Meltdown & Spectre: How Chip Flaws May Affect Students

Two recently-discovered security flaws in computer chips could allow hackers to steal personal information from computers and smartphones.

Technology companies have started to release software updates to address these flaws, called Meltdown and Spectre, but these important updates have the potential to affect the anti-virus software students need to log in to the Rowan Network.

How May I Be Affected?

The software updates being released to address Meltdown and Spectre may affect students using Windows computers. Mac users are not affected by these updates. If you recently updated Windows, the software patches that were applied during that update may stop your anti-virus software from working. Without active anti-virus software, you will not be able to access the Rowan Network.

What Should Windows Users Do?

If ClearPass (correctly) blocks you from joining the Rowan Network, you will need to uninstall your current anti-virus software and install a new product. Windows Defender, which comes with Windows 10, can protect your machine just fine. You can also use the anti-virus software Rowan University provides to students for free. We accelerated our planned release of McAfee to address this issue.

If you have Windows 10:

1. Uninstall Symantec or other anti-virus software that’s not working.
2. Activate Windows Defender. (On your Windows menu, choose Settings, then Updates & Security, and click the On switch for Windows Defender.)

If you have Windows 7 or 8:

1. Uninstall Symantec or other anti-virus software that’s not working.
2. Install McAfee. Visit our McAfee page for instructions.

What Should Mac Users Do?

You do not need to take any action at this time. While Macs are affected by the Meltdown and Spectre flaws, the updates released by Apple do not interfere with anti-virus software.

Where Can I Get More Help?

We have staff available in the Technology Assistance Center to help you this weekend. The center is open Sunday, Jan. 14, and Monday, Jan. 15, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All of our support services, including phone and email support, will be available on Tuesday.