

April 10, 2014

## Congressional Adoption of Vine

### Overview

**What Is Vine?** Vine is a social media mobile video sharing service that allows users to create six second videos that can be short snippets of conversation, a series of still shots, or a moving panorama that automatically repeats in a loop. These videos (Vines) can be shared with Vine followers and on Twitter and Facebook.

**On What Devices Can I Use Vine?** Vine is primarily supported on mobile devices such as iPhone and Android and Windows supported devices. The Mobile Application (App) supports viewing and posting of Vine videos.

**Can Vine Be Used on the Web?** Yes and no. Vine is primarily a mobile application. The mobile App allows both the posting of Vines and the viewing of others' posts. Vine does, however, have a Website ([www.vine.co](http://www.vine.co)) where Vines can be viewed, but not posted.



"Profiles and posts on Vine are public by default, which means that anyone on the service can view and share them." <http://vine.co/help>

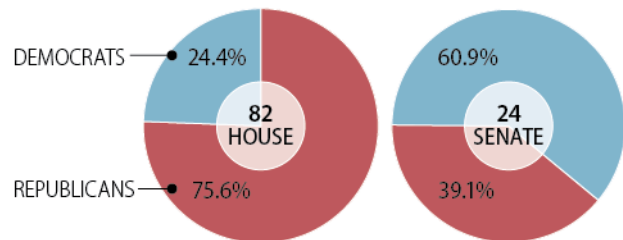
**How is Vine Different From Other Forms of Social Media?** Vine combines many features from Twitter—short posts and hashtags—with the ability to post short, looping videos or compilation of pictures. It allows users to reach followers with both text and video images. Up to 140 characters of text can accompany a Vine post.

### Member Adoption of Vine

**Are Members of Congress Adopting Vine?** As of January 31, 2014, a total of 105 Members of Congress (19.6%) had a Vine account. In the House, 82 Representatives (18.9%) have adopted Vine and in the Senate 23 Senators (23%) have adopted Vine.

**What is the Party Breakdown for Vine Adoption in the House and Senate?** In both the House and Senate, the majority party has a larger percentage of Vine adopters than the minority party. **Figure 1** shows the percentage of Vine adoption in the House and Senate by political party. In the House, 75.6% of adopters have been Republicans and 24.4% have been Democrats. In the Senate, 60.9% of adopters have been Democrats, while 39.1% have been Republicans. Independent Senators are included in the totals of the party they caucus.

**Figure 1. Vine Adoption by Political Party and Chamber**



**Source:** CRS analysis of Vine account data, as of January 31, 2014.

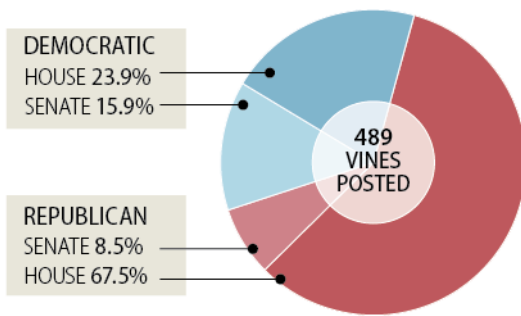
**Note:** Independent Senators are included with the party in which they caucus.

### Member Use of Vine

**Are Members of Congress Posting on Vine?** Yes. Of the 105 Members who have adopted Vine, 63 have posted at least one Vine and 42 have signed up for an account but have not yet posted a Vine. The 63 active users have posted an average of 7.8 Vines. The minimum number of Vines posted by active users is one (by 15 users) and the maximum is 81 (by one user).

**What is the Party Breakdown for Vine Usage in the House and Senate?** Overall, House Republicans have posted the greatest percentage of Vines (58.3%). This is followed by House Democrats (20.7%), Senate Democrats (13.7%), and Senate Republicans (7.4%). In both the House and Senate, more Vines have been posted by the chamber majority party than the chamber minority party. House Republicans, however, have posted more Vines (285) than House Democrats (101), Senate Republicans (36), and Senate Democrats (67) combined. **Figure 2** shows the breakdown in the frequency of Vine posts by chamber and party.

**What are Members of Congress Posting on Vine?** CRS has not yet fully analyzed the content of Member Vines to know what Members are posting. Based on an initial examination of randomly selected Member Vines, however, video posts include information about policy and positions, district and constituent service, official duties, and themselves and their families.

**Figure 2. Frequency of Vine Posts by Chamber and Party**

**Source:** CRS analysis of Vine account data, as of January 31, 2014.

**Note:** Independent Senators are included with the party in which he or she caucuses.

## Social Media Policies for Members

**What policies are in place for Member offices interested in adopting Vine?** Several policies exist to guide Member offices interested in adopting and using social media accounts for official business. These policies vary between the House and the Senate and are described below.

### House of Representatives

**What Policies Exist in the House for Social Media Adoption and Use?** The Committee on House Administration has issued policies on the use of Websites and the Internet, including what can and cannot be included on Websites and social media posts. The *Member Handbook* specifies that Members may “establish profiles, pages, channels or other similar presence on third-party sites...,” so long as Members ensure that their official position (i.e., representative, congressman, congresswoman) is clearly stated in the account name. Further, all information provided on Member-controlled social media accounts “is subject to the same requirements as content on Member websites.” For more information on website requirements for Members, see <http://cha.house.gov/handbooks/members-congressional-handbook#Members-Handbook-Comms-Websites>.

Therefore, material posted on Member social media accounts “must be in compliance with Federal law and House Rules and regulations applicable to official communications and germane to the conduct of the Member’s official and representational duties.” For more information on the content of Member websites, see <http://cha.house.gov/handbooks/members-congressional-handbook#Members-Handbook-Comms-Websites-Content>.

### Senate

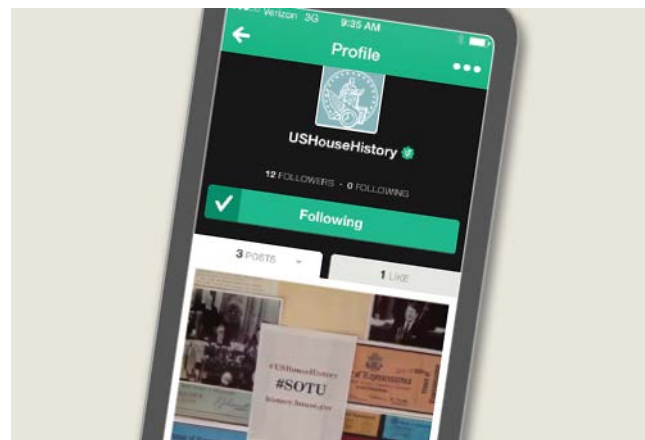
**What Policies Exist in the Senate for Social Media Adoption and Use?** In September 2008, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration adopted Internet services usage rules and policies. The policy requires that all Internet services be used for official purposes only. The Senate policy also provides requirements for the use of

third-party Websites (i.e., social media), including the naming of accounts, a prohibition against the use of data gathering tools, and a prohibition against personal, promotional, commercial, or partisan political/campaign-related material. For more information, see <http://www.senate.gov/usage/internetpolicy.htm>.

## Social Media Resources from Vine

**Does Vine Provide Guidance on Getting Started?** Yes, Vine has a FAQ and help page. They can be found at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20170317>.

**Does Vine Allow Users to Customize Profile Pages?** No, Vine profile pages follow a standard format. The standard profile includes the account name, a profile picture, the number of followers and accounts followed by the user, and the most recent Vine posted. **Figure 3** shows the profile of the U.S. House Historians Office Vine account (@USHouseHistory).

**Figure 3. Vine Sample Screenshot**

**Source:** Screenshot from <https://vine.co/u/1005495931879227392>.

For more information on Member adoption of Twitter and Facebook, see CRS Report R43018, *Social Networking and Constituent Communications: Members’ Use of Twitter and Facebook During a Two-Month Period in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress*; and CRS Report R41066, *Social Networking and Constituent Communications: Member Use of Twitter During a Two-Month Period in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress*.

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