Security flaws (Meltdown and Spectre) affecting many computers, tablets, and mobile devices
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You may have recently seen news of two new security flaws affecting nearly all desktops, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones manufactured since the mid-1990’s. These security flaws, named Meltdown and Spectre, could allow hackers to steal data including passwords and other sensitive information. To address this issue, security updates from operating system, web browser, and hardware vendors are currently being released. We are writing to make everyone aware of the details of the situation, and provide information about what can be done to keep systems and data safe.

For College owned computers:

As noted, this issue is widespread and affects most of our campus systems. ITS is working with our vendors to update College-managed systems. ITS already has a number of protocols in place to ensure updates to College-owned computers and servers happen automatically, or on a regular schedule. The Systems staff is already updating several critical systems and will continue as new updates become available from vendors.

For Personally owned computers and mobile devices:

For your own devices — including smartphones, tablets, home computers, etc. — we strongly recommend you use your device’s software update feature to make sure you are updated to the latest versions. This includes updating web browsers like Chrome and Firefox to the latest versions, which contain some protections against Spectre and Meltdown.

Some manufacturers will be releasing updates in the weeks to come, so we recommend you continue to check your device’s update features for new versions. If you are running an old, unsupported operating system, your manufacturer may require you to update to a newer operating system version.

For those wanting more detail on the flaws, please visit the Meltdown and Spectre site [1].

If you have any questions, please contact the ITS Help Desk at 518.388.6400 or email us at helpdesk@union.edu[2].

Category:
IT Security [3]

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