#DigEarlyAm: Reflections on Digital Humanities and Early American Studies

By Sharon Block

In October 2018, the *William and Mary Quarterly* and the University of California, Irvine, jointly held a workshop to showcase the intersection of early American scholarship with a variety of computational analyses made possible by the rise of digital humanities (DH). This article uses the projects presented and discussions that ensued at that two-day meeting to review the state of the field of digital humanities and its use for early American scholars, including analysis of theoretical interventions and explanation of technological resources. At the workshop, multiple scholars relied on visualizations to expand on previous understandings of early America. Discussions directly addressed how to ethically study the past, particularly with the creation of visually arresting argument-based projects. By questioning the degree to which DH work transforms the field, this article traces the material consequences for definitions of scholarship, scholarly review, and authorship practices. As importantly, it argues that theoretical interventions by African diasporic, Indigenous, and feminist scholars allow cutting-edge work in digital early American to most productively create new forms and formats for knowledge.