

It's Not That Easy Being A Monolithic, Multinational Search Engine

By: Jack Greiner on September 28, 2010 on graydon.law

[Here's a piece from the Sydney Morning Herald](#) about Google's recent legal troubles in France. It seems that a French citizen sued Google for slander because the words "rapist", "rape" and "Satanist" popped up when his name was entered into Google searches. Apparently the fellow had been convicted of corrupting a minor and been sentenced to three years in jail, but because he was appealing the conviction, he was still considered innocent. The fact that Google merely made the content (created by third parties) available did not sway the jury. Two things. One, it couldn't happen here. The federal Communications Decency Act explicitly provides that an interactive service provider is not the publisher of third party content. Two, it does illustrate how different countries view defamation. We have so much freedom in the area of speech it's easy to take it for granted. But if you do business internationally, that's probably not a real good business strategy.