

FOSSIL Project
Florida Museum of Natural History
University of Florida

Project Description and Informed Consent

Study Description:

FOSSIL is creating a national network of fossil clubs and professional paleontologists. The project team is very interested in your experiences, interests, needs, and feedback about the development and effectiveness of FOSSIL in creating a network for amateur and professional paleontologists and providing opportunities for members to learn science, contribute to science, and promote informal science learning. Participant feedback informs the on-going project development and implementation of FOSSIL.

Procedure:

If you choose to participate in this study, you are allowing us to use information that is collected during the normal, iterative development activities for FOSSIL. The following types of information may be collected:

- Survey: A variety of means may be used to document your perspective, experiences, interests, and needs.
- Artifacts: A variety of artifacts may be collected to document your perspective, experiences, interests, and needs. These may include but are not limited to communication artifacts.
- Online archives: Comments and responses that are posted on the myFOSSIL website.
- Observations: Observation data in the form of field notes, video recordings, or audio recordings may be collected to document your interactions during focus groups, workshops, or the annual FOSSIL meeting.
- Interviews: Interviews lasting approximately 20 minutes may be conducted to gain insight into your perspective, experiences, interests, and needs. Interviews will be audio or video recorded and transcribed. Interviews will focus on the following kinds of questions:
 - Describe your participation in FOSSIL.
 - What elements of FOSSIL are most effective in creating a network among amateur and professional paleontologists? Please explain.
 - How do digitized collections impact the practices of the network?
 - How does your participation in FOSSIL influence your science learning, contributions to the science of paleontology, and promotion of informal science education?
 - What types of components should we include in the myFOSSIL website? Please explain.
 - Are the FOSSIL programmatic activities and training effective? Please explain.
 - Is the communication among FOSSIL participants effective? Please explain.
 - How do the FOSSIL amateur and professional paleontologists share practices and skills?

- How does networking the clubs improve the outreach, resources, and capabilities of the individual clubs?

An anonymous coding scheme will be applied to all information collected and prior to analysis. Data will be analyzed and reported in an aggregated fashion and participants will not be identified by name in any reports of our research.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There are risks involved in all research and evaluation studies. However, minimal risk is envisioned for participating in this project. You will not be identified by name in any reports of this research; pseudonyms will be used. There are no direct benefits for participating in the FOSSIL project research and evaluation. However, future participants may experience benefits in the form of a more effective FOSSIL project in providing a network for amateur and professional paleontologists that fosters science learning, contributions to the science of paleontology, and informal science learning.

Time Required and Compensation:

The study will occur over the course of the FOSSIL project and we anticipate requiring a total of 60 minutes annually of your time to complete the surveys. There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

All information gathered in this study will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the information will be shredded and/or electronically erased.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is strictly voluntary. Non-participation or denied consent to collect some or all of the data listed above will not affect your participation in FOSSIL. In addition, you may request at any time that your data not to be included.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Kent Crippen at kcrippen@coe.ufl.edu or (352) 273-4222 or Dr. Betty Dunckel at bdunckel@flmnh.ufl.edu. For questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study you may contact the UFIRB Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; ph (352) 392-0433.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

Participant Name (Please Print)