

Joichi Ito and Russell Cumber announce Japan Smart Chain to provide Japan a sovereign, Ethereum Equivalent blockchain



Joichi Ito, President of Chiba Technical University and co-founder of Digital Garage, and Russell Cumber, Founder and former Chairman of Paidy (Japan's leading BNPL service), have jointly launched AltX Research KK to develop Japan Smart Chain (JSC), a Japan-sovereign, Ethereum blockchain optimised for Japanese regulations. Japan Smart Chain aims to solve key regulatory and consumer protection challenges for digital transactions, unlocking sizable efficiencies for Japan-based companies, consumers, and innovators.

[Background]

Japan's ability to leverage web3 technologies has been constrained by the lack of compatibility between domestic regulations safeguarding Japan-based users and the development of these technologies abroad. This gap has left Japanese companies hesitant to adopt blockchain for transformative use cases like payments, loyalty systems, and user-friendly finance.

To address these challenges, Japan Smart Chain is a sovereign blockchain solution that aligns with Japan's regulatory framework. By resolving regulatory concerns at the infrastructure level, Japan Smart Chain facilitates Japanese businesses and users to benefit from faster, cheaper, and more secure digital services.

[Project Description]

Japan Smart Chain is the sovereign blockchain for Japan. It is a public Layer 1 Ethereum Equivalent blockchain validated entirely onshore by Japan's industrial leaders. JSC embeds digital KYC/AML methods into the Layer 1 infrastructure layer with its pioneering **Mizuhiki Protocol**, built to reduce

compliance burdens on operators and users.

The Protocol contains an identification method that users can control themselves, combined with a suite of eKYC tools and services optimised for Japanese regulations. The Mizuhiki Protocol will be provided free of charge to Japan Smart Chain projects and end-users.

Mission: Japan Smart Chain is committed to streamlining the Japanese blockchain ecosystem and overall customer experience by focusing on consumer pain points in the application layer that can be better addressed at the Layer 1 blockchain.

Vision: Our vision is to enable widespread adoption of web3 in Japan by eliminating repetitive form filling across applications, and to allow users to easily and safely transact with regulated services without oversharing unnecessary personal information. We believe that Japan Smart Chain will set a global precedent for secure, scalable, and sovereign digital transaction infrastructure.

Problem it solves: Currently, regulated businesses face high levels of redundancy and financial burden for servicing Japan's customer base with modern, cost-effective, and fast applications in areas such as gaming, payments, and finance. By addressing Japan's regulatory requirements at the infrastructure layer, businesses may confidently invest long term into web3 applications that unlock customer delight.

[Guiding Principles]

Japan Smart Chain's unique approach to creating the conditions for web3 adoption to thrive in Japan lies in its four guiding principles as defined below:

1. Principle of Sovereignty

Sovereignty – being within the control of Japan and beyond the influence of outside regulatory and geopolitical forces is key for JSC. Japan Smart Chain is Japan's sovereign L1: it is validated onshore in Japan by key leaders in Japanese industry, and it is built to comply with and uphold Japanese regulations. JSC is beyond the reach of foreign regulators and outside forces to the greatest extent possible.

2. Principle of Security

The quality of one's digital assets being secure. Japan Smart Chain is Ethereum Equivalent, and leverages Japan's top engineering talent to fortify Ethereum's excellence with robust infrastructure.

3. Principle of Safety

Customers of regulated on-chain services (such as stablecoins) can safely interact with others, knowing that accounts have been verified and Japan's anti-money laundering and anti-social compliance policies have been embedded at the infrastructure layer.

4. Principle of Scalability

The ability of the platform to meet the needs of an ever-growing customer base. Japan Smart Chain will offer L2 as a service from launch, allowing pre-existing and future L2 projects to adopt compliant infrastructure at a significantly lower cost to what is being currently offered.

[Project Leadership]

Joichi Ito – Co-founder

Joi Ito is the co-founder of Digital Garage and current President of Chiba Institute of Technology. Ito is an expert in open-source internet projects, previously serving on the board at Mozilla Foundation, Creative Commons, Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), among others.

“Many companies and government agencies in Japan struggle to leverage web3, because of the lack of a blockchain compliant and consistent with the stringent requirements in Japan. Japan Smart Chain is designed to address this need.”

Russell Cumber – Co-founder

Russell Cumber is the founder and former Chairman of Paidy, Japan's leading BNPL service. Previously, Russell worked on credit and derivatives trading at Goldman Sachs in Tokyo. Russell holds a Masters in Financial Mathematics from Stanford University.

“I have been passionate about creating magical experiences for Japanese people through digital payments and online financial services. I am now extremely excited about the prospects of new companies, new services and new consumer experiences that JSC will facilitate.”

Jeff Wentworth – Chief Architect

Jeff Wentworth is the co-founder of Curvegrid, a Japan-based enterprise blockchain company. Previously, Jeff was Vice President and global product owner of block and object storage at Goldman Sachs. He holds a BAsC in Computer Engineering from the University of Waterloo.

Gen Kanai – Vice President

Gen Kanai is a blockchain industry investor and open-source internet executive. Kanai currently serves as a Director at Animoca Brands, and previously led the Mozilla Foundation's expansion to Asia. Gen holds a Bachelor of Arts from Dartmouth College.

[Advisors]

Shota Matsuzawa – Advisor

Shota Matsuzawa is a co-founder of Decima Fund, a crypto-focused venture capital firm. Previously, Matsuzawa served as Deputy Director of the FSA in Japan, with a focus on fintech. Matsuzawa holds a Bachelor of Arts from Waseda University.

Marcus Okuno – Advisor

Marcus Okuno is a Japan Equity Market specialist and outside director at Tsuraha Holdings (TYO:3319). Previously Okuno was Managing Director of Jefferies & Company at the Tokyo headquarters and a Japan equities specialist at Merrill Lynch.

Masaya Kubota – Advisor

Masaya Kubota is a venture capitalist and a co-founder of Project Coalis. Kubota was a Partner at WiL, investing in notable Japanese startups, after 16 years in tech-focused investment banking at Lehman and Barclays. Kubota holds a Bachelor of Economics from Keio University.

[Investors]

SBI Investment

"JSC represents a pivotal moment for Japan's blockchain future. By aligning with domestic regulations and focusing on sovereignty, JSC sets the stage for large-scale blockchain adoption in Japan," Koji Maruyama, Executive Officer, General Manager, Investment Dept.



X&KSK Fund

"Blockchain is more than technology—it's about trust and transparency. I'm excited to see JSC empower Japan to lead in web3 innovation and create impactful solutions."
Keisuke Honda, Footballer & Entrepreneur



Decima Fund

"I am thrilled to support Russell, who has successfully connected Japan-originated services with global players, as he takes on a similar challenge in the blockchain space through this initiative. This team sparks the vision of a future where 'Japan Smart Chain becomes a natural part of the existing digital infrastructure,' and I am eager to see the transformative impact they will have, not only in Japan but across the entire blockchain industry."
Ken Kitahara, Co-founder and General Partner of Decima



[Partners]

Animoca Brands Japan

"Japan Smart Chain is set to become a vital blockchain platform, empowering a wide range of blockchain businesses in Japan. Animoca Brands Japan is proud to participate as a validator and is excited to collaborate with Japan Smart Chain to establish a thriving validator staking business. We are committed to working closely together and supporting companies eager to join as validators, fostering a stronger blockchain ecosystem."
Daisuke Iwase, CEO of Animoca Brands Japan



Famima Digital One Co. Ltd.

"Famima Digital One Co. Ltd. is honored to participate in the proof of concept (PoC) as an initial partner candidate for Japan Smart Chain. Through close collaboration with stakeholders, we aim to develop



innovative blockchain solutions that contribute to reducing payment processing fees."

Kazuhiro Nakano, President of Famima Digital One Co. Ltd.

Loyalty Marketing, Inc.

"Loyalty Marketing, Inc. is proud to join Japan Smart Chain as a partner, united by a shared vision to co-create innovative Web3 experiences. Together, we will explore potential use cases on the blockchain and actively work toward their implementation."

Tshuyoshi Hasegawa, President & CEO of Loyalty Marketing, Inc.

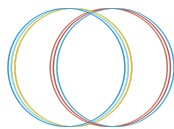


Tokyo Dome Corporation



TOKYO DOME CORPORATION

Myna Wallet



Unyte Inc.



Digital Platformer Corporation



Digital Platformer

[Company Info]

About AltX Research KK

AltX Research KK is a blockchain research and development lab based in Tokyo, Japan. The company specializes in creating cutting-edge blockchain solutions optimized for local markets, with a focus on regulatory compliance, consumer protection, and privacy. AltX Research is currently focussed on the technical development and launch of Japan Smart Chain.

<https://japansmartchain.com/>