Eternal Egypt

"At first I could see nothing, the hot air escaping from the chamber causing the candle flame to flicker, but presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold-everywhere the glint of gold. For the moment-an eternity it must have seemed to the others standing by-I was struck dumb with amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer inquired anxiously, "Can you see anything?" It was all I could do to get out the words, "Yes, wonderful things."

- Howard Carter, on the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun,
November 1922

For over five thousand years, from the dawn of the pharaohs to the modern era of independence, Egyptian culture has evoked a sense of almost inexpressible awe. By the fifth century BC, as the Greek historian Herodotus wrote, Egypt had "more wonders in it than any other country in the world," and provided "more works that defy description than any other place."

For the past three years, the Egyptian Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage (CultNat) and IBM have been working to bring the awe-inspiring experience of Egypt to the world through a project known as the Eternal Egypt. With the help of a $2.5 million grant of technology and expertise from IBM, the Eternal Egypt represents a unique partnership to use innovative IBM technologies and services to create an interactive, multimedia experience of Egyptian cultural artifacts, places and history for a global audience.

A little over one year since the 100th anniversary of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, anyone with access to the internet is now able to enter a three-dimensional reconstruction of Tutankhamun's tomb,as it was when Howard Carter and his colleagues discovered it and wiped the dust of a grave of 3000 years age. The experience is only one small part of Eternal Egypt, which is accessible by handheld digital guides in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, by cell phone for visitors to the pyramids at Giza or the Luxor Temple in Upper Egypt, or through the Eternal Egypt web site.

The Eternal Egypt web site includes an unprecedented experience of high-resolution images, three-dimensional reconstructions of Egyptian monuments and antiquities, as well as virtually-reconstructed environments, panoramic images, and panoramic views of present-day Egypt captured by robotic cameras located from the top of Karnak Temple to the streets of Old Cairo. An innovative, interactive map and timeline will guide Eternal Egypt visitors through Egypt's

cultural heritage, while a "context navigator" presents the complex relationships between objects, places and personalities of Egypt's past in a unique, web-like display.