= Grand Theft Auto clone =

 Grand Theft Auto clone is a subgenre of open world action @-@ adventure video games , characterized by their likeness to the Grand Theft Auto series in either gameplay , or overall design . These types of open world games are games in which players may find and use a variety of vehicles and weapons while roaming freely in an open world setting . The objective of such games is to complete a sequence of core missions involving driving and shooting , but often side @-@ missions and minigames are added to improve replay value . The storylines of games in this subgenre typically have strong themes of crime and violence .
 The subgenre has its origins in open @-@ world action adventure games popularized in Europe (and particularly the United Kingdom) throughout the 1980s and 1990s . The release of Grand Theft Auto (1997) marked a major commercial success for open @-@ ended game design in North America , and featured a more marketable crime theme . But it was the popularity of its 3D sequel Grand Theft Auto III in 2001 that led to the widespread propagation of a more specific set of gameplay conventions consistent with a subgenre . The subgenre now includes many games from different developers all over the world where the player can control wide ranges of vehicles and weapons . The subgenre has evolved with greater levels of environmental detail and more realistic behaviors .
 Since calling a game a " clone " usually has a negative connotation , reviewers have come up with other names for the subgenre . Names such as " sandbox games " , however , are applied to a wider range of games that do not share key features of the Grand Theft Auto series .

= = Definition = =

 A Grand Theft Auto clone is a video game that falls within the genre popularized by the 2001 title Grand Theft Auto III , where players are given the ability to drive any vehicle or fire any weapon as they explore an open world . These games are sometimes treated as a 3D action @-@ adventure game , or third @-@ person shooter . They are noted for frequently bearing strong violent or criminal themes , though exceptions like American McGee Presents : Scrapland have copied its gameplay and structure with a Teen rating .

= = = Other terminology = = =

 Calling a game a " Grand Theft Auto clone " is sometimes considered unfair or insulting . This is because reviewers sometimes use this term to suggest that the " clone " is a mere imitation , which commonly occurs in the video game industry , designed for the sole purpose of capitalizing on the success of the Grand Theft Auto series . However , this term can also be used as a neutral description of a game , which can range from good to bad . Reviewers have used " Grand Theft Auto clone " to describe games that rest on their own merits , and do not necessarily dismiss the entire class of games as mere imitators .
 Games of this type are sometimes defined under the broader terminology " open world games " or " sandbox games " . However , many games that predate Grand Theft Auto III , such as Metroid from 1986 , are also called open world games . Conflictingly , games such as Grand Theft Auto III and Body Harvest are credited with inventing this genre more than a decade later . Furthermore , reviewers have stated that this genre does not include every game with a freely explorable world and that this genre is much more specific , thus excluding the free @-@ roaming titles Spider @-@ Man 2 and The Incredible Hulk : Ultimate Destruction from this class of games . The terminology is inconsistent , sometimes including any game with open level design , while other times focusing on a specific genre created at the turn of the century .
 Without clear classifications to describe the genre popularized by Grand Theft Auto , reviewers have created a number of alternate names for this genre . Some reviewers have focused on the pervasive criminal themes and content in the genre , using terminology such as " crime games " , " crime @-@ based action games " , and what CNN called the " gangsta genre " . Other journalists

have emphasized gameplay by describing the genre as " free roaming action adventure games " , " driving @-@ and @-@ shooting games " , and " driving action hybrids " .

= = Game design = =

= = = Driving and shooting = = =

Grand Theft Auto clones offer players the ability to steal and drive a number of vehicles . Games have included all kinds of vehicles , such as cars , helicopters , boats , jet @-@ skis , fixed @-@ wing aircraft , and military vehicles . Reviewers have compared these games based on the number of vehicles they offer , with greater choice resulting in better reviews . Players can also use vehicles as weapons , either by driving into enemies , or by damaging the vehicle until it explodes . Some games allow vehicles to perform stunts . Games in the genre thus incorporate elements of driving simulation games . Some games even allow players to customize their vehicles .

Players can engage in combat using range of weapons depending on the game setting , such as assault weapons , sniper rifles , explosives , rocket launchers , and close @-@ range melee weapons . As such , several reviewers have stated that games in this genre are partially third person shooters . Players can find weapons scattered throughout the game world , and may buy weapons in shops or take them from dead enemies . Virtually anyone in the game world can be attacked by the player . In many games , excessive violent behavior will provoke a reaction by police authorities , who the player may then choose to fight or evade . Players must also keep track of their health and ammunition in order to succeed in combat .

These games have employed a variety of aiming mechanisms , such as free look aiming or a " lock @-@ on " button . Several games have been criticized for difficult or burdensome controls when it comes to shooting , and thus video game designers have tried refine the aiming and shooting controls in these games .

= = = Open world and missions = = =

Grand Theft Auto clones allow players to freely explore the game world , which is typically on the scale of an entire city . Some games base their level design on real world cities , such as London , New York City , and Los Angeles . Players are usually able to navigate by vehicle or on foot . Some games put greater emphasis on leaping , climbing , and even swimming . Exploring the world is not just necessary to complete objectives , but also to gain valuable items , weapons , and vehicles . Different parts of the game world may be controlled by different enemy factions , who will attempt to stop the player in a variety of ways . However , more recent games in this genre allow players to acquire their own territory . The freedom of navigating a huge game world may be overwhelming or confusing for new players . Game designers have come up with a variety of navigational aids to solve this problem . A mini @-@ map feature is common , while Saints Row and Grand Theft Auto IV go so far as to offer a GPS service . Games without these navigation tools are sometimes criticized as confusing .

The player 's freedom to explore may be limited until they complete certain objectives and advance the game plot . Players must visit specific locations and complete specific missions in order to win the game , such as racing , tailing , couriering , robbing , stealing , shooting , assassinating , and driving to specific checkpoints . There may be multiple ways to complete these missions as the game environment is designed to facilitate shortcuts , experimentation , and creative ways to kill enemies . Completing a core mission will unlock further missions and advance the storyline , and if the player fails a mission they will be able to resume the game from before the mission began . In addition , these games usually offer optional side missions , which allow players to gain other rewards . These side missions improve the game 's replay value . These games are also known for incorporating numerous minigames into the game world , such as circuit races . Ultimately , this allows the player to follow or ignore the game 's storyline as they see fit .

= = History = =

= = = Origin = = =

Open @-@ world , 3D action @-@ adventure games existed for years prior to the release of any similar game from the Scottish developer DMA Design . Mercenary (1985) has been described as a major ancestor to the Grand Theft Auto series , because it featured an open world which the player could explore freely . The Terminator , released in 1990 , was a free @-@ form , open @-@ world game that set its action in a modern @-@ day city that extended for miles , and included the ability to fire at civilians and steal cars . This game was also among the first American @-@ developed games to feature these elements .

Hunter (1991) has been described as the first sandbox game featuring full 3D , third @-@ person graphics , thus making it an important precursor to the Grand Theft Auto series . The game consisted of a large , open world in which there were numerous possibilities to complete different missions . The character could travel on foot , or steal different vehicles such as cars , tanks , or even bicycles , boats , helicopters and hovercrafts . Moreover , Hunter also had many unique features such as day and night lighting , fuel modelling , a log book , aerial observation units , tank traps , land mines and computer @-@ controlled rocket batteries and tracer guns . It was also possible to ride a bicycle , swim , windsurf or even make a parachute jump from a helicopter .

DMA Design began pursuing open @-@ world game design with the first Grand Theft Auto , which allowed players to commandeer various automobiles and shoot various weapons within a mission @-@ based structure . Unlike later games in the series , and indeed many earlier influences , the first two GTA games were 2D . In 1998 , DMA moved many of these design concepts into a 3D world , with Body Harvest , a Nintendo 64 game developed by DMA Design (which eventually became Rockstar North when it was acquired by Rockstar Games) . This title featured an open world with nonlinear missions and side @-@ quests , as well as the ability to commandeer and drive a variety of vehicles . As such , it has been retroactively called " GTA in space " (despite the fact that the entire game takes place in various settings on earth) , and is credited with making Grand Theft Auto III possible . Dan Houser has also cited the 3D Mario and Zelda games on the Nintendo 64 as major influences . Another important influence came from the Driver series , which was created in 1999 , with its open city environments and being cited as the first driving game to allow the player to go anywhere in the map .

Grand Theft Auto III took the gameplay foundation of the first two Grand Theft Auto games and expanded it into a 3D world , and offered an unprecedented variety of minigames and side @-@ missions . The title was a much greater commercial success than its direct precursors , and its influence was profound . As such , Grand Theft Auto III is credited with popularizing this genre , let alone inventing it . Its release is sometimes treated as a revolutionary event in the history of video games , much like the release of Doom nearly a decade earlier . GamePro called it the most important game of all time , and claimed that every genre was influenced to rethink their conventional level design . IGN similarly praised it as one of the top ten most influential games of all time . Subsequent games that follow this formula of driving and shooting in a free @-@ roaming level have been called Grand Theft Auto clones .

Other critics , however , likened Grand Theft Auto III to The Legend of Zelda and Metroid , as well as Shenmue in particular , and noted how GTA III had combined elements from previous games and fused them together into a new immersive experience . For instance , radio stations had been implemented earlier in games such as Sega 's Out Run (1986) and Maxis ' SimCopter (1996) , open @-@ ended missions based on operating a taxi cab in a sandbox environment were the basis for Sega 's Crazy Taxi (1999) , the ability to kill non @-@ player characters dated back to action role @-@ playing games like Hydlide II (1985) , and Final Fantasy Adventure (1991) , and the way in which players run over pedestrians and get chased by police has been compared to Pac @-@ Man (1980) .

Recent history

Rockstar North developed Grand Theft Auto : Vice City in 2002 , which expanded on the open world concept by letting players explore the interior of more than sixty buildings . The game featured an expanded soundtrack and the voice talent of several Hollywood actors , including Ray Liotta . This set a new standard for the genre , making studio talent a pre @-@ requisite for success . Other game developers entered the field that year , with releases such as The Getaway . The Simpsons : Hit & Run in 2003 applied the concept to a cartoon world , while True Crime : Streets of LA reversed the Grand Theft Auto formula by putting the player in the role of a police officer . Even the Driver series , which influenced Grand Theft Auto III , began to follow this formula by combining driving and shooting in Driv3r . Some reviewers began warning parents of the growing number of games in this genre , due to the violent themes intended for mature audiences .

Ultimately , rival developers were unable to match the reception of the Grand Theft Auto series . Rockstar North released Grand Theft Auto : San Andreas in 2004 , which featured an open world on the scale of three distinct cities . The game also allowed players to customize the player @-@ character and vehicles , as well as compete for turf by fighting with rival gangs . The continued success of the Grand Theft Auto series led to successful spin @-@ offs , including Grand Theft Auto : Liberty City Stories in 2005 , Grand Theft Auto : Vice City Stories in 2006 , and the 2D Grand Theft Auto Advance for the Game Boy Advance handheld game console . A market analysis in early 2006 found that new games in this genre would have more difficulty than new first @-@ person shooters or racing games , and noted that that overall revenue for this genre declines during periods without a new Grand Theft Auto game . By 2006 , developers were producing fewer games in this space , estimated at half the number seen in 2005 . City Racing developed by EA Group and published by Gametop continues to be wildly popular GTA clone , despite the complete lack of storyline .

With the arrival of the seventh generation of video game consoles , the first " next @-@ gen " Grand Theft Auto clones were released in 2006 , beginning with Saints Row from 2006 and Crackdown from 2007 both introduced online multiplayer to the genre , a feature that had been requested by many fans . Crackdown attracted attention for being created by David Jones , the developer of the original Grand Theft Auto , and featured the ability to develop the player character 's superpowers in a semi @-@ futuristic setting . Meanwhile , The Godfather : The Game and Scarface : The World Is Yours entered the market in 2006 , and attempted to apply the Grand Theft Auto formula to popular movie franchises . Still , reviewers continued to measure these games against the standard set by the Grand Theft Auto series . Grand Theft Auto IV was released in April 2008 and featured a large , detailed environment , redefining gameplay and even adopted the GPS navigation system seen in Saints Row . The game broke numerous sales records , including the record for the fastest selling game in its first 24 hours . Since its inception , this genre has evolved to include larger settings , more missions , and a wider range of vehicles . In 2010 Rockstar Games published Red Dead Redemption , an open world Western themed game . On the day of Grand Theft Auto V ' s release on September 17 , 2013 , Volition released a free downloadable content pack for Saints Row IV titled " GATV " , purposely playing the similarity in the abbreviated titles to promote their game due to the confusion raised on various social networks .