

Aircraft carrier Ireland - the place from which compani...

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Sometimes I make a quote to the press I just know they'll use. Not always, of course. Not even often, maybe. But some work.

I was talking to [Eric Pfanner of the New York Times last week when I suggested this line](#):

Google is saying, 'We just float around freely above this useful aircraft carrier, Ireland'

I followed up with a comment on France's attack on Google's tax affairs:

What France is saying is, 'We don't think you float around over Ireland, we think you are in France.'

I think the metaphor works. What these companies are doing is exploiting the rules on international tax established by the OECD (with the advice, it has to be said, of a great many representatives of large companies who dominate their "expert panels") to seek to float free above national tax systems, and Ireland is the launch pad for those attacks.

We're only just becoming aware of this here, but not so in France, where as the New York Times reports:

In France, tax collectors have gone further. Amazon says it has received a bill from France for taxes and penalties related to the "allocation of income between foreign jurisdictions" from 2006 through 2010. Other companies, including Google, are also reportedly in the French authorities' sights.

"Even if the Internet is a zone of freedom, it shouldn't be a lawless zone," Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, a spokeswoman for the French government, said last week. "Fiscal rules should be able to be applied to those activities as well."

There are intensive discussions on Google's affairs to. Amazon has had a bill, for \$252 million. That's the French way of doing things. It's time it was ours too.