



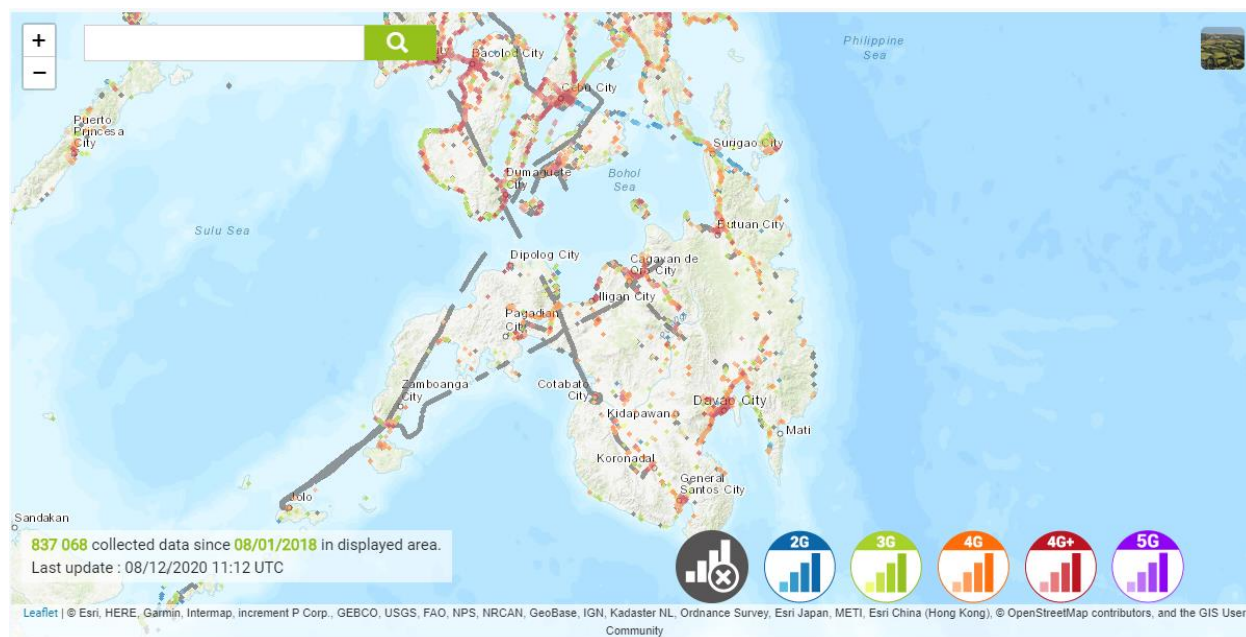
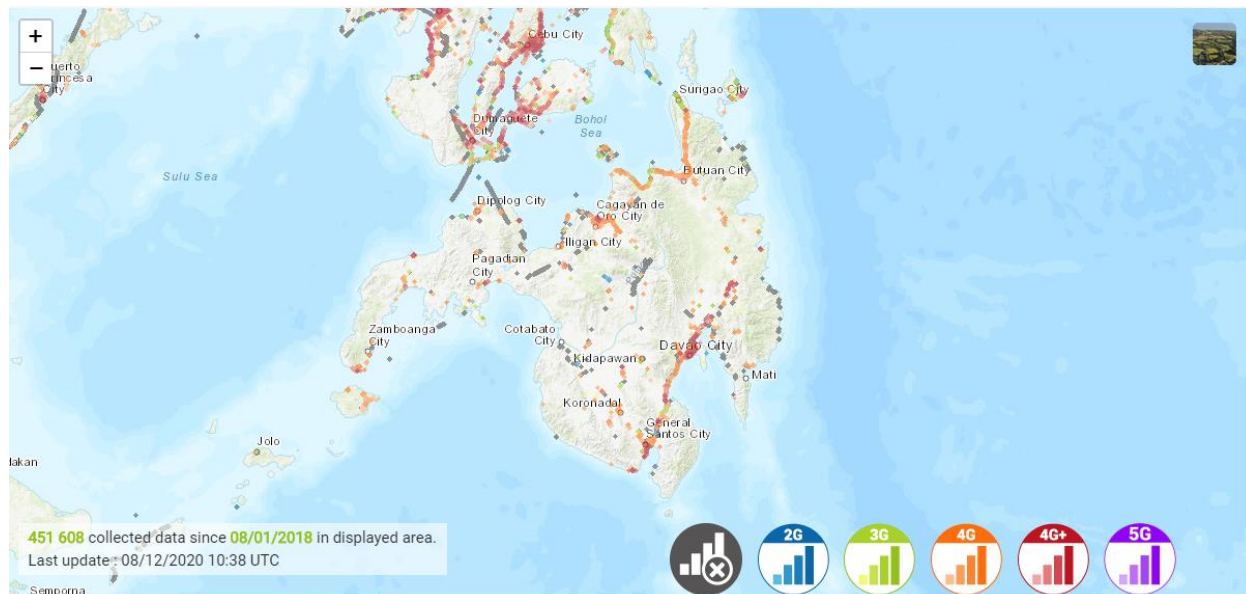
The Internet Situation in Mindanao

As wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. raises its network services in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, residents in Mamasapano in Maguindanao gained access to high-speed LTE connectivity. Other towns and their capital also have access to the said network rollout like Jolo in Sulu, Bongao in Tawi-Tawi, Shariff Aguak in Maguindanao, Lantawan in Basilan and other towns like Upi, Pagagawan in Maguindanao and Marantao, Bacolod Grande, Malabang, Ragain and Datu Piang in Lanao del Sur (Anon, 2020).

The number of Smart LTE stations was increased by 51 percent in the year 2019. PLDT's fiber infrastructure grew by 32 percent versus 2018-end with more than 322 400 kilometers nationwide (Anon, 2020).

According to Quiros (2020), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has numerous plans for the following years. Here in Davao, the DICT has already spent upwards of 6 million pesos in the development of wifi lines and free wifi locations for the Davao region in the last year alone. Next year, the DICT is hoping for a 40 million pesos budget for further development of the country's communication and information infrastructure.

Mindanao Network Coverage Map (Smart and Globe Telecom) from nPerf



Looking at this network map by nPerf (2020), it can be seen that there are concentrations of 4G towers in major cities of Mindanao such as Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Butuan, and General Santos. However, there is a significant absence of cell sites beyond these cities, with Central Mindanao sparse with network signals, with other areas only receiving 3G signals. BARMM is also having a hard time getting fast internet speeds, with little to no cell towers in the region.

References

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