Big History and ChronoZoom
... a new way to think about geology, for teachers and researchers

Big History is the attempt to understand, in a unified and interdisciplinary way, the history of the Cosmos, Earth, Life and Humanity.

Today a new, interdisciplinary field called Big History is unifying the study of all of the past, bringing together the history of Cosmos, Earth, Life, and Humanity into a single grand panorama of time. Geology and paleontology sit squarely in the middle of this panorama, and the teaching of Big History offers remarkable opportunities to those with a broad view of the past.

Background
Big History was invented about 25 years ago by the historian, David Christian, at Macquarie University in Australia, author of the Big History monograph, Maps of Time (Univ. Calif. Press, 2004). Big History courses are now offered in dozens of universities around the world. Professors who give these courses find them a wonderful way to engage their students, and commonly say that Big History is the most exciting subject they have ever taught. Big History has the potential to help schools, colleges and universities break out of the narrow specialization that is now so prevalent in academic institutions, and to give students a broad understanding of the world obtainable in no other way.

What could you do?
If you are a professor or a teacher, think about offering your students a course in Big History! There is a growing body of resources to help you get started, and links to these resources are given in this brochure. If you are a student, you could tell your teachers and professors and fellow students about Big History, and try to get this subject taught in your school or college.

What is ChronoZoom?
ChronoZoom is a web-based graphical timeline with the potential to display everything in the past that we have any possibility of knowing about. It is a new resource for Big Historians that is under development by UC Berkeley and Microsoft Research. ChronoZoom is intended to be a tool for Big History teachers and researchers. You are invited to explore the first version of ChronoZoom on the web at http://ChronoZoomTimeScale.org. Work is now in progress on developing a second version of ChronoZoom, with new capabilities and more flexibility. We are actively seeking ideas and requests for features to incorporate in ChronoZoom.

How does one start teaching Big History?
The small international community of Big Historians is very welcoming and supportive. You can find a list of Big History teachers and courses, along with syllabi, books, and other resources, online at http://usm.maine.edu/lac/global/bighistory/. Most people who teach these courses would be happy to help you. Please note that so far most Big History professors come from the humanities, not from the relevant historical sciences, so there is a big opportunity for geologists and paleontologists to contribute to Big History.

Our Berkeley group welcomes your inquiries about starting a Big History course, by e-mail to chronozoombighistory@berkeley.edu

Launch ChronoZoom
ChronoZoom is a web-based graphical timeline for the history of everything.

First Generation
Try it online ChronoZoomTimeScale.org