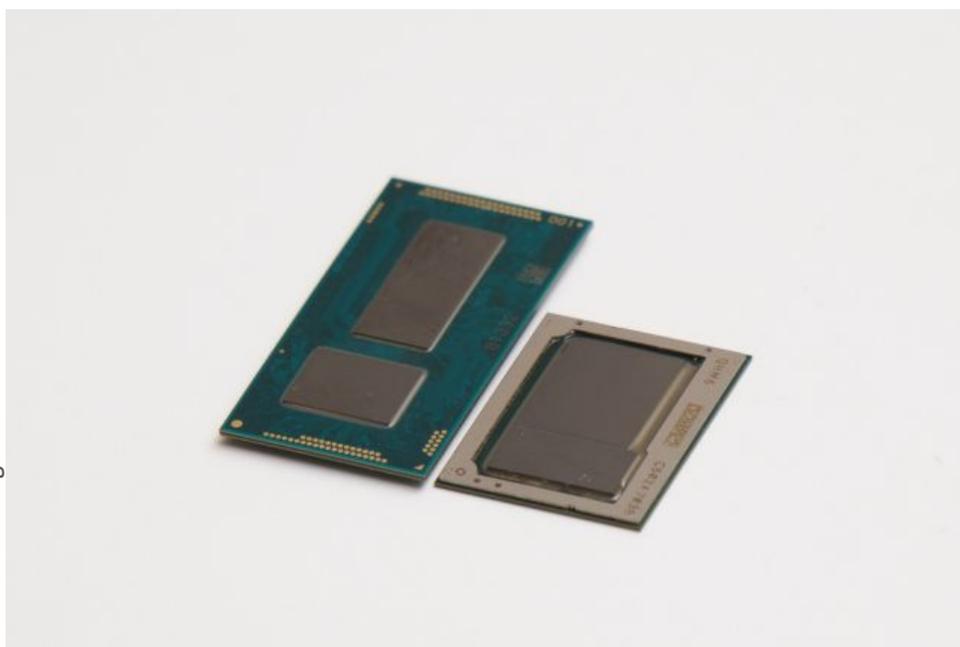


TECH —

Meltdown and Spectre: Good news for AMD users, (more) bad news for Intel

Windows patches are fixed, but microcode updates are causing even more trouble.

PETER BRIGHT - 1/18/2018, 7:27 AM



[Enlarge](#) / Core M Broadwell (left) vs. Core M Skylake (right).

227

The good news: Microsoft suspended shipping its [Spectre and Meltdown](#) Windows patches to owners of AMD systems after some users found that they left their systems unbootable. Microsoft partially lifted the restriction last week, sending the update to newer AMD systems but still leaving the oldest machines unpatched.

Now the company has an update [that works on those systems, too](#). If you're unfortunate enough to have installed the previous, bad update and now have a system that crashes on startup, you'll still have to roll back the bad update before you can install the new one. We've read reports that this is indeed possible, but unfortunately, [Microsoft only offers generic guidance on troubleshooting blue screen of death crashes](#), not any specific steps to fix this specific issue.

The bad news: Intel has [previously warned](#) that the microcode update it issued to provide some processor-based mitigation for some kinds of

Spectre attack was causing machines with Haswell and Broadwell processors to reboot. It turns out that the problems are more widespread than previously reported: the chip company is **now saying** that Ivy Bridge, Sandy Bridge, Skylake, and Kaby Lake systems are affected, too.

Intel says that it has reproduced the reboot issues and is working on identifying the root cause. It intends to ship a beta microcode to system builders next week.

What this means is that if you're lucky enough to have a system that is still being supported with firmware updates from its manufacturer—because let's be honest: good luck getting any firmware updates for *any* consumer PC or motherboard that's more than about 18 months old—you probably shouldn't install the firmware anyway. Unless, that is, you're in a high risk category such as a cloud host or VPS provider, in which case you'll just have to install it anyway, because the consequences of not upgrading are probably worse than the consequences of upgrading.

PETER BRIGHT

Peter is Technology Editor at Ars. He covers Microsoft, programming and software development, Web technology and browsers, and security. He is based in Brooklyn, NY.

EMAIL peter.bright@arstechnica.com // **TWITTER** [@drpizza](https://twitter.com/drpizza)

READER COMMENTS 227 SHARE THIS STORY

[← PREVIOUS STORY](#)

[NEXT STORY →](#)

Related Stories

Bad docs and blue screens make Microsoft suspend Spectre patch for AMD machines

Here's how, and why, the Spectre and Meltdown patches will hurt performance

Spectre and Meltdown patches causing trouble as realistic attacks get closer

"Always Connected" Windows PCs won't just use ARM chips as Intel, AMD join the fray

Today on Ars

Net neutrality is bad? 1 million
PornHub employees can't be
wrong. Oh, wait.

Video demonstrates the
marvel of CRT displays at
380,000 frames per second

Trump puts 30% tariff on
imported solar cells and
modules

Making tools gives crows a big
food boost

SpaceX gets good news from
the Air Force on the Zuma
mission

Sorry, FCC: Montana is
enforcing net neutrality with
new executive order

Windows VR headsets now
available with deep discounts

A Comcast net neutrality
commitment from the NBC
merger just expired

[RSS FEEDS](#)
[VIEW MOBILE SITE](#)
[ABOUT US](#)

[CONTACT US](#)
[STAFF](#)
[ADVERTISE WITH US](#)
[REPRINTS](#)

CNMN Collection
WIRED Media Group
Use of this Site constitutes acceptance of our User Agreement (effective 1/2/14) and Privacy Policy (effective 1/2/14), and Ars Technica Addendum (effective 5/17/2012). View our Affiliate Link Policy. Your California Privacy Rights. The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Condé Nast.