

You've got to be kidding, surely?

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[Indigostarfish.com](#) runs a mail order fulfilment business from Jersey. Of their activities [they say](#):

You may also know the name Indigo Starfish from our long standing relationship with Amazon. Indigo Starfish is the preferred merchant for the supply, on Amazon, of CD's and DVD's. Whether you realise it or not - it is likely that the CD or DVD you ordered on the Amazon website came from Indigo Starfish.

That's probably because Amazon can't get a licence to ship CDs and DVDs VAT free out of Jersey because the UK has tried to get Jersey to stamp down on the trade because , given it costs the UK more than £100 million a year at least in tax lost it's considered somewhat abusive. Indigostarfish has such a licence though — so problem solved for Amazon, and as it [says on its site](#):

Indigostarfish.com is an independent Jersey-based merchant offering to supply goods to UK customers via the Amazon.co.uk website. Orders placed with Indigostarfish.com are subject to the [Indigostarfish.com Terms & Conditions](#).

Note: Each item ordered from our Preferred Merchant, Indigostarfish.com, will be packed and dispatched separately. As items are charged for at the time of dispatch, orders for multiple items may result in multiple charges on your payment card within a short period of time. If we notify you that we are having difficulty processing payment for an order for multiple items from Indigostarfish.com, please contact your card provider as they may have blocked your card as a security precaution following multiple authorisation requests.

Import Duty and VAT

* Indigostarfish.com prices do not include VAT because: (a) the State of Jersey does not charge VAT on products purchased in Jersey; and (b) when products are imported into the UK, VAT is usually payable in the UK by the importer of record (the customer is considered the importer of record in respect of items purchased from Jersey). However, there are special tax and customs regulations that exempt personal imports of 'low

value' goods (goods with a value below £18) from import VAT. You can find further information regarding the VAT exemption [here](#). **When ordering an item from Jersey, you are acting as the importer of record and must comply with all laws and regulations of the UK. To the extent your purchase does not qualify for the low-value exemption from import VAT, you may be liable for import VAT at the time of delivery.**

* For more information about the VAT relief please read HM Customs and Excise guide to [Shopping on the Internet](#).

All very convenient, eh? Legal, but pretty aggressive and highly artificial tax avoidance all the same, and I really don't think anyone could dispute the fact.

I have, of course, [written about this many terms before](#). But then I had the IndigoStarfish.com [corporate social responsibility web site](#) drawn to my attention. It's ridiculous. Take these statements:

Corporate Social Responsibility

As a responsible retailer, we believe that the long-term future of the group is best served by respecting the interests of all our stakeholders: Customers, suppliers and the wider community. We look actively for opportunities to improve the environment and to contribute to the wellbeing of the communities in which we trade.

So putting all the competition on the UK mainland out of business using a VAT avoidance scheme is "respecting the interests of the wider community" and "contributing to the well being of the communities in which we trade"? I don't think so.

Environment
We will take all reasonable steps to manage our operations so as to minimise our environmental impact and to promote good environmental practice. We will review regularly our business practices and performance to identify how we can improve our energy efficiency, minimise packaging and reduce water usage, waste disposal and air emissions.

What like sending CDs all the way to Jersey and then back again in individual jiffy bags to avoid VAT; is respecting environment? Please pull the other one.

Relationships
We will conduct our business relationships with integrity and courtesy, and honour our trading commitments. Our aim is to build long-term relationships with our suppliers and provide support for small, local, specialist producers.

So seeking to undermine tax revenues in the state in which our customers live is acting with integrity? It's legal, of course. But let's not for a minute pretend legality is the same as integrity. And where in this statement is the obligation to build a good relationship with the stakeholder called the government considered? Nowhere that I can

see.

Communities

We will build relationships with our customers, suppliers and the local communities we are part of by encouraging our Stakeholders to consider the needs of others and involve themselves in public service. We will obtain a wide range of views on our social and environmental policies and performance.

You mean avoiding VAT which funds public services helps communities? It's an interesting logic.

You really do have to wonder who wrote this twaddle. Because to any objective observer who knows the basis on which this company trades that is what it seems to be. But is indigostarfish.com want to respond I'd be happy to publish anything they'd like to say, subject to my right to reply.