If you're worried about your personal information being exposed by the Heartbleed bug, not all hope is lost.

It’s not a data breach or a computer virus. This time, a flaw in encryption software online put personal information at risk.

“Heartbleed took advantage of a vulnerability in that authentication system, encryption system,” said J.P. Auffret, technology management professor at George Mason University.

The Heartbleed bug is a serious concern when it comes to security online. Five hundred thousand websites are vulnerable. But there are steps you can take to stay safe.

- **The Passwords You Need to Change Right Now**
“Awareness and checking out the services you use I think is a very important first step,” Auffret said.

So, how do you know if a website you use has been hit by Heartbleed? There is a way to check. Sites like McAfee Security have set up a free Heartbleed screener. Type in a site, like your bank, to see if it was affected or has been fixed.

And it's not just websites that have been exposed by Heartbleed.

“There’s one version of the Android phone operating system that’s potentially at risk,” Auffret said.

To check your operating system, go to settings on your phone. If you have the 4.1.1 version, that is the version hit by Heartbleed. So don't use that phone to visit websites that have your bank or credit card info.

Another piece of technology at risk from Heartbleed is your home router. Some Cisco and Juniper brand routers may be compromised. Check with your manufacturer to be sure.

As websites start repairing this Heartbleed issue, beware of scams. Phishing emails -- pretending to be from sites like your bank about the Heartbleed bug -- may contain links that could compromise your information. A safer bet is to go directly to websites you use and change your passwords there.

- **Samples of Fraudulent Messages**

  As you're changing those passwords, if you feel like you can’t keep them all straight, tech website c-net recommends a password manager like Last Pass or Robo Form. A password manager won't help protect you from bugs like Heartbleed, but it will make the cleanup a whole lot easier, storing all your usernames and passwords in the same place.

  Auffret also warned against using public Wi-Fi when banking or shopping online. He advised checking your credit report periodically to make sure it’s accurate.

- **Dell Heartbleed Remediation**

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