

Jacked - Grand Theft Audio

Written by Westside ID233
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Less than a week before its release, the wildly anticipated crime game has itself been stolen and republished on the Internet.

Less than a week after a pirated version of Halo 2 began appearing on the Web, another of the year's most sought after games has been stolen. Ironically, it also happens to be a game titled after a larcenous act itself. That's right. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas has become the latest victim of piracy, with illegal copies of the game, its manual, and its cover appearing on various Web sites.

Late today, Rockstar issued a statement on this latest in a series of unfortunate events. "The proper authorities are investigating the theft and are continuing to investigate all possible leads to ensure there is no further dissemination of our creative content," read the statement. "Downloading, possession and distribution of Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, including making the game available on the internet, is theft." Then came this warning from the company: "We take the theft of our intellectual property very seriously and we are and will continue to diligently and aggressively pursue this matter."

For those wishing to help track down the San Andreas thieves, Rockstar also offered the following advice: "If anyone finds information on websites with links to unauthorized downloads, information, scans or videos, please contact us at piracy@rockstargames.com."

Rockstar officials also emphasized the fact that the theft would not affect Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" release plans. The game is due in the US next Tuesday, October 26, and in Europe next Friday, October 29. However, it is already clear that with four of the year's top games--GTA: San Andreas, Halo 2, Doom 3, and Half-Life 2---being posted online before their official releases, piracy is becoming an increasingly common and serious problem for both gamers and the games industry.

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