THE VOICE OF DATA PROFESSIONALS & INNOVATORS

OCTOBER 2026 EDITION

# DATA GIST

*Magazine*



COVER STORY

## Beyond Expertise

*The place of influence in data*

## The Responsibility of Influence

GUIDING OTHERS WITH HONESTY

## From Individual Expertise to Collective Impact

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

## From Visibility to Global Influence

AFRICA'S PLACE IN THE DATA CONVERSATION

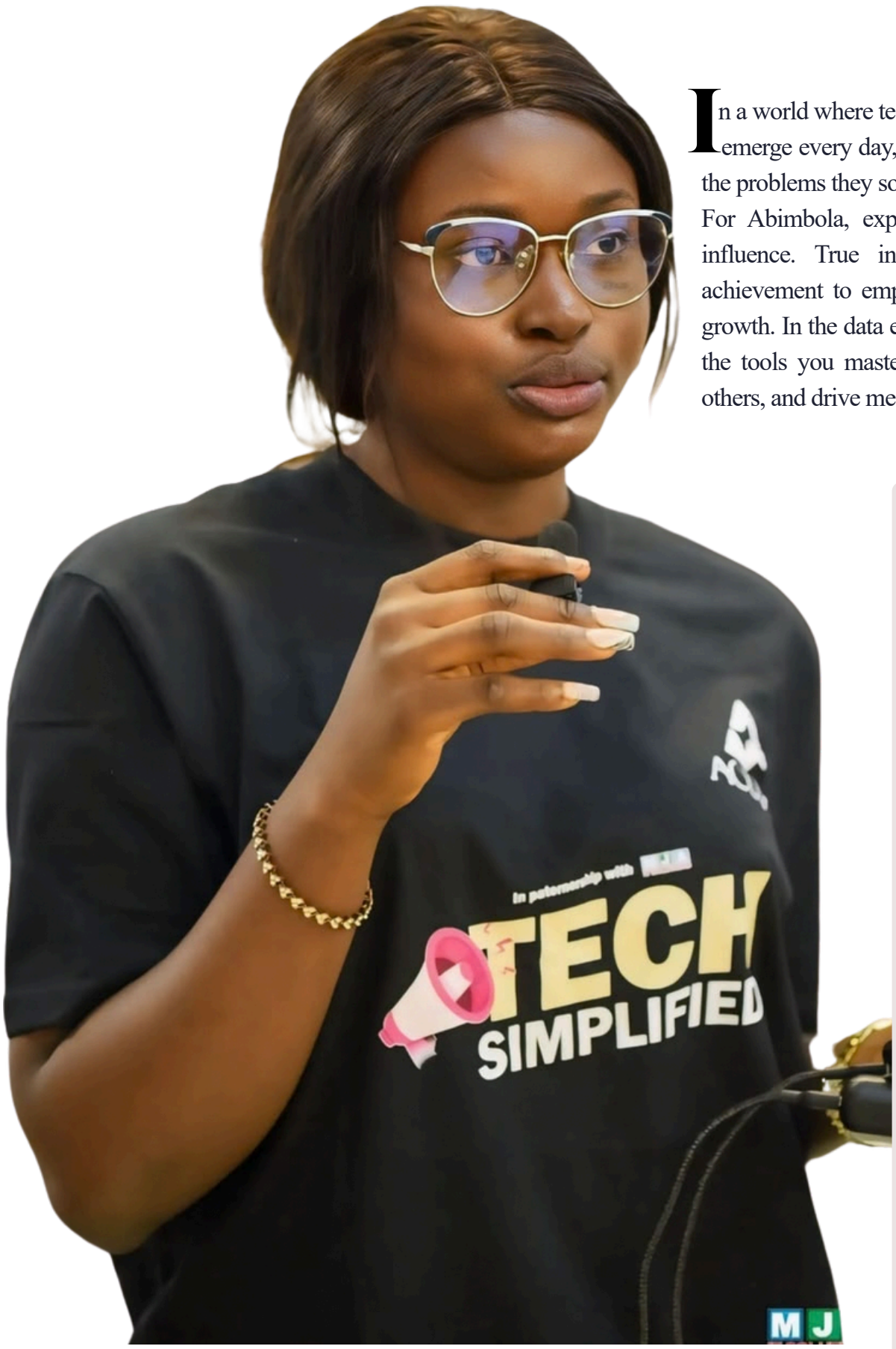
## Beyond Personal Success

WHAT DRIVES THE COMMITMENT TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE

# Abimbola Arowolo

Data and Technology Professional
Co-founder of Techsavia

# BEYOND EXPERTISE THE PLACE OF INFLUENCE IN DATA




In a world where technical skills are constantly evolving and new experts emerge every day, what truly sets a data professional apart? Is it how much they know, the problems they solve, or the impact they create beyond their immediate work?

For Abimbola, expertise is more than technical proficiency; it is a foundation for influence. True influence emerges when knowledge extends beyond individual achievement to empower others, strengthen communities, and create opportunities for growth. In the data ecosystem, the real measure of expertise is not just what you know or the tools you master, but how you use that knowledge to shape perspectives, inspire others, and drive meaningful change.

This journey towards influence does not begin when you become a senior professional; it begins with the willingness to contribute, no matter where you are in your career. Sharing what you learn, document the projects you build, and explain difficult concepts in ways that help others understand.

**Abimbola Arowolo** is a Microsoft MVP, data and technology professional, educator and content creator working at the intersection of data, artificial intelligence (AI), automation and education.

Recognised as a Microsoft MVP for her contributions to Excel and Microsoft 365 Copilot across two years, she is passionate about making technology more accessible, practical and impactful.

A graduate of Chemistry Education from the University of Jos, Nigeria, Abimbola combines her educational background with expertise in data analytics, business intelligence, AI and automation to help people and organisations solve problems, improve productivity and make better decisions.

Beyond her technical work, she is passionate about knowledge sharing, mentorship and community building. Through teaching and content creation, she helps people develop practical technology skills, explore opportunities in the digital economy, and build meaningful careers.

She is also the co-founder of Techsavia, an initiative dedicated to equipping people with practical technology skills and expanding access to opportunities through digital education.

***At the heart of her work is a belief that technology should go beyond theory and trends to solve real-world problems, empower people and create lasting impact.***

You do not need to know everything before you can make a difference. In fact, teaching others strengthens your own understanding, exposes gaps in your knowledge, and creates opportunities for collective growth.

> ***"The journey from expertise to influence requires intentional effort but it cannot be built on visibility alone."***

While professionals can deliberately create opportunities to be seen by sharing knowledge, showing up consistently and building relationships, the true foundation of genuine influence must be earned over time through the value they bring to others.

Visibility means people see you; influence means something changes because they did. A large followers does not necessarily translate into meaningful impact, just as a smaller audience can make a profound difference in people's careers, decisions and perspectives. Rather than measuring success by how many people engage with your content, the more important question is what changes as a result of your contribution.

Building that kind of influence comes down to three essential qualities;

- Consistency
- Competence
- Honesty.

While demonstrating a sound understanding of your field is important, being open about what you do not know is equally valuable. Sharing both your achievements and the lessons you are still learning makes you more relatable and trustworthy. After all, you do not have to know everything to be valuable; you simply have to be willing to learn, contribute, and grow with others.

### Beyond Personal Success: What Drives the Commitment to Share Knowledge?

The motivation to keep teaching, creating content, mentoring, and engaging with communities comes from the realization of the impact these efforts have on people's lives. It could be someone finally understanding a difficult concept, acquiring a new skill or securing an opportunity. These moments are a reminder that behind every post, lesson, or conversation is someone whose journey can be positively influenced. It is this connection between sharing knowledge and seeing its impact on others that keeps the passion alive.

These experiences revealed the far-reaching power of sharing knowledge, particularly in a digital world where a single post or lesson can reach people far beyond its original audience. With that realisation came a greater sense of responsibility, the understanding that influencing others is not just about what you share but also about the value, accuracy and impact of what they take away from it.

### At What Point Did You Realise Your Knowledge Was Influencing People Beyond Your Immediate Work?

It became more evident when people she had never met began reaching out to tell her that her content, teaching or advice had helped them.

Initially, she was simply sharing what she was learning, including the challenges, failures and successes that shaped her journey. But hearing from people in different places who had learned something from her content or applied something she had taught made the experience feel different. It made her realise that what we share online can reach far beyond the audience we initially have in mind. That realisation also made her more intentional and careful about what she shares, knowing that her words and experiences could influence someone else's journey.

### The Responsibility of Influence: Guiding Others with Honesty

Guiding others with honesty is a responsibility that should never be taken lightly. Being mindful of what we share is essential because people may make life-changing decisions based on what they hear or read. Someone might choose a career path, invest in a course, apply for a job, or find the courage to keep going when they feel like giving up because of something they read in our content. That alone is a reminder of how much responsibility comes with having a voice that influences others.

Influence comes with a responsibility to be realistic. The tech industry offers exciting opportunities, but it has its challenges too. People deserve an honest picture of both sides so they can make informed decisions and approach their journeys with realistic expectations.

That is why she believes in sharing her experiences honestly without presenting her journey as the only path to success. Everyone's journey is different, and what works for one person may not necessarily work for another.

> ***"Influence is not just about inspiring people; it is about being honest enough to help them make better decisions."***

Meaningful impact, is seeing something become better because of your involvement. The realization that impact does not always have to be big, visible or publicly celebrated also matter. Sometimes, it's about making a difference in ways that others may never see, helping one person at the right time is enough.

### From Individual Expertise to Collective Impact: The Power of Community

The real value of community lies in its ability to turn individual knowledge into shared opportunities, collective learning, and meaningful contributions that extend far beyond what one person could achieve alone.




### Creating Opportunities for Others: What the African Data Ecosystem Needs

The African data ecosystem needs more professionals who are willing to open doors for others. Influence becomes more meaningful when it creates opportunities beyond the individual who holds it.

Across Africa, talented professionals and communities are doing excellent work, but we can achieve much more by connecting our efforts and collaborating rather than working in isolation.

African data professionals should not only participate in the global technology conversation; they should help shape it.

### Finding Your Voice: Start Contributing Before You Feel Ready

The first step is simple, start sharing.

You don't need to become influencers or have everything figured out before you can contribute to the community.

You can begin by sharing something you have learned, documenting a project, explaining a problem you have solved, asking questions, joining a community or helping someone who is just starting their journey.

Finding your voice is a process that develops through practice. The more you share knowledge, engage with others and contribute to conversations, the more confident and clearer your voices become.

You don't have to know everything before you can contribute something valuable. Start where you are, share what you know, and allow your voice to grow through the process.

### Beyond the Title: The Meaning of Microsoft MVP Recognition

Becoming a Microsoft MVP meant a great deal to her because it recognised something she genuinely enjoys: learning, teaching, and helping people make better use of technology.

Receiving the recognition was exciting, but it also brought a deeper sense of fulfilment. It was a reminder that the small, consistent efforts she had made over time had grown into something meaningful. The knowledge she shared, the people she helped, and the time she invested in teaching had created an impact beyond what she could see at the time.

For her, becoming an MVP was not the beginning of her contribution; it was recognition of a journey already in progress.

Yet, the title itself is not what matters most. It is the responsibility that comes with it: to keep learning, share knowledge generously, and create more opportunities for others to grow.



### DataGist Signature Question

***If you could share one message with Africa's next generation of data professionals through DataGist, what would it be?***

Don't just learn tools.

Learn to solve problems.

The data and technology space is changing too quickly for you to spend the whole time simply chasing tools, certificates and job titles.

Build your expertise, but also share what you know.

Help someone else. Work on real problems. Build things. Collaborate. Ask better questions.

And don't underestimate your own story.

You don't have to wait until you have the perfect career, the biggest platform or all the answers before you start contributing.

Start with what you know. Start where you are. Keep learning. Keep contributing.