

Introduction of mercari R4D

mercari **R4D**

| About myself



Mari Inoue (井上 真梨) **Manager, mercari R4D, Mercari Inc.**

Background:

Master's degree from Keio University

Previously worked at the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) on IT trends and R&D program/projects mgmt

Current work at Mercari:

Promoting joint research with Osaka University about ELSI R4D initiatives: research strategy, PhD support program, etc.

A background image showing a group of people, including children and adults, gathered around a table and working with colorful LEGO bricks. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows. The people are focused on their task, with some looking at the camera and others looking down at the bricks.

mercari R4D

Research for

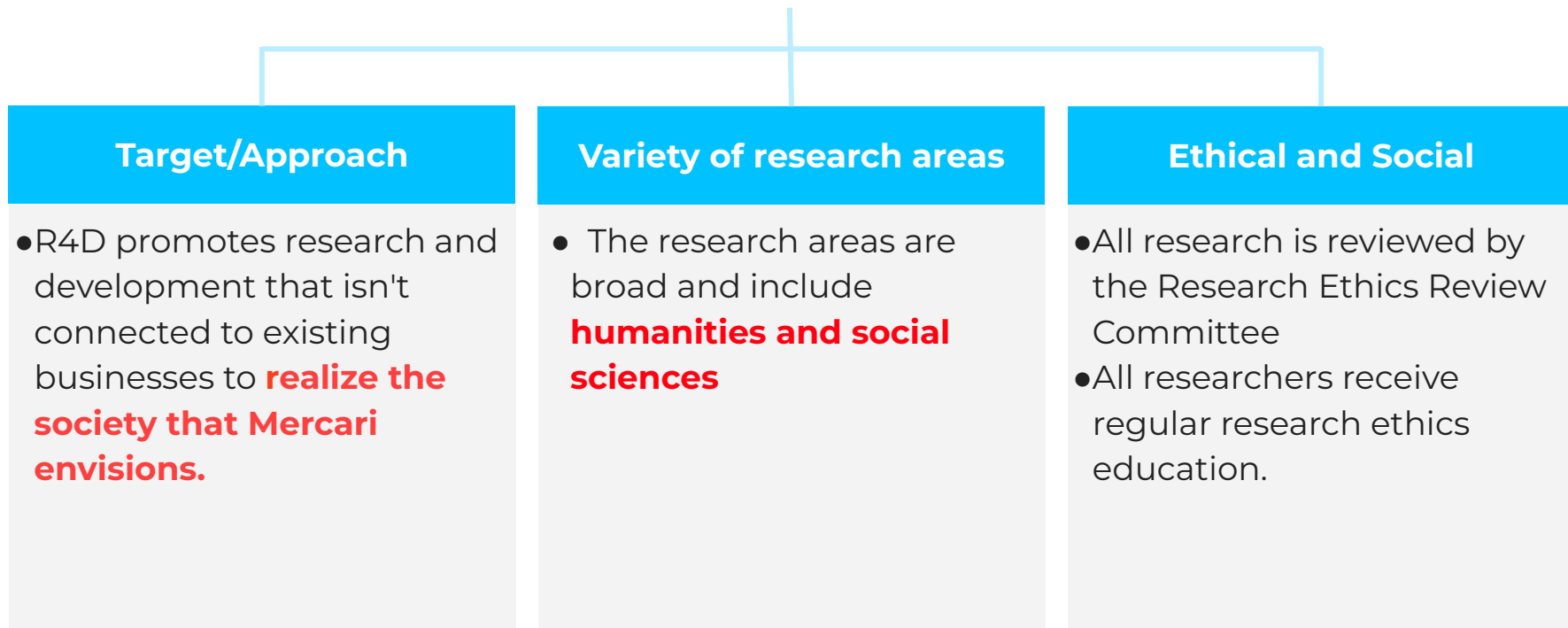
**Design
Development
Deployment
Disruption**

The R&D organization, established by Mercari, Inc. in December 2017 for social implementation.

We are engaged in research and development to create innovations toward the Mercari Group's goal of "a society where limited resources are recycled, and all people can realize their potential."

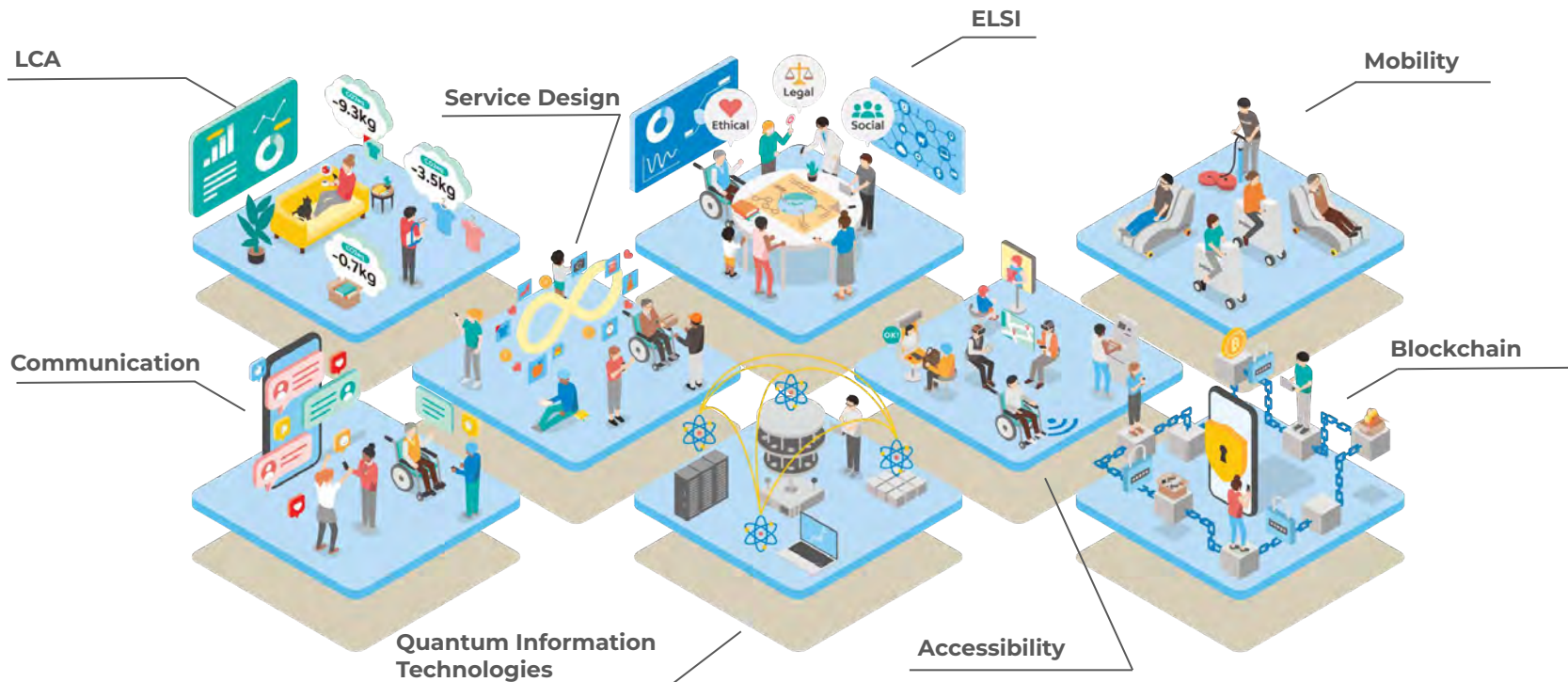
mercari R4D Features

Promotion of research and development for the realization of a circular society



Research Areas

We are engaged in a variety of research and projects that transcend the boundaries of academia, industry, and government, as well as crossing different fields.



ELSI (Ethical, Legal and Social Issues project, 2020.9~)

Toward the realization of responsible R&D and social implementation -



Objectives

ELSI research that considers social risks and impacts is essential for social implementation.

Initially, this project focused on the potential ELSI of individual R&D projects. We are now progressing to explore ELSI considerations for the entire Mercari Group.

Members

Osaka University Research Center on Ethical, Legal and Social Issues (ELSI Center)
mercari R4D, and other relevant Mercari members

In July 2025, we will expand this research and establish Mercari R4D Research Alliance Laboratory in Osaka University. Press release:



Individual Project Examples



Enhancing R&D Ethics Review

Created **R&D Ethics Guidelines**:

- Customized from medical research to fit our context.
- Expanded the scope of the guidelines from research to research and development

To promote the **adoption of the guidelines**, we introduced an **ethics review application format**.



Ethical
Guidelines*:



Application
Format*:



Inclusion & Diversity

In 2023, Mercari implemented initiatives to correct the **gender pay gap** (correcting the unexplained wage gap).

- Held a workshop inviting Mercari's I&D team and experts in fields such as economics and data science.
- Clarified the details of the model used for analysis and key points such as the underlying assumptions and conditions.



ELSI note*:



Youtube*:



*available in Japanese only

R4D's Ongoing Initiatives

Investment in People : PhD Support Program

A program to support employee research activities and re-learning, launched in 2022.

All research areas are welcome.

(humanities and social sciences are actively supported)



Program support overview

Tuition support

- Up to 2 million JPY, including entrance fee
- Tuition support will be provided for 3 years*

Balancing work and research

Research consultation support



Options for balancing work and research

Choose your working hours from 0 days/week, 60% working (about 3 days/week), 80% working (about 4 days/week), or 100% working. Individuals can design their own balance between research and work.

Motivation for Supporting PhD Students: Social Significance

Current situation in Japan

- The number of students entering PhD programs is decreasing.
 - Shrinking faculty positions at Universities
 - Limited private sector career opportunities for PhDs
 - High costs of pursuing a PhD
- Low mobility of researchers between industry and academia

In a society where innovation is difficult to occur



Our thoughts: Expanding Opportunities for PhDs

- Increase opportunities for PhD holders.
- We want to **explore and disseminate the possibilities of PhD holders in the private sector.**
 - Explore and showcase PhD capabilities beyond research.
 - Inspire other companies to embrace PhD talent.

Towards revitalization of the innovation ecosystem

Motivation for Supporting PhD Students: Corporate Value

Investment in people to enhance corporate competitiveness

New Research Ideas

Discover research themes we wouldn't find on our own.

Stronger Networks

Build new networks with universities through program participants.

Human Resource Development

Help people grow their skills and contribute to Mercari's mission, the economy, and solving social issues.

Outreach

Youtube channel "Mercari R&D Department - mercari R4D"

4,400 subscribers!

Runs a Youtube channel featuring mercari R4D's research, innovative people and things, and futuristic information.

<Example of video>

- Quantum Mechanics x Summer Wars
- Business Strategy by DXing Soccer Teams
- Automotive Interface Transition
- ELSI x Back to the Future
- NFT, Blockchain

