

Let the force be with you on DVD in Sept.

By MICHAEL GILTZ

PUT down that light saber and pick up a credit card: The "Star Wars" trilogy is finally coming to DVD Sept. 21.

Fans have long been clamoring for DVD versions of the trilogy, the last holdouts from the top 200 grossing films of all time to be scheduled for release on DVD.

"Star Wars" creator George Lucas has finally relented, after insisting the three movies wouldn't be released until the final

"Star Wars" hits theaters in May 2005.

The set (details like pricing are still unavailable) will include four DVDs, with the fourth disc containing a brand-new two-hour documentary.

The DVDs, which are certain to be blockbusters, are also certain to be controversial: Despite pleas from "Star Wars" fanatics all over the world, these DVDs will not contain the original theatrical version of the movies.

Instead, the DVDs will include the

much-debated versions director Lucas released in the '90s with new digital effects and plot twists that softened the character of Han Solo — even though DVD makes it easy to offer both the original and director's cut of a movie.

It's simply a matter of an artist's right, says Jim Ward, a Lucasfilm vice president and the executive producer of the set.

"We realize there's a lot of debate out there," says Ward. "But this is not a democracy. We love our fans, but this is

about art and filmmaking. [George] has decided that the sole version he wants available is this one."

The original "Star Wars" from 1977 is the second-highest-grossing movie of all time in the U.S. (behind "Titanic"), and all three "Star Wars" movies in the trilogy still rank in the Top 20.

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