

= Grand Theft Auto III =

Grand Theft Auto III is an open world action @-@ adventure video game developed by DMA Design and published by Rockstar Games . It was released on 22 October 2001 for the PlayStation 2 , on 20 May 2002 for Microsoft Windows , and on 31 October 2003 for the Xbox , and re @-@ released an anniversary version on mobile platforms in 2011 . It is the fifth title in the Grand Theft Auto series , and the first main entry since 1999 's Grand Theft Auto 2 . Set within the fictional Liberty City , based on New York City , the game follows Claude after he is left for dead and quickly becomes entangled in a world of gangs , crime and corruption .

The game is played from a third @-@ person perspective and its world is navigated on foot or by vehicle . The open world design lets players freely roam Liberty City , consisting of three main islands . Development was shared between DMA Design in Edinburgh and Rockstar in New York . Much of the development work constituted transforming popular series elements into a 3D world . The game was delayed following the September 11 attacks , to allow the team to change references and gameplay deemed inappropriate .

Upon release , the game received critical acclaim , with praise particularly directed at its concept and gameplay . However , the game also generated controversy , with criticism directed at the depiction of violence and sexual content . Grand Theft Auto III became the best @-@ selling video game of 2001 , and has sold over 17 million copies . Considered one of the most significant titles of the sixth generation of video games , and by many critics as one of the greatest video games of all time , it won year @-@ end accolades , including Game of the Year awards from several gaming publications . Since its release , it has received numerous ports to many gaming platforms . Its successor , Grand Theft Auto : Vice City , was released in October 2002 .

= = Gameplay = =

Grand Theft Auto III is an action @-@ adventure game played from a third @-@ person view . Players complete missions ? linear scenarios with set objectives ? to progress through the story . It is possible to have several active missions running at one time , as some missions require players to wait for further instructions or events . Outside of missions , players can freely roam the game 's open world , and have the ability to complete optional side missions . Liberty City is composed of three boroughs : Portland , Staunton Island , and Shoreside Vale ; the islands are unlocked to players as the story progresses .

Players may run , jump or use vehicles to navigate the game 's world . In combat , auto @-@ aim can be used as assistance against enemies . Should players take damage , their health meter can be fully regenerated through the use of health pick @-@ ups . Body armour can be used to absorb gunshots and explosive damage , but is used up in the process . When health is entirely depleted , gameplay stops , and players respawn at the nearest hospital , at the expense of losing all weapons and armour , and an amount of money .

If players commit crimes while playing , the game 's law enforcement agencies may respond as indicated by a " wanted " meter in the head @-@ up display (HUD) . On the meter , the displayed stars indicate the current wanted level (for example , at the maximum six @-@ star level , efforts by law enforcement to incapacitate players become very aggressive) . Law enforcement officers will search for players who leave the wanted vicinity . The wanted meter enters a cooldown mode and eventually recedes when players are hidden from the officers ' line of sight .

The game lets players control the mute criminal Claude . During the story , Claude meets various new characters from gangs . As players complete missions for different gangs , fellow gang members will often defend players , while rival gang members will recognise players and subsequently shoot on sight . While free roaming the game world , players may engage in activities such as a vigilante minigame , a fire fighting activity , and a taxi cab service . Completion of these activities grants players with context @-@ specific rewards ; for example , completing the vigilante mission allows players to bribe police after committing a crime .

Players use melee attacks , firearms and explosives to fight enemies . The firearms include

weapons such as the Micro Uzi , an M16 rifle and a flamethrower . The game 's three @-@ dimension environment allows a first @-@ person view while aiming with the sniper rifle and rocket launcher . In addition , the game 's combat was reworked to allow players to commit drive @-@ by shootings by facing sideways in a vehicle . The game gives players a wide variety of weapon options ? they can be purchased from local firearms dealers , found on the ground , retrieved from dead enemies , or found around the city .

= = Plot = =

While robbing a bank in Liberty City , ambitious criminal Claude is shot and betrayed by his girlfriend and accomplice Catalina (Cynthia Farrell) . Although he survives the wound , Claude is arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison . While being transported in a prison van , Claude and fellow prisoner 8 @-@ Ball (Guru) are inadvertently freed after an attack on the police convoy , and escape to a safehouse . 8 @-@ Ball later introduces Claude to the Leone Mafia crime family ; Sex Club 7 owner Luigi Goterelli (Joe Pantoliano) , Don Salvatore Leone (Frank Vincent) , his Capo Toni Cipriani (Michael Madsen) , and the Don 's son Joey Leone (Michael Rapaport) . During work for the family , Claude finds himself fighting the Colombians , who are being led by Catalina in proliferating a new drug . Meanwhile , Salvatore 's trophy wife Maria (Debi Mazar) begins to take a liking to Claude . Salvatore grows suspicious and betrays Claude into luring him to a death trap , but Maria saves him just in time and they both flee .

Claude then begins working for the city 's Yakuza and its leader Asuka Kasen (Lianna Pai) , Maria 's close friend , who has Claude assassinate Salvatore and get his revenge . This cuts off all of Claude 's ties with the Leone family , who are now against him . Claude 's work leads him to allying himself with other criminal sources , such as corrupt police detective Ray Machowski (Robert Loggia) , an enemy of the Cartel . Claude later saves him from Internal Affairs and the CIA by helping him flee to Vice City . Claude also meets charismatic media mogul Donald Love (Kyle MacLachlan) , who maintains a huge media front . In an effort to start a war between the Yakuza and Cartel , Claude and Love organise the death of Asuka 's brother Kenji Kasen (Les Mau) and blame the Cartel . Later , Love asks Claude to rescue a man who was kidnapped by the Cartel in the prison truck that Claude was in . While on an errand , Claude finally confronts Catalina , who narrowly escapes . Asuka abducts Catalina 's partner Miguel (Al Espinosa) , believing him to have knowledge of her brother 's death .

With the war with the Cartel intensifying , Asuka and Maria learn of Claude 's history with Catalina and order him to attack many Cartel operations . Eventually , his exploits attract the attention of Catalina . As a result , the Cartel kidnap Maria , murder Asuka and Miguel , and demand Claude to pay a \$ 500 @,@ 000 ransom in exchange for Maria 's release . When Claude confronts Catalina , she attempts to have him killed , but he escapes . In the resulting firefight , Catalina attempts to flee in a helicopter and makes a final attempt on Claude 's life . After killing the remaining Cartel members and rescuing Maria , Claude shoots down the helicopter , effectively killing Catalina . As they are leaving the scene , Maria complains to Claude about the kidnapping , particularly the state of her clothes and nails . During the credits , a gunshot is heard , and Maria 's voice is silenced .

= = Development = =

The core development team of Grand Theft Auto III consisted of about 23 people at DMA Design in Edinburgh , who worked closely with publisher Rockstar Games in New York . By early 2001 , the team had designed the city , cars , and some weapons . An online multiplayer mode was initially planned for the game , but was ultimately dropped due to time and resource limitations . Producer Leslie Benzies described Grand Theft Auto III as a " crime simulation game " . When porting the game to Microsoft Windows , the team delayed it from the PlayStation 2 release in order to ensure quality , citing issues with the simultaneous platform release of previous Grand Theft Auto games .

= = = Open world design = = =

Grand Theft Auto III is the first 3D game in the series , using Criterion Games ' RenderWare game engine . When designing the game , the development team expanded upon concepts introduced in the previous Grand Theft Auto games . Benzie stated that the intention was to recreate the " freedom and diversity " of the previous games in a " living , breathing 3D world " , using the power of the PlayStation 2 to do so . The console 's ability to use DVDs , an improvement over the PlayStation 's limit to CDs , allowed the team to store more data , such as animations , music and environments . Despite this , the team found it difficult to fit the game into 32 megabytes , due to the scale . The game 's size also created difficulties for the testers , due to the variety of options . Benzie felt that creating a living city was the " underlying principle " of the game 's concept during development . Executive producer Sam Houser felt that the game 's 3D element allowed the " chemistry of the team [to come] together perfectly for the first time " .

A major difficulty the team encountered was converting all game elements into a 3D world , including the sound and radio stations , as well as designing and voicing the non @-@ player characters , due to the amount that existed within the open world ; producer Dan Houser said that there was about 8 @, @ 000 lines of recorded dialogue in the game , while audio programmer Raymond Usher estimated about 18 @, @ 000 . The basic technical elements of the game began to work together in mid @-@ 2000 , with a carjacking mechanic prototype and stable streaming model . Streaming was initially intended to be reserved for music and map geometry , but other elements were eventually included when it became apparent to the team as more data was entered .

When designing the game world , the team initially created a " hybrid city " , which producer Dan Houser describes as " a post industrial Midwest slash east coast generic " city . Upon developing within this game world , the team realised that basing the design on a real location meant " you have a lot of things you can say about it " . As a result , the team redesigned Liberty City , which had been previously featured in Grand Theft Auto (1997) , basing it loosely on New York City . The city is broken into three islands : an industrial section representing Brooklyn and Queens , a commercial center resembling Manhattan , and suburbs similar to New Jersey . The islands unlock as the story progresses ; the team wanted players to " start out feeling poor and work to being richer " . Dan Houser describes Liberty City as a " hybrid of a generic American city " , including Chicago , Pittsburgh , Detroit , New York , and Philadelphia . He felt that the parallel realism of the world allowed the team to make more social commentary than previously . Sam Houser cited films and shows like Heat (1995) and The Sopranos (1999 ? 2007) as inspiration for the setting , and wanted to emulate them in the game . He also cited the influence of the The Legend of Zelda series (1986 ? present) and the film Goodfellas (1990) , describing Grand Theft Auto III as " a cross between a gangster movie and an RPG " .

= = = Story and characters = = =

The team developed the story and design simultaneously . " We use the story to expose the mechanics , and we use the mechanics to tell the story , " said Dan Houser . Houser found it difficult to create the narrative , as the game is so strongly focused on player freedom . He wanted the story to be more nuanced and interesting than the generic " rise and fall and rise again of a superhero bad guy " . The game 's script was also focused on mission objectives , attempting to implement high amounts of interactivity . Houser felt that each mission is " its own short story " , and part of an " overarching story " . Houser and co @-@ writer James Worrall drew influence from mob films , and the mafiosi featured in films by Martin Scorsese . When writing the story , Houser and Worrall regularly met with the designers , and filled a room with post @-@ it notes to reconstruct the story components to shape the game .

Many of the game characters were animated using motion capture , filmed at a rented studio at the Brooklyn Navy Yard , though this was limited by technical restraints . The character movement was also treated as being cinematic , though limited polygons heavily inhibited this . Animating non @-@ player characters entering and driving cars proved to be difficult for the team , due to the variety of vehicle designs . " It involved chaining together dozens of different animations and altering key

frames in code , " recalled software engineer Alan Campbell . The team used varying camera angles when animated the game 's cutscenes , in order to evoke different emotions . For the voice acting , the team wanted " natural , subtle performances " , which proved difficult as many of the actors " had in their head the idea that because video games are animated their performances needed to be animated " , explained motion capture director Navid Khonsari . The game 's playable protagonist is unnamed in the game , and his name is not officially revealed as Claude until his appearance in Grand Theft Auto : San Andreas (2004) . He is a silent protagonist , never speaking throughout his appearances . The team decided to make Claude silent primarily because it " did not seem like a major issue " , due to the other challenges faced during development , and also partly to allow players to identify with the character .

= = = Sound design = = =

Grand Theft Auto III features about three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half hours of in @-@ game radio material . For the music , the team sought a broad diversity , to recreate the real sensation of skipping through radio stations , reflecting the gangster movie culture invoked by the game . The team used the talk radio stations to add character to the city , and provide a " unique take on American life " ; Sam Houser described it as " a very iconoclastic look at America " . The team used real DJs to portray those on the radio . In doing so , the team wrote unusual dialogue for the DJs , seeking the effect of " high production values and absurd content " . Music director Craig Conner assembled the assets of the radio station ? music , advertisements , DJ dialogue , station imaging .

= = = Cuts , changes , and the 9 / 11 effect = = =

Prior to the initial release , several modifications were made to the game . While changes are frequent during game development , the changes in Grand Theft Auto III were noted to be around the time of the September 11 , 2001 attacks , which led to speculation that some changes were motivated by the attacks . On September 19 , 2001 , Rockstar delayed the game 's release by three weeks , citing the attacks as an influencing factor in the delay . " Everyone had someone who had an uncle or brother [who was impacted by the attack] " , said Paul Eibeler , then @-@ president of distributor Take @-@ Two Interactive .

One of the changes made shortly after 9 / 11 was the colour scheme of the police cars ; the original colour scheme of blue with white stripes specifically resembled that of the New York City Police Department . It was changed to a generic black @-@ and @-@ white design common among several police departments in the United States , such as Los Angeles and San Francisco . Other changes include altering the flight path of a plane to avoid appearing to fly into or behind a skyscraper , removing a mission referencing terrorists , as well as some changes to pedestrian dialogue and talk radio .

Another cut to the game is the character of Darkel , a revolutionary urchin who vowed to bring down the city 's economy . When references to Darkel were found in the game 's code , speculation arose that the character was related to 9 / 11 , however Dan Houser explained that the character had been cut " months before [release] " . There are also reports and previews stating that the game featured school children as pedestrians prior to release , although Rockstar has dismissed such rumours as " nonsense " .

Rockstar stated that the game was " about 1 % different " after 9 / 11 , and that the biggest change was the cover art . They felt that the original cover , which was ultimately released as the cover in Europe , felt " too raw " after 9 / 11 , and was changed into what became the " signature style " of the series . Sam Houser claims that the cover was designed in an evening , and was instantly preferred over the original cover . The cover was inspired by the movie posters for 1960s films , such as The Thomas Crown Affair (1968) .

= = Critical reception = =

= = = Initial release = = =

Grand Theft Auto III was released to critical acclaim . Metacritic calculated an average score of 97 out of 100 , indicating " universal acclaim " , based on 56 reviews . It is the sixth @-@ highest rated game on Metacritic , tied with a number of others . Reviewers liked the game 's sound , gameplay , and open world design , though some criticism was directed at the controls . Tom Bramwell of Eurogamer called Grand Theft Auto III " a luscious , sprawling epic " , and Official PlayStation Magazine named it " the most innovative , outlandish , brilliant video game " . GameSpot 's Jeff Gerstmann described the game as " an incredible experience that shouldn 't be missed by anyone " ; IGN 's Doug Perry named it " one of the best titles of the year , on PlayStation 2 , or on any system " .

Many reviewers found the 3D graphics a welcoming change from the 2D of the previous games . GameSpot 's Gerstmann particularly praised the character and vehicle models , and the overall texture quality of the city . GameSpy 's Andrei Alupului found the graphics " really rather impressive " , describing the car models as " greatly improved " over those in Midnight Club . Eurogamer 's Bramwell considered the graphics " generally pleasant to look at " , but considered it inferior to games like Gran Turismo 3 and Ico . Justin Leeper of Game Informer described game world as " stunning in scope and detail " , and Perry of IGN found it to be " on a scale that 's truly epic " . Game Revolution 's Ben Silverman called the city a " technological marvel ... that captures the essence of gritty city life in amazing detail " .

IGN 's Perry considered the game 's sound " unbelievably and meticulously delivered " , particularly praising the soundtrack , voice acting and sound design , stating that it was " really approached as if it were done for a movie " . Eurogamer 's Bramwell echoed similar remarks , describing the city sounds as " perfect " and the soundtrack as " monstrous " . The sound was described as " terrific " by GameSpot 's Gerstmann and Game Revolution 's Silverman , and 1UP.com appreciated the subtlety of the in @-@ game radio stations . AllGame 's Scott Alan Marriott named the music " the true star " of the game .

Reviewers considered the style of the game 's missions to be a welcoming departure from those in previous games . 1UP.com described the missions as " wonderfully creative " , while GamesMaster appreciated the diversity . IGN 's Perry similarly appreciated the variety and scale of the missions , and praised the amount of available side missions . GameSpy 's Alupului described the game 's story as " well @-@ paced " and " coherent " , featuring plot elements akin to a mob film . GameSpot 's Gerstmann found the missions entertaining and challenging , but noted that exploring the game world also offers " a great deal of fun " to players .

Reactions to the game 's controls were mixed . Alupului of GameSpy found the game " controls beautifully " , both while driving and on @-@ foot . Game Revolution 's Silverman identified the control issues as the game 's only flaw , although praised the responsiveness of the driving mechanics . Matt Helgeson of Game Informer similarly described the driving as " great " , but noted " clunky " combat . GamePro 's Four @-@ Eyed Dragon found the cars simple to manoeuvre . Edge described the game 's combat as " an awkward system that stymies play " . 1UP.com noted particular flaws in the targeting system , explaining that it " often focuses on the wrong guy " .

= = = Microsoft Windows version = = =

When Grand Theft Auto III was released to Microsoft Windows in May 2002 , it received similar critical acclaim . Metacritic calculated an average score of 93 out of 100 , indicating " universal acclaim " , based on 20 reviews . It was the highest @-@ rated Windows game on Metacritic in 2002 . Reviewers liked the visual enhancements and control improvements , but criticised the port for its demanding system requirements .

The in @-@ game features and controls in the port were generally well received . IGN 's Tal Blevins praised the higher precision of the mouse controls , finding the aiming mechanic more precise . GameSpot 's Erik Wolpaw also commended the mouse controls , but disapproved the replay system

, particularly due to the lack of options with timing and camera controls . Extended Play 's Andrew Bub appreciated the addition of a custom radio station , as well as the availability of custom skins . Daniel Morris of PC Gamer praised the gameplay tweaks provided by the port , but criticised the lack of major additional features , such as an overhead map of the in @-@ game city .

The port 's visuals received a positive response from reviewers . GameSpot 's Wolpaw praised the port 's reworked textures , but criticised the frequent popup , and the advanced system requirements . IGN 's Blevins similarly criticised the necessity of an advanced system for stable play , but ultimately felt that the port looks " a bit nicer " than the original game . GameSpy 's Sal Accardo felt that the port " looks much sharper " than the PlayStation 2 version , though noted some " choppy " animations . Extended Play 's Bub mentioned that the advanced settings resulted in slowdown and crashes . Game Informer 's Matt Helgeson noticed little difference between the visuals of the original and the port .

= = = Mobile version = = =

When Grand Theft Auto III was released to mobile devices in December 2011 , it received generally positive reviews . Metacritic calculated an average score of 80 out of 100 , based on 26 reviews . Reviewers liked the enhanced visuals , but criticism was directed at the touchscreen controls .

The port 's visuals were well received . IGN 's Peter Eykemans commended the smoother textures , especially condensed on a mobile screen , while Destructoid 's Jim Sterling noted improvements in the character and vehicle models . Mark Walton of GameSpot wrote that the game runs well on high @-@ end devices like the Motorola Xoom and Samsung Galaxy S II , but noticed significant frame rate and texture issues on the Xperia Play . Pocket Gamer 's Mark Brown identified the game 's short draw distance leading to sudden popup , although still found that the models and textures " have been given a tune @-@ up " in the port .

The touchscreen controls received a mixed response . Eurogamer 's Dan Whitehead appreciated the driving mechanics , but felt that moving on @-@ foot is " a flaky way of navigating " the world , and criticised the " clumsy " shooting mechanics . IGN 's Eykemans felt that the controls " make half the experience frustrating " , and Destructoid 's Sterling described them as " by far the biggest barrier toward enjoying " the port . Brown of Pocket Gamer found that the touchscreen " hasn 't hindered [the game] too drastically " , commending simple movement and " effortless " driving mechanics . Some critics identified better controls upon the use of external gamepads , but felt that they hinder the game 's portability .

= = Commercial performance = =

= = = Sales = = =

Grand Theft Auto III was the highest @-@ selling game of 2001 in the United States , selling over two million units by February 2002 . The game was also the second best @-@ selling game of 2002 , behind only its sequel . Take @-@ Two stock significantly increased following the game 's launch , and the game was included in PlayStation 's Greatest Hits selection . In the United States , the game had sold 5 @.@ 35 million units by June 2004 , and 6 @.@ 55 million units in the United States by December 2007 . In Japan , Grand Theft Auto III sold about 120 @,@ 000 copies in its first week , and over 350 @,@ 000 by January 2008 . The game earned a " Diamond " award in the United Kingdom , indicating over one million sales ; it was the first game to achieve this milestone in the region . By March 2008 , the game had sold 14 @.@ 5 million units worldwide .

= = = Accolades = = =

Grand Theft Auto III received multiple nominations and awards from gaming publications . It was awarded Game of the Year at the Game Developers Choice Awards , and from GameSpot and

GameSpy . It was named the Best PlayStation 2 Game by Game Revolution , GameSpot , GameSpy and IGN . It also won Best Action Game from Game Revolution , GameSpot , and IGN , and Most Innovative from GameSpot , as well as Excellence in Game Design at the Game Developers Choice Awards . GameSpy also awarded the game Most Offensive , Best Use of Radio , and tied for Best Artificial Intelligence .

= = Controversies = =

Prior to and since the release of Grand Theft Auto III , the game generated several controversies . GameSpy awarded Grand Theft Auto III with Most Offensive Game of the Year , calling it " absolutely reprehensible " . They wrote that the game rewards players for " causing mayhem " and " killing innocent people by the dozen " , ultimately questioning its appropriateness within the industry . The notoriety of Grand Theft Auto III resulted in Wal @-@ Mart 's decision to check the identification of purchasers who appeared to be under the age of 17 , when purchasing mature titles . In an essay , assistant professor Shira Chess identified the lack of conclusion to player violence , due to the ability to respawn upon death or incarceration , and found that it denies the " reality of mortality and simultaneously [forces] it on players " . When speaking about the game 's depiction of violence , producer Leslie Benzies claims that is intended as comedic , and that the game is " not meant to be taken seriously " . Producer Dan Houser stated that the team was conscious of the offence that the game would attract , but " never marketed it in a way that exploited that " .

The game allows players to commit sexual activities with prostitutes , and murder them to reclaim the payment . This was met with widespread controversy . The game also received controversy for its depiction of crime , and allowing violence against police officers . Psychologist David Walsh of the National Institute on Media and the Family stated that the game " glamorizes antisocial and criminal activity " , and that " the purpose of the game is to perpetrate crime " . In response , Kotaku writer Owen Good wrote that the game does not reward players for " proficiency at crime , no matter how much it is accused of doing so " . Joanna Weiss of The Boston Globe noted the " adrenaline " that players feel when committing crimes in the game , excusing the game 's violence due to its mature classification . The National Organization for Women spoke out against the game in January 2002 , asking Rockstar and Take @-@ Two to withdraw the game from sale as it " encourages violence and the degradation of women " . Matt Richtel of The New York Times wrote that the activities within the game " crossed the line into bad taste " .

Grand Theft Auto III was initially released in Australia with an MA15 + classification . After re @-@ reviewing the game , the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) banned it , due to its depiction of sexual content and violence to prostitutes . This prompted distributor Take @-@ Two Interactive to appeal to the OFLC , who reaffirmed the banned status on December 11 , 2001 , after reanalysing the game and seeking the professional opinion of a forensic psychologist . This prompted Take @-@ Two to recall the game in Australia , and Rockstar to make appropriate changes to the game ; a modified version was re @-@ released with an MA15 + classification in January 2002 , removing all instances of sexual acts with prostitutes .

On 25 June 2003 , teenage stepbrothers William and Josh Buckner shot and killed Aaron Hamel and Kimberly Bede . In statements to investigators , the perpetrators claimed their actions were inspired by Grand Theft Auto III . In response , on 20 October 2003 , the families of Hamel and Bede filed a US \$ 246 million lawsuit against Rockstar Games , Take @-@ Two Interactive , Sony Computer Entertainment and Wal @-@ Mart . Rockstar and Take @-@ Two filed for dismissal of the lawsuit , stating in United States district court on 29 October 2003 that the " ideas and concepts " , and the " purported psychological effects " of the perpetrators , are protected by the First Amendment 's free @-@ speech clause . Jack Thompson , the lawyer representing the victims , denied Rockstar 's claims , and attempted to move the lawsuit into a state court for consideration under Tennessee 's consumer protection act .

= = Legacy = =

Grand Theft Auto III has been frequently included among the greatest video games of all time . In 2007 , GamePro called Grand Theft Auto III the most important video game of all @-@ time , explaining that the " game 's open @-@ ended gameplay elements have revolutionized the way all video games are made " . Similarly , IGN ranked the game among the Top 10 Most Influential Games , and GameSpot listed among the greatest games of all time . In 2009 , Game Informer wrote that Grand Theft Auto III " changed the gaming landscape forever with its immersive open world sandbox " , and in 2016 GamesRadar named it " the most important game of the decade " . In November 2012 , Time named it one of the 100 greatest video games of all time .

Grand Theft Auto III is considered to have a leading role in the popularisation of sandbox games , inspiring those such as True Crime (2003 ? 05) , Saints Row (2006 ? present) and Crackdown (2007) . The term " Grand Theft Auto clone " is frequently used to describe subsequent video games released with similar open @-@ ended gameplay as Grand Theft Auto III . While previous video games used open world design , including earlier Grand Theft Auto games , Grand Theft Auto III took this gameplay foundation and expanded it into a 3D world , offering an unprecedented variety of minigames and side @-@ missions . Due to the greater success of the game over its predecessors , it is credited with popularising the open @-@ world genre ; Dan Houser felt that the game made it " one of the most vibrant genres today " .

The game also led the trend of mature video games ; Dan Houser felt that it allowed other developers to create violent shooters . Hal Halpin , president of the Entertainment Consumers Association , described Grand Theft Auto III as the " lightning rod for the violence @-@ in @-@ games debate " . Metro 's Roger Hargreaves wrote that it " emboldened a whole new wave of games that were ... fixated with violence , gang culture " . Greg Ford of Electronic Gaming Monthly felt that the game allowed the medium to handle mature subject matter in a more serious manner than previously perceived , and noted the improvement of video game classification as a result of the game 's controversy .

Following the game 's success , Rockstar developed further titles in the series . Vice City and San Andreas are set in their titular locations in 1986 and 1992 , respectively . Grand Theft Auto Advance (2004) is set in Liberty City roughly one year before the events of Grand Theft Auto III . Grand Theft Auto : Liberty City Stories (2005) takes place three years before the events of Grand Theft Auto III in the same rendition of Liberty City . A completely redesigned version of the city was later used in Grand Theft Auto IV (2008) , The Lost and Damned (2009) , The Ballad of Gay Tony (2009) and Chinatown Wars (2009) .

= = = Ports and remakes = = =

Grand Theft Auto III was released on 21 May 2002 for Microsoft Windows , supporting higher screen resolutions and draw distance , and featuring more detailed textures . The game was planned to release on the Nintendo GameCube and Xbox , but the former was later cancelled . For its release on the Xbox in December 2003 , Grand Theft Auto III was bundled with its sequel Vice City in a compilation titled Grand Theft Auto : Double Pack . The Xbox port features custom soundtrack support as well as improved audio , polygon models , and reflections over the previous ports . Double Pack was later bundled with San Andreas in a compilation titled Grand Theft Auto : The Trilogy , released in October 2005 . The Trilogy was also released for OS X on 12 November 2010 . For the game 's tenth anniversary in December 2011 , War Drum Studios ported Grand Theft Auto III to several iOS and Android devices . The port is almost identical to the Windows version of the game , in addition to enhanced textures and models and touchscreen controls . A PlayStation 3 version of Grand Theft Auto III was released on 25 September 2012 via the PlayStation Network . The original PlayStation 2 version of the game was released for the PlayStation 4 on 4 December 2015 .