Personal Statement – Josiah Uma

Applicant for UK Global Talent Visa (Digital Technology)

From a young age, I was endlessly curious about how things work. I was the child who constantly unscrewed the VCR, radio, and any gadget I could find, determined to understand the technology within. My fascination truly began when I first saw a computer in primary school. Nearly a hundred of us crowded around as our instructor typed commands into a glowing black-and-white DOS screen. I could barely see, but I was captivated. That spark became a lifelong passion for technology and innovation.

This passion led me to earn a BSc in Computer Science and an MSc in IT Consultancy from Queen Mary University of London and the University of Kent, where I deepened my technical knowledge and entrepreneurial drive. After completing my studies in the UK, I returned to Nigeria, determined to apply my education and skills to national development through technology.

In Nigeria, I founded and led three start-ups that embodied my vision of solving real-world problems through innovation:

1. **Oveem** – Among Nigeria's first online fruit-and-vegetable ordering platforms, pioneering digital agriculture when e-commerce in the sector was still emerging. Oveem connected farmers directly with consumers, closing gaps in food logistics.

2. **Koziapp** – A data-driven career platform matching users to job opportunities through personality assessments and behavioural analytics. Featured by Techpoint Africa, Koziapp showcased AI-driven recommendations that transformed how candidates and employers connect.

3. **Vigan Limited** – A digital printing company offering automated on-demand solutions. It enabled businesses to upload and process print jobs online, streamlining workflows and demonstrating my expertise in cloud automation and user experience.

Despite Nigeria's difficult business environment—marked by insecurity, poor infrastructure, and limited start-up support—I remained undeterred. My belief in technology as a driver of progress never waned. Vigan became my most successful venture, earning Techpoint Africa coverage for its impact on SMEs. When I relocated with my family to the UK for my wife's studies, I registered Vigan Limited (Company No. 13107764) in the UK, eager to bring my entrepreneurial experience into a thriving digital economy.

Today, I serve as an ICT Training Specialist with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), Ministry of Justice, where I lead the regional ICT Training Team delivering digital-skills training to staff. Over the past four years, I have coordinated learning for more than 2,000 staff and over 5,000 attendances across the East of England, assisting colleagues use modern tools that enhance productivity and service delivery. I also serve as the AI

Champion for the region, delivering workshops and mentoring staff on responsible AI adoption while maintaining ethical and data-protection standards. I hold the British Computer Society (BCS) Professional Certificate in Artificial Intelligence and I'm a member of the British Computer Society, reinforcing my commitment to continuous learning.

One of my proudest achievements was leading the design and development of the East of England Probation Service Intranet, a secure and dynamic platform now used daily by over 2,000 staff. The system streamlined communications, digitised manual processes, and cut email dependency by more than 60%, with monthly metrics of 2,694 unique viewers, 75,248 site visits, and an average engagement time of 11 minutes 28 seconds. The project earned recognition from the Regional Probation Director and commendation from HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP)—a landmark in my career.

Beyond my civil service occupation, I actively contribute to the wider digital technology community through open-source innovation and volunteer work. My GitHub portfolio showcases projects across web, cloud, mobile and AI technologies, including LearnTree LMS — now adopted by Oviprime for its digital training programmes. I also mentor young developers from ethnic-minority backgrounds at Oviprime, promoting inclusion and technical confidence. In addition, I volunteer at Fresh Fountain Charity, where I modernised their digital systems, built their website and CRM platform, and trained staff in media and digital literacy—helping the organisation reach a global audience and strengthening community access to technology.

Open-source projects include:
• **HealthBuddy** – AI-powered chatbot providing personalised health advice and wellness insights.
• **LearnTree LMS** – Learning-management system for course creation and delivery.
• **Eventib** – SaaS event-management platform integrating Stripe payments and authentication.
• **Fresh CRM** – Cloud-based system helping small organisations manage communication, attendance, and finances.
• **Lyfchat** – Community platform connecting users through shared interests and goals.
• **GiveForMe** – Donation platform integrating e-commerce for seamless giving to multiple charities.
• **Data Engineering Projects** – Python-based ETL and analytics projects showcasing Power BI visualisation.

Why the UK and My Future Contribution

Having spent over five years studying in the UK, the country already feels like home. I live in Nottingham, East Midlands—a region with a thriving digital innovation scene where I see immense opportunities to apply my experience in technology, AI, and training. The UK's supportive environment for digital enterprises contrasts sharply with the challenges I faced in Nigeria, strengthening my resolve to channel my creativity and entrepreneurial drive here.

In the coming years, I plan to launch a civic-tech startup focused on intelligent intranet and workflow automation for public and private organisations, helping them achieve smarter, more efficient operations. I also intend to mentor young developers and data professionals—especially those from underrepresented backgrounds—through workshops, open-source projects, and community learning. Additionally, I aim to contribute to the UK's AI and open-source ecosystem by developing ethical, accessible, and inclusive digital solutions aligned with national transformation goals.

My long-term aspiration is to become a Chartered Member of the British Computer Society, continuing my commitment to professional excellence, lifelong learning, and ethical technology leadership.

My journey—from a curious child disassembling gadgets to an AI specialist and digital innovator—reflects my enduring curiosity, perseverance, and belief in technology's power to create positive change. The Global Talent Visa represents an opportunity to reignite my entrepreneurial vision and contribute meaningfully to the UK's digital economy through innovation, mentorship, and civic impact. I am confident that my experience, creativity, and resilience will enable me to make a lasting contribution to the UK's position as a global leader in responsible and inclusive technology.

Visit https://josiahuma.site/ for more information