

New Study to Examine How Trusted AI Practices Shape Merger and Acquisition Outcomes

Santa Clara University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics Awarded Research Grant from Ford Foundation and Omidyar Network

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[Santa Clara University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics](#) has received a grant from the Ford Foundation and Omidyar Network to study whether building trusted artificial intelligence (AI) practices into a company's products and operations influences acquisition outcomes.



**Santa Clara
Markkula Center**
for Applied Ethics

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*Don Heider, Markkula Center
for Applied Ethics*

The study will investigate whether “trusted AI” practices—policies and controls around privacy, security, digital rights, fairness, workforce, and environmental impact—affect acquisition outcomes. It will test whether companies that demonstrate these practices see smoother diligence, fewer roadblocks, and stronger results when they are acquired.

“With the Markkula Center's focus on applied ethics, this effort will provide investors with actionable insights into the material impact of trusted AI practices,” said Don

Heider, executive director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. “Findings from the research will be translated into guidance for asset allocators, helping them manage AI risk and mitigate unintended outcomes.”

“This grant allows us to examine whether building trust into AI products and operations influences acquisition outcomes,” said Tracy Barba, director of venture ethics at the Markkula

Center for Applied Ethics. "For the venture community, where M&A accounts for most exits and AI is drawing an unprecedented share of investment, understanding how trust affects deal dynamics is both timely and important."

About Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

Founded in 1986 with a seed grant and initial endowment from Linda and A.C. "Mike" Markkula Jr., the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University brings the traditions of ethical thinking to bear on real-world problems. Beyond a full range of programs for the SCU community, the Center also serves professionals in fields from business to health care, and from government to journalism, providing innovative approaches to problems from fake news to privacy protection. Through its website and international collaborations, the Center brings ethical decision-making resources to a global audience. For more information, visit <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/>.

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