

## [Expanded Column: The Digital Evans](#)



Beginning in July 2002, the [Readex Corporation](#), in cooperation with the [American Antiquarian Society](#), began releasing the first installments of "[Evans Digital](#)," a full-text-searchable version of Charles Evans's *American Bibliography*, first published on microfiche by Readex and the AAS in the 1950s. When complete, the Evans Digital will include more than thirty-six thousand items: virtually all books, pamphlets, and broadsides published in British North America from 1639-1800. The publication of the microfiche collection made astonishingly rare books available at small colleges and large universities across the country and even around the globe. The digital edition, with full-text searching, may well revolutionize the study of early American life. *Common-place* asked two prominent scholars of early America, whose work has relied extensively on printed materials, to review the Evans Digital.

Cathy N. Davidson [From Movable Type to Searchable Text](#)

Jay Fliegelman [An MRI of Early America](#)

This article originally appeared in issue 3.3 (April, 2003).

---