Using ChronoZoom

# Introduction

This guide will walk you through the basics of using ChronoZoom, the near-infinitely zooming timeline of everything. The goal of this document is to provide you with the basic competency needed to use ChronoZoom yourself and to help your students to use it. This is not a comprehensive guide to every feature of ChronoZoom. You will find more features as you go along and you can also reference the complete guide [here](http://join.chronozoom.com/user-guide/).

Before we get into the exact details of using ChronoZoom, let's discuss what ChronoZoom is and what it isn't:

## ChronoZoom is . . .

* **designed to be cross-platform** -- this means that it is designed to work on almost any modern browser, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Opera, and Safari. It is also intended to work on any hardware that supports these browsers. This includes PCs, Macs, Android devices, and iPads. It will even work on most smartphones, though the experience isn't optimized for such a small screen.
* **entirely free and always will be** -- you will never be asked to upgrade to a premium account or presented with advertising while using ChronoZoom. It is a free, open educational resource.
* **a tool for telling stories about history** -- ChronoZoom allows you and your students to create timelines, share them, and give presentations based on the timelines you have created.
* **safe and secure** -- when you create a timeline in ChronoZoom you will be asked to provide either a Microsoft Live ID, a Google ID, or a Yahoo ID. Once you have done this you will be given your own personal space within which you can create timelines. You can share these timelines with anyone you like but only you will be able to edit them.

## ChronoZoom is not . . .

* **designed to work on legacy browsers** -- ChronoZoom uses some of the latest developments in web technology (html5) to make the experience fresh and exciting for you and your students. Because of this it won't work on Internet Explorer 8 or other older browsers. If you have problems loading the ChronoZoom page, check your browser version and install a more modern browser (or talk to your IT administrator)
* **a Flash, Silverlight or Unity application** -- ChronoZoom does not require you download any additional software for it to run. It simply uses the power of your web browser. We designed it this way so you would not have to worry about getting permission from your IT staff to install anything! Just go to ChronoZoom.com and you can start using it immediately.
* **a tool for exploring all of history** -- while our ultimate intention is for ChronoZoom to be a sort of authoritative and visual Wikipedia of all the knowledge in the universe, we are still far from that goal. As of October of 2013 we have about 7000 content items in the main ChronoZoom timeline. This is a very tiny amount if you compare it to the 1.26 million articles in Wikipedia or the fifteen terabytes of primary source data in the library of congress collections. We encourage you to use search engines and authoritative web sites to collect your data. Once you have the data you can use ChronoZoom to build timelines and give presentations.
* e**ntirely free of problems** -- ChronoZoom is still in early release and there are problems (known as 'bugs') with some of the features. You may find that ChronoZoom doesn't do what you expect it to or gets stuck. This can happen if there is a lot of people on the internet or ChronoZoom at that moment. If this happens, first be patient and wait a little longer, and then try and refresh your web page, maybe log out and log back in again, and see if that helps. If it doesn't, contact us on our website and tell us about the problem. We will help fix it. There is chance that you might lose some of your work while creating a timeline if you refresh your browser or navigate away from a dialog because what you have entered into the browser has not yet been stored in ChronoZoom. **This happen very rarely and usually only with the specific item you are creating at that moment.**  If you are planning an ambitious timeline, we suggest that you use a program like Word, OneNote, or Excel to take notes before you make a timeline with your links and descriptions. That way if you lose some data you can easily re-enter it.
* **designed to be an end-to-end teaching solution** -- we realized early on that ChronoZoom is very good at some things and not so good at others. We decided to concentrate on what ChronoZoom is best at, and we have designed the curriculum to leverage the best of ChronoZoom. In fact, you can even use these lesson plans without using ChronoZoom at all! We really encourage you to try it, however. We are pretty confident that your students will enjoy it.
* **a cloud store for your images, videos and other content** -- ChronoZoom keeps pointers to content stored elsewhere on the web. If you want to use your own content, you can use a service like SkyDrive to make it available and then use ChronoZoom to point to it.

# Basic Features

ChronoZoom is terrific at doing a few key things:

Exploring the vastness of universal time -- Try zooming from 13.8 billion years to a single day. We guarantee that you and your students will be impressed.

Creating timelines -- We have made it easy to create timelines with either a mouse or using touch controls. We have also integrated Bing search and SkyDrive so you can easily find resources on the web or add your own personal images and videos.

Presenting timelines -- We have leveraged Microsoft Research Interactive Storytelling technologies to give you a simple system for stringing together many different points in time into a linear presentation that we call a 'tour'. Tours are easy to make, similar to making a presentation in PowerPoint or Prezi.

## Creating an Account

Visit ChronoZoom.com and click the ‘person’ icon in the top right hand corner. This will let you log in with a Microsoft, Google or Yahoo account. ChronoZoom does not get any of your other information from those accounts, it just knows that you have logged in. Once you have logged in, ChronoZoom will reappear and you will be asked to specify a user name. This name will be visible to others and can be any text (without spaces) unless already taken by someone. Once you save your profile you will be asked to specify the name and range of time for your timelines – you can specify anything from 13 Billion Years ago till the present.

## Creating a Timeline

Once you have established a top timeline, additional timelines can be created inside it by clicking on the ‘pen’ icon in the top right hand corner and select ‘Create Timeline’. You will be asked to click and drag to draw a box that represents the start and end of the new timeline. Once the box is drawn, a dialog will appear with a title and the start and end time which can all be changed. You can create any number of timelines inside or next to each other, and that is a convenient way to organize and group your content.

## Creating an Exhibit

Once you have your first timeline, you can create exhibits inside it at a time when something happened. Exhibits are like a place in a museum with a bunch of artifacts that together tell a story. Click on the ‘pen’ icon again and select ‘Create Exhibit’. You will be asked to click somewhere in time where you want this exhibit to appear. Once you have picked a spot, a dialog will appear with more details. Most importantly, an exhibit needs to have one or more artifacts which are images or documents. Click ‘Create Artifact’ and choose import from Bing or SkyDrive. Bing is the easiest – just enter a search term for an image or a video and select the one you like. Now you have the first artifact and there is room for 9 more.

## Creating a Tour

Once you have created one or more timelines and exhibits, you are ready to create a tour that connects them to tell a story. Click the ‘pen’ icon in the top right hand corner ans select ‘Create Tour’. Give the tour a name and description and click ‘add new stop’ and point to existing timelines or exhibits in the sequence you would like them to show. Clicking on individual stops after they have been added allows you to add a description to each stop. The finished tour will be available to all users under the ‘movie strip’ icon in the top right hand corner.