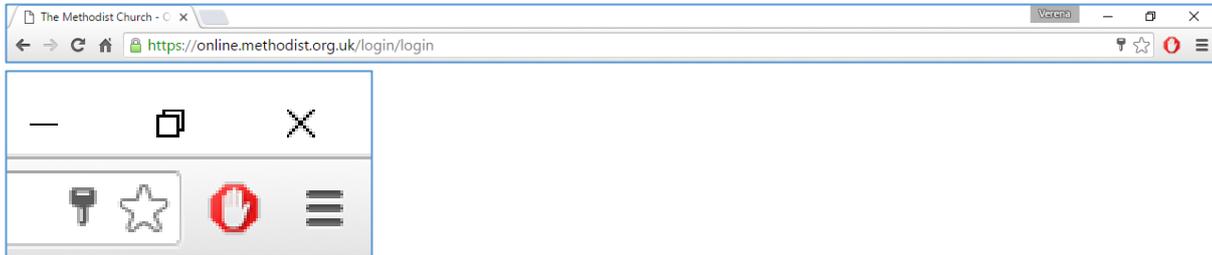
A browser is the programme you use to view web pages. The confusion between browsers and search engines probably comes from the fact that most people have a search engine (such as Google Chrome or Internet Explorer) as their homepage. The difference is that a browser is a programme used to view web pages, whereas a search engine is a website used to search the web. Therefore, you visit a search engine using a browser. If you don't know which browser you're using, it's probably Internet Explorer on a PC or Safari on a Mac because these are the defaults.

**All the above are browser-specific so if you have saved e.g. your login details in more than one browser, you will need to clear the cache individually in each browser.**



## Google Chrome

**Step 1:** Click the **Menu** button (an icon made up of three horizontal lines and found in the top right corner of the browser window).

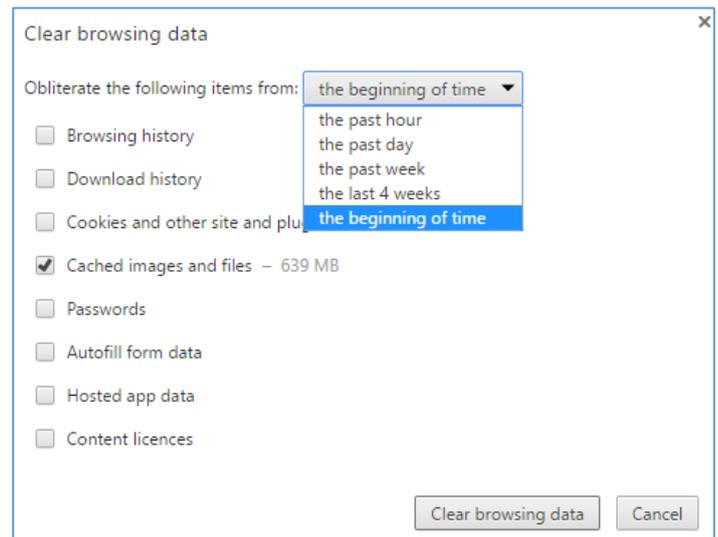


**Step 2:** Click on the option **More tools**. A second dropdown menu will open up. One of the options is **Clear browsing data**. Click on this.

**Step 3:** The **Clear browsing data** window gives you detailed options on what exactly to clear, and within which timescale. The default options are likely to be “Cached images and files / from the beginning of time”.

**Step 4:** Tick the boxes for each item you would like to clear. For the purposes of the Methodist Online Suite of Applications, it is advisable to tick the following:

- Cookies and other site and plug-in data
- Cached images and files
- Passwords
- Autofill form data



**Step 5:** Click **Clear browsing data**.

### ★ **TIP: Managing passwords and auto-fill**

To reduce some potential caching issues, it's useful to be aware of how Google Chrome retains information such as passwords and how to manage the auto-fill function in web forms. To do this:

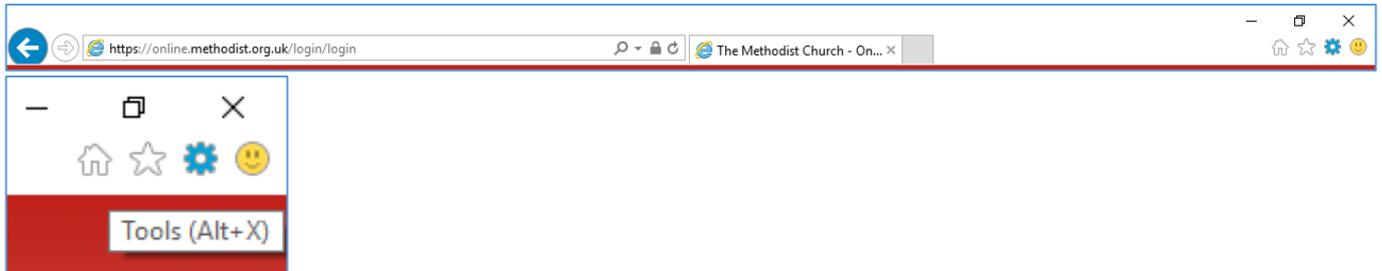
1. From the **Menu** choose **Settings**.
2. Under **Passwords and forms** click **Manage passwords**. This will open up a separate window displaying all websites for which you have saved your login details, enabling you to view or delete the information.
3. When you are done, click the **Finished button**.



## Internet Explorer 8 & 9

**Step 1:** Click the **Tools icon** (the gear wheel found in the top right corner of the browser window to the right of the star icon) and choose **Internet options**. You can also open the Internet options dropdown menu by pressing the **Alt + X buttons** on your keyboard.

[For IE8, got to the **Tools** menu and choose **Internet options**.]



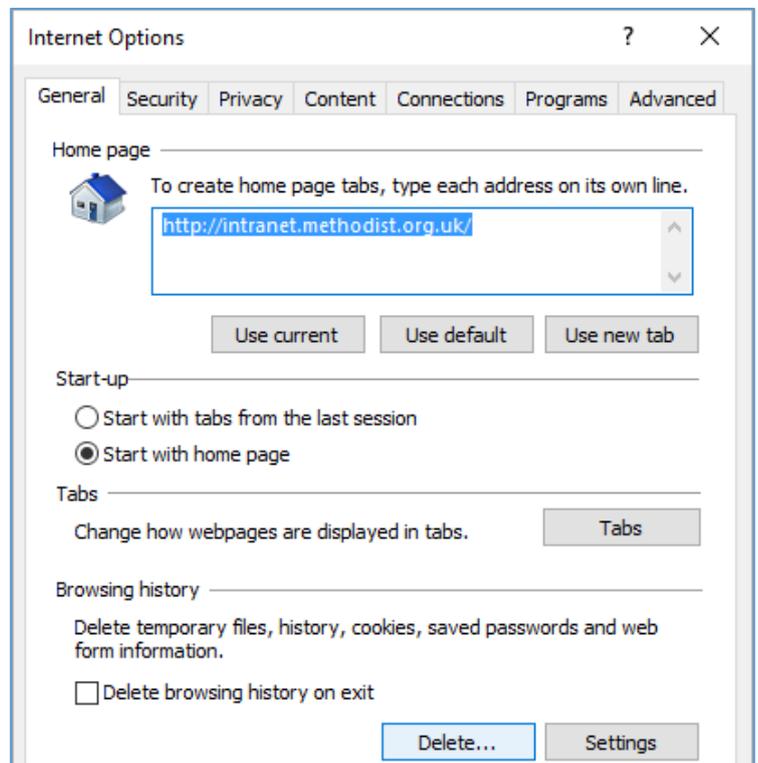
**Step 2:** On the **General tab**, under **Browsing history**, click **Delete**.

**Step 3:** Tick the boxes for each item you would like to clear. For the purposes of the Methodist Online Suite of Applications, it is advisable to tick the following:

- Temporary Internet file and website files
- Cookies and website data
- Form data
- Passwords

Some of these options might be ticked already by default.

**Step 4:** Click the **Delete button**.



### ★ **TIP: Preventing future caching issues**

To reduce some potential caching issues, it's best to have Internet Explorer set to request the latest version of the page rather than relying on a cached copy. To do this:

1. From the **Tools menu** choose **Internet options**.
2. On the **General tab**, under **Browsing history**, click **Settings**.
3. Under **Check for newer versions of stored pages** make sure **Every time I visit the webpage** is selected.
4. Click the **OK button**.



## Internet Explorer 9, 10 & 11

**Step 1:** Click the **Tools** via the **Gear icon** and choose **Safety**, then **Delete browsing history**.

Delete Browsing History

**Preserve Favourites website data**  
Keep cookies and temporary Internet files that enable your favourite websites to retain preferences and display faster.

**Temporary Internet files and website files**  
Copies of webpages, images and media that are saved for faster viewing.

**Cookies and website data**  
Files or databases stored on your computer by websites to save preferences or improve website performance.

**History**  
List of websites you have visited.

**Download History**  
List of files you have downloaded.

**Form data**  
Saved information that you have typed into forms.

**Passwords**  
Saved passwords that are automatically filled in when you sign in to a website that you have previously visited.

**Tracking Protection, ActiveX Filtering and Do Not Track**  
A list of websites excluded from filtering, data used by Tracking Protection to detect where sites might automatically be sharing details about your visit and exceptions to Do Not Track requests.

[About deleting browsing history](#) **Delete** **Cancel**

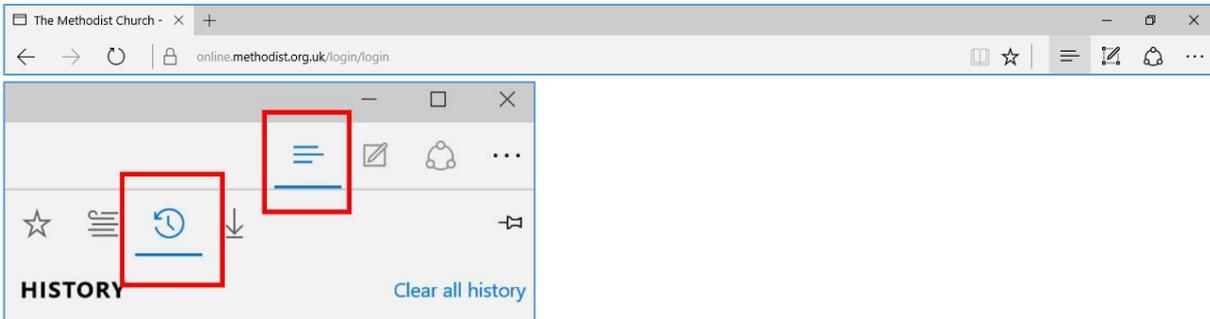
Then follow **Steps 3-4** as above.

★ **TIP: Usage of reading lists**



*It is recommended that you don't move [online.methodist.org.uk](http://online.methodist.org.uk) to the reading list of your browser as this will be the version of the site as it was at the time you moved it there, and will therefore not reflect later changes.*

**Step 1:** Click the **Hub icon** (an icon made up of three horizontal lines of different length and found in the top right corner of the browser window).



**Step 2:** You will see four options - Favourites, Reading List, History and Downloads. Click on **History**. Another dropdown menu will open up.

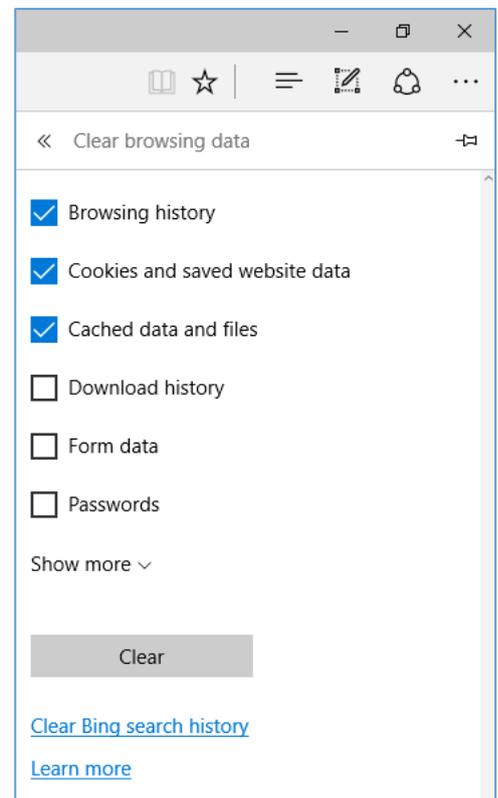
**Step 3:** One of the options is **Clear all history**. Click on this.

**Step 4:** Tick the boxes for each item you would like to clear. For the purposes of the Methodist Online Suite of Applications, it is advisable to tick the following:

- Cookies and saved website data
- Cached data and files
- Form data
- Passwords

Some of these options might be ticked already by default.

**Step 5:** Click the **Clear button**.



## ★ **TIP: Refreshing a page**

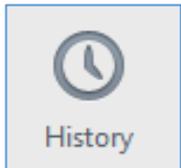
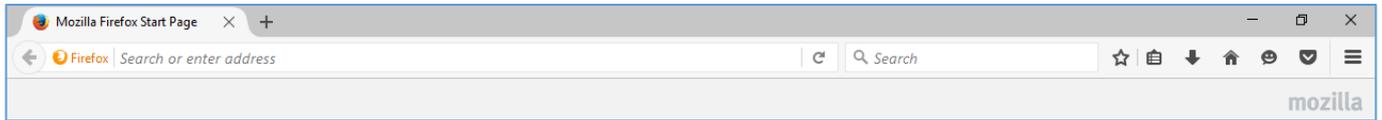


Some changes will only take effect when a website is reloaded. To refresh / reload a webpage, simultaneously press the **Shift + F5 buttons** on your keyboard or click the **Reload icon** of your browser. This saves you from having to close down and reopen your browser.



## Mozilla Firefox

**Step 1:** Click the **Menu** button (an icon made up of three horizontal lines and found in the top right corner of the browser window).

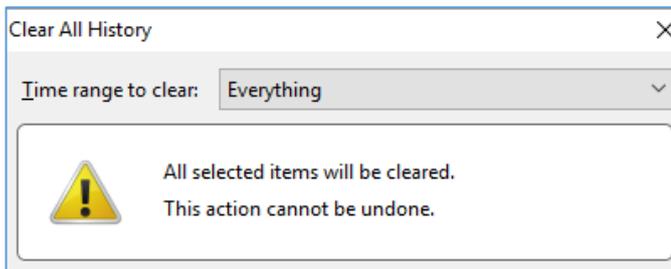


**Step 2:** You will see a range of icons. Click on the clock-shaped **History icon**.

**Step 3:** One of the options is **Clear Recent History**. Click on this.

**Step 4:** The **Clear Recent History** dialogue box gives you detailed options on what exactly to clear, and within which timescale. The default time range is likely to be “Last Hour”, but to clear the entire cache, you would have to choose “Everything”.

This triggers a warning message:

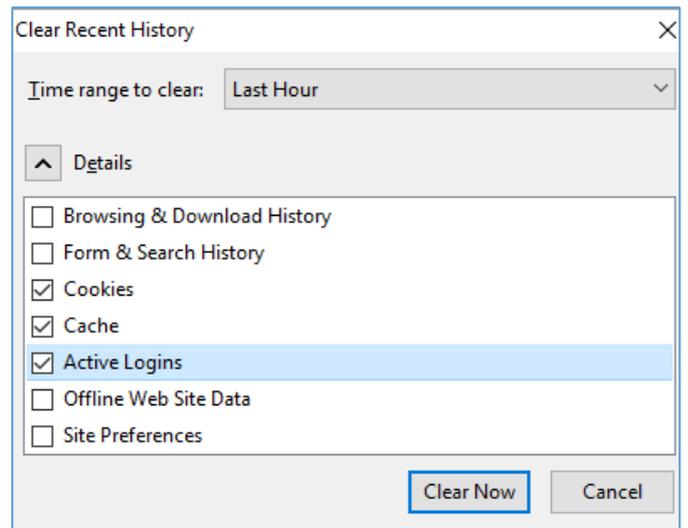


Under **Details**, tick the boxes for each item you would like to clear. For the purposes of the Methodist Online Suite of Applications, it is advisable to tick the following:

- Cookies
- Cache
- Active Logins

Some of these options might be ticked already by default.

**Step 5:** Click the **Clear Now button**.



### ★ **TIP: Shortcut**

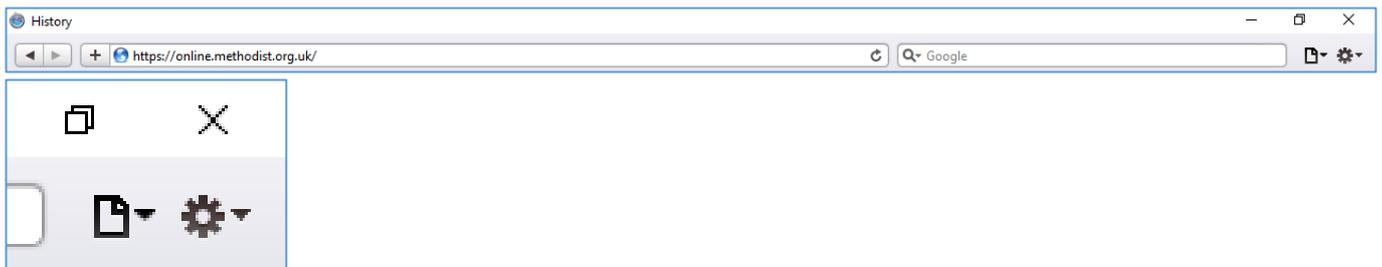
Instead of Step 1 and 2, you could also simultaneously press the **Ctrl + Shift + Delete buttons** on your keyboard. This action will take you directly to the window described in Step 4.



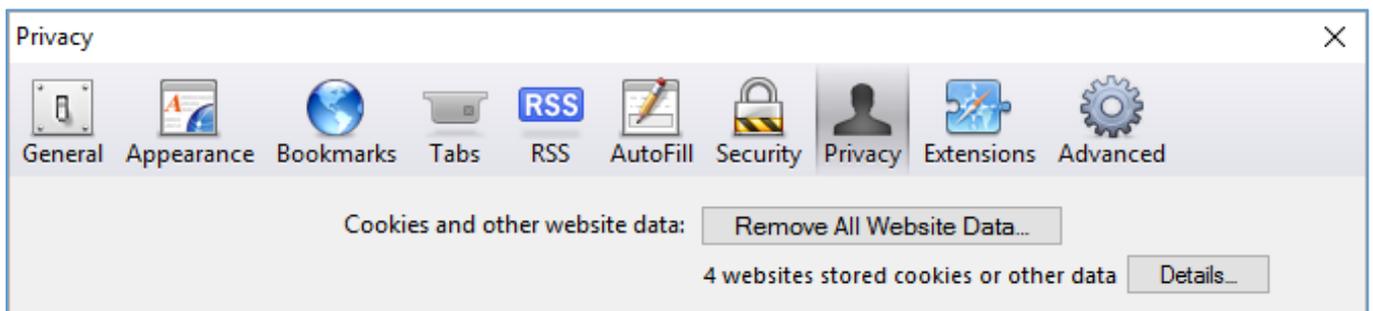
## Safari

### Clearing cache and cookies

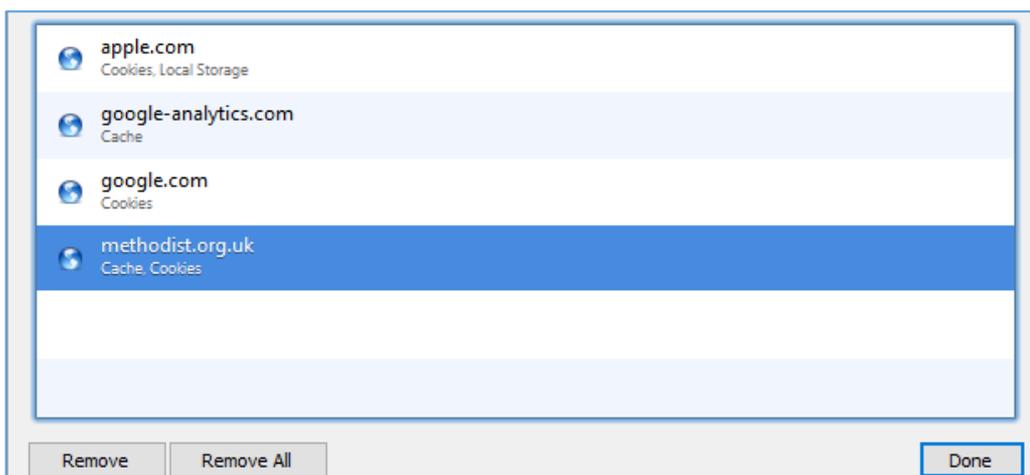
**Step 1:** Click the **Menu icon** (the gear wheel found in the top right corner of the browser window) and choose **Preferences** from the dropdown menu that appears.



**Step 2:** From the dialogue box which appears, choose the **Privacy icon**.



**Step 3:** You then have two options – either to **Remove All Website Data**, which will remove your entire browsing history and deletes cookies and the browser cache stored by your computer (a warning will come up before you are asked to confirm or cancel that step), or to remove saved data for one or more particular websites only. For the purposes of the Methodist Online Suite of Applications, it is advisable to choose to remove the cookies and cache of the Methodist webpages only, which you can do by clicking **Details** and highlighting the relevant site(s).

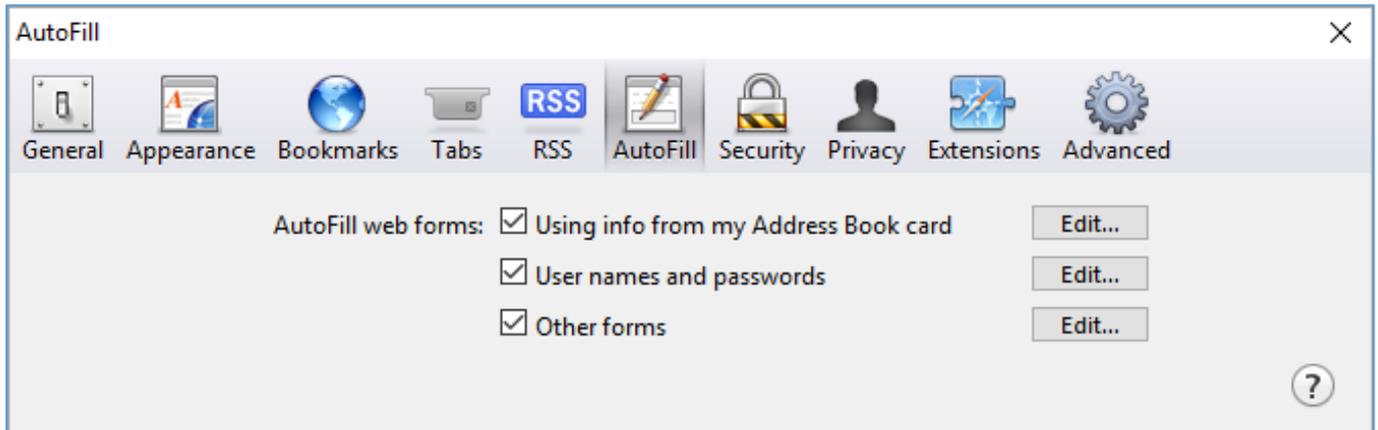


**Step 4:** Click the **Remove button** and exit the window by clicking the **Done button**.

## Removing site logins, passwords and autocomplete data

**Step 1:** as above

**Step 2:** From the dialogue box which appears, choose the **AutoFill icon**.



Safari's AutoFill tool sometimes overrides cookies and fills in username and password details on websites. AutoFill might also autocomplete some other information on the site.

**Step 3:** Under **AutoFill webforms**, tick the boxes for each item you would like to clear. For the purposes of the Methodist Online Suite of Applications, it is advisable to tick the following:

- User names and passwords
- Other forms

Some of these options might be ticked already by default.

**Step 4:** In the dialog box that appears once you've clicked the **Edit button**, select the site in the list and click the **Remove button**.



### Apple mobile devices

For mobile devices, the process is slightly different.

#### Clearing browser history, tracking cookies and website data on your iPhone:

**Step 1:** In Safari, tap the **Bookmarks button** in the toolbar.

**Step 2:** Select the **Bookmarks icon** in the upper left corner.

Make sure you've returned to the top-level menu by tapping on any back arrows in the upper left corner.

**Step 3:** Tap the **History** menu.

**Step 4:** Tap **Clear** and select how much history you'd like to clear.

**Note that cookies and website data will be cleared from the iPhone, and history will be cleared from all iCloud devices.**

#### Clearing the cache on your iPad or iPhone:

**Step 1:** Go to the **Settings app** and tap **Safari**.

**Step 2:** You will see options to **Clear History** and **Clear Cookies and Data**.

**Step 3:** Proceed as above.