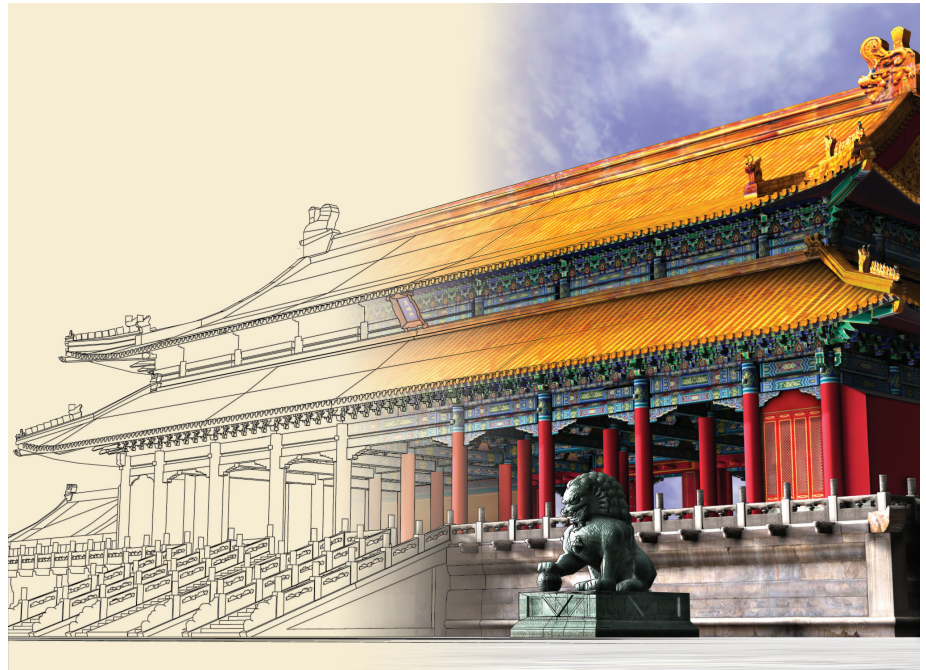# The Virtual Forbidden City: Highlights

The Forbidden City was created to embody the idea of the emperor as the center of the universe and to evoke a visceral sense of his power. This huge palace complex was completed in 1420 and covers more than 72 hectares (178 acres). It contains hundreds and hundreds of exquisite buildings and historic artifacts.

Now, using virtual world technology, visitors can experience the awe inspired by this vast and amazing space. The Virtual Forbidden City allows you to see and interact with other users and a range of helpful automated characters.

As you explore the Virtual Forbidden City, you can choose to simply observe the buzz of activity, or you can take tours and participate in activities that provide insights into important aspects of Qing culture.

The Museum Experience

Visitors to the Palace Museum in Beijing can experience the Virtual Forbidden City at a specially–designed standalone installation. In addition to offering full access to the online environment and the thousands of people interacting in the space around the world, the Palace Museum installation permits easy visit–planning for tourists hoping to learn more about their time on the museum grounds.

The Virtual Forbidden City is the first large-scale virtual world dedicated to a country's cultural heritage.

The Virtual Forbidden City

Explore

■ Visitors are represented within the Virtual Forbidden City by figures known as avatars which can take the form of any of several people dressed in Qing–era clothing.

■ Avatars move through the world looking for areas of interest where a click reveals if more information is available

■ Maps show a visitor's current location and path through the world while also highlighting interesting places to explore

■ Fellow visitors may join one of the many guided tours that wind throughout the Virtual Forbidden City

Learn

■ Many of the most impressive artifacts and buildings have additional information and even photos available to provide a deeper understanding of their purpose and construction — when available, the information is only a mouse–click away

■ To get an even closer look at the intricate details of certain items, visitors can virtually "hold" a copy for closer inspection

www.beyondspaceandtime.org

- First–of–a–kind project that extends IBM's service–oriented architecture and on-demand computing resources to create an online 3D virtual world

- High–resolution, finely–detailed 3D modeling of palace architecture, artifacts, and characters

- Imperial scenes, guided tours, and interactive activities developed in collaboration with scholars of Chinese history and based on live motion capture of Chinese actors

- Open, extensible platform representing the convergence of rich content and visual storytelling with community and social networking features

Save and Share

- Virtual visitors in the Virtual Forbidden City can save photos, places and items that they've enjoyed
- Photos can be revisited as often as visitors like and even shared with friends
- A thriving online community features a photo gallery where, if visitors choose, pictures taken within the Virtual Forbidden City will be available for all to see
- Visitors can keep a list of fellow explorers in their scrapbook and take them on a tour of favorite sights — anyone can be a tour leader

The Beyond Space and Time Website

The project website at www.beyondspaceandtime.org offers an introduction to the concept of a virtual world and the history of the Forbidden City. Visitors can download the Virtual Forbidden City from the website and receive support there. The website also hosts the community forums and

photo galleries of shots taken from within the virtual world.

Technology

Beyond Space and Time is comprised of a portfolio of customized, integrated products and services including WebSphere Application Server, Advanced ESB (WebSphere Message Broker) DB2, GarageGames' Torque Game Engine, and other open source components. BladeCenters running Linux Blade servers support the highest level of performance and robustness. IBM Rational software tools facilitated the design, development, and testing of the project applications. The Virtual Forbidden City virtual world application runs on Windows XP/Vista, Mac OSX, and Linux.

For more information, visit: www.beyondspaceandtime.org.

For more information on IBM Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs, visit **ibm.com/i**bm/ibmgives *or call 914-499-1900.*

The Virtual Forbidden City offers rich functionality for exploration, learning, and sharing.

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