The Inspector calls on eBay

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However, the Government is increasingly concerned that the sheer size of eBay means the Revenue is losing millions of pounds in tax. "Anybody buying or selling on eBay needs to be aware of what their tax responsibilities are," Richard Ambrose (eBay's UK category manager) maintains. "But we are not in a position to enforce it . . . although we can and do co-operate with outside bodies."

For the British eBayers who have made secret tax-free profits, the time when they can sleep peacefully at night is rapidly running out.