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DESKTOP APP SEARCHES FOR POTENTIAL HAZARDS ANYWHERE IN PH

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Predict an earthquake it cannot, but by using it, real estate investors can avoid buying property that sits atop a fault.



Others can avoid locating in places exposed to hazards, including volcanic eruptions, floods and landslides, by using it.

It is called HazardHunterPH, a web application launched on Tuesday by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) and other agencies overseen by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

The launch of the app coincided with the 29th anniversary of the 7.7-magnitude earthquake that killed 1,621 people in Central Luzon and the Cordillera region on July 12, 1990.

Any place in PH

The app, which has real-life applications, allows people wired to the internet to search for potential hazards in any place in the Philippines, according to Renato Solidum Jr., undersecretary for disaster risk reduction and climate change at the DOST and officer in charge of Phivolcs.

Accessible via hazardhunter.georisk.gov.ph, the desktop app allows users to search for a specific location, either through GPS, coordinates, or the search function of Google Maps, Solidum said.

Users can also visually search for locations by zooming in on the map, Solidum said.

In just seconds, the app will display the vulnerabilities of the location.

Users have the option to download an information sheet with explanations of the risk assessment report, he said.

“In less than a minute, you will be assessed of the hazards, from how prone the place is to earthquakes, landslides, flooding and even what the nearest volcano is,”

Solidum said during the HazardHunterPH presentation at the Phivolcs office in Quezon City.

Local governments and national agencies can use the app, which went live Tuesday morning, to assess the safety of schools and hospitals, Solidum said.

Ordinary citizens can use the information in making informed real-estate purchases, he said.

The information they will get will save people getting building permits from going to numerous agencies, as it is “the most accurate information,” Solidum said.

He said he hoped government agencies and private institutions that required hazard or risk assessment before issuing permits would consider data provided by the app, as the maps and information were the same that Phivolcs would give to permit applicants.

“Sometimes other government agencies want [maps] with the real signature of the head of agency. That’s one thing HazardHunter can’t do yet. But if they now recognize that HazardHunter is the officially recognized application by [the] government, then we will save a lot of money, time and effort,” Solidum said.

For the national government, Phivolcs said the app could be used to evaluate the locations for the projects under President Duterte’s infrastructure program.

Mobile version

The mobile version of the app is already in the works, the DOST said.

HazardHunterPH was developed by the GeoRiskPH project, a multiagency initiative led by the DOST and Phivolcs.

It was funded by the DOST and monitored by the DOST Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development.