Tenet will be released internationally first because the US is a mess

Christopher Nolan's *Tenet* will skip the United States for its initial release because of ongoing safety concerns surrounding the pandemic. It will instead roll out to several international territories weeks before the US gets it.

Warner Bros. is gearing up to release *Tenet* in 70 international territories, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United Kingdom on August 26th, according to a press release. *Tenet* will then roll out into select theaters in the United States beginning September 3rd. The studio does not have plans currently to release *Tenet* in China right now, *Variety* reported.

Tenet's staggered release is something executives talked about last week during AT&T's earnings call, but it's not an ideal situation. Releasing the film internationally in markets where there aren't as many coronavirus cases will hopefully boost box office revenue for the studio, especially without a national opening in the United States. It also remains unclear which select cities in the US are set to receive the film, but hotspots like Los Angeles likely won't. Unlike other countries around the world that have flattened the curve and slowed the spread of COVID-19, the United States is seeing new cases peak in several states every day. Some states have refused to allow theaters to open because of growing cases and ongoing concerns.

Warner Bros.' decision to release *Tenet* on a city-by-city

basis in the United States just goes to show how desperate Warner Bros. is to get the movie out. John Stankey, CEO of Warner Bros. parent company AT&T, previously told CNBC that *Tenet* wasn't the type of movie that could be released city by city, but that's the new situation the company has found itself in. From Warner Bros.' perspective, it's understandable; *Tenet* is a $200 million movie, and there's ongoing pressure from Nolan to make *Tenet* the movie that sees people return to theaters.

The company has struggled to figure out what to do with its summer blockbuster. *Tenet* was delayed three times previously as Warner Bros. and Disney played a game of release date chicken with their two biggest films of the summer – *Tenet* and *Mulan*. Some critics called for both studios to delay their films into 2021, at a time that made more sense for filmgoers but the studios are trying to figure out how to make any kind of revenue.

For some movies, that means releasing films as digital releases. Warner Bros. moved its animated *Scooby-Doo* movie to an on-demand rental title before it landed on WarnerMedia's streaming service, HBO Max, for example. Other studios like Disney have taken some of its highly anticipated theatrical titles, like *Hamilton*, and moved it exclusively to Disney Plus.

Stankey told analysts on last week's earnings call that while some movies make more sense to take off the calendar and go straight to home video, movies like *Tenet* and *Wonder Woman 1984* do not.

"Do I think there can be some things that we built for theatrical release that migrates into a [streaming] construct? Sure," Stankey said. "Is It going to happen on a movie like *Tenet* or *Wonder Woman 1984*? I would be very surprised… actually, I can assure you on *Tenet* that's not going to be the case."

Of course, Warner Bros. could delay *Tenet* again. That’s the main thing to take away from this never-ending game of release date musical chairs. Nothing is ever certain.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/27/21340447/tenet-release-date-united-states-international-delay-theaters-nolan