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## Canis Canem Edit - PS2

Is the game really as bad as some would believe?

by Stuart Miles published on 3 November 2006

Courting controversy like it's going out of fashion, Canis Canem Edit, or otherwise known as Bully, is the latest title from the makers of Grand Theft Auto.

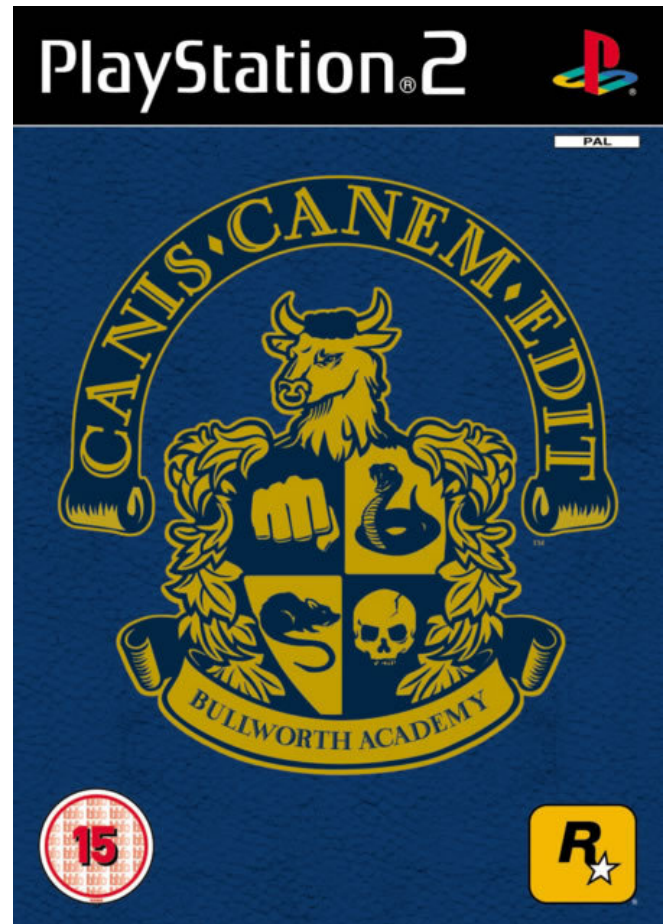
This time, instead of stealing cars it's bullying kids, feeding the "all video games are evil" supporters' cause even further. So is the game really as bad as some would believe; should it really be banned? Pocket-lint checked it out.

The story follows expelled kid Jimmy Hopkins as he heads off to a boarding school for troublemakers to learn some manners and respect. Making you choose what is right and wrong, the game is based around choosing between friends and rivalries while all the time keeping to school rules.

Based on the same gaming structure as Grand Theft Auto you are given the option to free roam or complete mini tasks, which just like GTA earn you kudos and prizes. Kudos involves gaining popularity with certain group in the school from the old clichés like Nerds, Prepies and Goths or merely gaining new kit such as a slingshot.

In amongst this is the daily humdrum of school life like going to lessons and making sure you're back in the dorm before lights out. The school lessons, although annoying are small puzzles that if passed do open up extra skill sets. Doing well at chemistry for example gives you access to firecrackers while gym allows you to hone and learn new fighting skills.

And fighting is something that you'll have to do a lot of, either defending yourself or merely picking on others that you feel are "good for a beating". Just as in GTA there are rules and at school, rather than cops and the army chasing you down, it's prefects and the headmaster who are likely to



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bust you if you step out of line. Anything from bunking lessons to getting into a fight is worthy of gaining notoriety and you've got to make sure all your stunts are done out of sight.

Of course just like speeding away from the cops you can do the same with the prefects (although it's a lot harder as you are on foot) and instead of getting a new paint job to lose them, here it's a case of hiding in a rubbish bin instead.

## VERDICT

We've got mixed feelings about Canis Canem Edit, which means dog eat dog by the way. On the one hand it's a very good game that has lots going for it (it's GTA with a different shell after all). The graphics, for the PlayStation 2 are top notch and the gang affiliation system as in GTA are more role-playing than pick up and play.

But, and here is the big but, the moral issues for us are just too much. As someone who was bullied at school, the subject matter is just too close to home.

While the game's makers could say there is always a choice, chances are kids are simply going to opt for the "beat the crap out of them route" rather than the "sorry, here's all my pocket money" option and our fear is that this mentally could easily transfer to the playground.

"But you've rated GTA so highly in the past before", I hear you cry. We have, but I think that is because the notion of car jacking is so far removed from the average 15 year-old's life that it's impossible to easily repeat. Here all you have to do is turn up at school the next day and try out the moves.

Normally when a game courts so much controversy it's to hide the fact that deep down inside, the game isn't very good. In fact most of the games banned in the UK when it actually comes to playing them are very disappointing. Canis Canem Edit causes a dilemma, why?

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Role playing game set in a school

### Good

Graphics, gameplay, mini tasks, character interaction

### Bad

Moral question of whether it should be allowed

### Verdict

We've got mixed feelings about Canis Canem Edit, it's very good but the moral dilemma is too close to home

**Price** £35

**Our score**

**7/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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Because it is actually a good game.

Had this been set in a magical world with elves and dwarves we would be praising it and crying its name on high. But the truth is, is that it's not and for that reason its not one we can recommend with a clear conscience.

Not one for the impressionable.