

## **Instagram or Vine? 5 Things to Know If Your Kids Are Sharing Videos** **(from CommonSenseMedia.org)**

Videos are all the rage with teens. Help yours use the top video-sharing apps appropriately. If your teen loves to share videos and has a smartphone, there's a good chance he or she has [Instagram](#) or [Vine](#) -- or both. Here's what you need to know about these two popular social apps.

### **1. What's the difference between Instagram and Vine?**

Instagram (Facebook owns it) was already a popular way for kids and teens to enhance and share photos before video capability was added. Just like with Instagram photos, you can edit and add filters to the 15-second videos (either recorded in the app or pulled from your device). Vine (Twitter owns it) lets you record and share six-second looping videos. On each service, you can follow other users, "like" posts and leave comments, and share others' posts. You can search for posts by user or hashtag.

### **2. Are they for kids?**

As with Facebook, Instagram users are supposed to be at least 13. Vine's privacy policy states that you must be 13 to use the service, but users have to affirm that they're at least 17 to install the app on an iOS device. (Google Play labels it "medium maturity.") So why is that? Beyond issues of COPPA compliance, videos that people post can be inappropriate for young kids. And just like on the Internet in general, kids looking for iffy stuff on Instagram and Vine will find it.

### **3. Can my teen see offensive content?**

Yes. It's relatively easy to get to some pretty hardcore stuff on Vine, especially. Sex, drugs, violence, language ... if teens can imagine it, they can probably find it on Vine. And even if kids aren't searching for iffy stuff, they can come across strong language and mature topics just by scrolling through the popular videos or various categories (comedy, music, sports, etc.). Users can report posts that violate terms of service, but the terms make it clear that the experience may expose users to inappropriate or offensive content. Teens may be a little less likely to stumble onto iffy content on Instagram, but it's there. Many inappropriate hashtags are banned on both services, but it's not hard to get around that.

### **4. How do teens use each service?**

Chances are, your kid is using Instagram to share cool photos and videos about his or her life with friends and Vine to post and watch funny and often really creative videos. Much of their experience will depend on whom they decide to follow and who follows them.

And depending on just how creative teens are, these services can be an outlet for multiple forms of expression. With categories like Music, Comedy, Health & Fitness, and Special FX, Vine can offer teens a little creative inspiration -- as well as some laughs. A budding filmmaker, for example, could use stop motion and Vine to tell a story in six seconds. Teens on Instagram can experiment with basic digital photo editing and how different filters change the look and mood of their photos and videos.

### **5. How can I help my teen make smart choices on Instagram and Vine?**

Although the privacy settings on Instagram and Vine are relatively limited, on both apps teens can adjust their settings to make their posts private/protected and available only to followers they approve. You can encourage kids to be deliberate about the network they're building rather than focusing on getting the most followers. Many of our key [Internet safety tips for teens](#) apply to kids using Instagram and Vine, such as "the Golden Rule applies in cyberspace," "encourage critical thinking," and, perhaps most important: "There's no such thing as 'private' online."