

Among the responses we received were several with an answer from EMSC. This is the organization responsible for the map showing the earthquakes in a strange pattern. The abbreviation EMSC stands for European-Mediterranean Seismological Center (EMSC), an international non-profit organization.

Dear user, Thank you for writing to us about this matter. We have received many questions about the seismic activity on the island of La Palma that is shown on our maps.

The “grid” of earthquake locations is an artifact, due to the fact that the EMSC rounds the latitude and longitude coordinates to two decimal places. We take this opportunity to explain why the EMSC map shows a grid pattern of earthquake locations on the island of La Palma.

If you look at the [latitude and longitude data](#) provided by the EMSC, you will see that there are two decimal places in each value, resulting in a less granular, less defined data set.

As an example, Google Earth uses 6 decimal points for the lon/lat pairs. This allows for exponentially more granularity, resulting in a higher definition view.

In tight earthquake clusters like the one on La Palma, zooming in far creates an artifact (artificial phenomenon) due to the 2 decimal approximation and the earthquake locations are displayed as a grid. This artifact is not unique to La Palma. It happens all over our maps, whenever there is a huge zoom in on a very small area.

On La Palma, this phenomenon is clearly visible due to the very small size of the island. IGN, the authoritative source for seismic information in Spain, does not round the coordinates, and [the seismicity does not appear as a grid](#) on their map.

We recommend consulting local sources for dense seismicity as we observe it on La Palma. Instituto Geográfico Nacional, [IGN Website](#): Twitter: @IGN_Sismologia) Instituto Volcanológico de Canarias [Website](#): Twitter: @involcan)

We are sorry for this misunderstanding and we welcome this opportunity to discuss with you and better explain our services. Sincerely, The EMSC team