

Mobile Video Tips for Nonprofits

Why mobile video?

With shrinking newsrooms and an explosion of mobile devices, media is increasingly democratic and increasingly visual. While still photos remain an important part of every nonprofit's communications toolkit, moving pictures can convey even more emotion, and capture news and events in live action as they happen. Vine and Instagram are the two main platforms for mobile video. Here's how they stack up:



Vine	Instagram
6 seconds, plays on a loop	15 seconds, plays only once
Can be shared on Twitter and Facebook and embedded on websites using YouTube	Can be shared through any social network or embedded in a website
Can be shot in segments, but it's not possible to edit them	Can be shot in segments, and allows users to delete the last take
Must be shot live and uploaded immediately	Can be uploaded from your phone's video library

Who should use mobile video?

Organizations that have established social media channels (for distribution), and savvy staff with steady hands. Vine is great for [nonprofits working on youth issues](#), since its audience skews young. Instagram video is an easy addition to any organization's Instagram photo feed.

How can nonprofits use it?

- Respond to current events or trending topics, as [Assemblymember Jared Huffman did](#) after the U.S. House voted to cut the SNAP program (shown at right).
- Bring your cause to life by showing the people impacted, as [charity:water does here](#).
- Show the problem you are working to address, like Lead Now did with a [video of the Alberta tar sands](#).
- Promote your mission like Pathways Canada does in this [simple vine post](#).



- Document an event, like this [Keystone Pipeline protest](#) held outside of President Obama’s climate speech.
- Ask your community to help raise awareness by creating their own videos, as (RED) did in their [#REDWorldRecord campaign](#) and a German group did with [#sixsecondsagainstAIDS](#).
- Embed short videos in a website to draw the eye and convey emotion, as Sesame Workshop [does here](#).
- Capture breaking news, like this [#standwithwendy video](#) taken right after the SB5 filibuster in Texas.

What kind of content works best?

Keep it short and sweet. Remember you only have six to 15 seconds, so a tight focus is key. Humor works well, but genuine emotion is tremendously powerful.

News outlets have begun to solicit video reactions to breaking news—as [Slate Magazine did](#) with recent Supreme Court decisions—and nonprofits can do the same. Because these platforms are relatively new, we recommend experimenting with different subject matter and styles, and tracking engagement to learn what kind of content works best for your particular cause and community.



Videos like those that came from the [#standwithwendy protests](#) are great examples of how mobile video can be done well.



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