United Health Group Critique

When Curtis Krondlund, Darren Cashman, and Brian Rue came to talk to us on Thursday, I was excited, because I really didn’t know all that much about United Health Group. I felt like I needed to learn more about this company, not only because knowledge is a fantastic thing, but because if one day I decided to work for them one day, I would already have some kind of background in knowing about their company and what it does, especially their IT department.

Anyway, United Health Group is a giant company, having bought up smaller companies in the healthcare industry as well as a bank. They earn $94 billion in revenue each year, and are number 21 in the Fortune 500. The tech and computer side of United Health Group’s make and maintain large programs and databases pertaining to important health records. Both Walgreen’s and CVS pharmacies use United Health Group’s backend systems for their prescriptions. United Health Group has the largest database of records for people who are insured. This, along with the programs used, takes up six petabytes of data, with 33 petabytes in backup! To give a scale of the projects created and used by United Health Group, there are 12,000 people working on seven million projects, most coded in Java, but some in C#.

Near the end, we learned about a new employee program that United Health Group uses. A part of this program allows new hires to meet high-level VPs CIOs, which I thought was really cool, because like they said, not many new employees get opportunities like that. As one guy said, he’s worked there for a long time, and still hasn’t had that chance. During this two-year program, the new hires get rotated around the three different areas of the company, so they get to choose which one they’d like best to work in at the end of the program. This program is only for actual employees, but interns get to work on a project for United Health Group over the summer, which is actually a very short time frame to finish a project.

Overall, I really liked this presentation. I thought it was filled with information relevant to us as software engineers. At first I wasn’t sure because I don’t know if I want to work for a healthcare organization, and I was skeptical that United Health Group had that many information systems. I was proved wrong, and now I’m more educated about United Health Group.