

# **RE-THINKING PRODUCT ADOPTION THROUGH DOCUMENTATION DESIGN**

By Pedro MC Fernandes at  PERCONA

# PEDRO

- A father and a lover
- Living in greater Lisbon, Portugal
- Hands-on creator inspired by arts
- Experience with 0-1 projects +  
eCommerce + operations
- All-round designer
- Product designer at Percona
- Generalist contributor in FOSS





- Freedom to choose ethos
- Provider of open-source database services, support, and software

## Known for

- Open-source, drop-in replacements for **PostgreSQL/MySQL/MongoDB**
- **Percona Toolkit** command-line tools
- **PMM** database monitoring tools
- Cloud-native database **Operators**



# **RE-THINKING PRODUCT ADOPTION THROUGH DOCUMENTATION DESIGN**

Why would we?

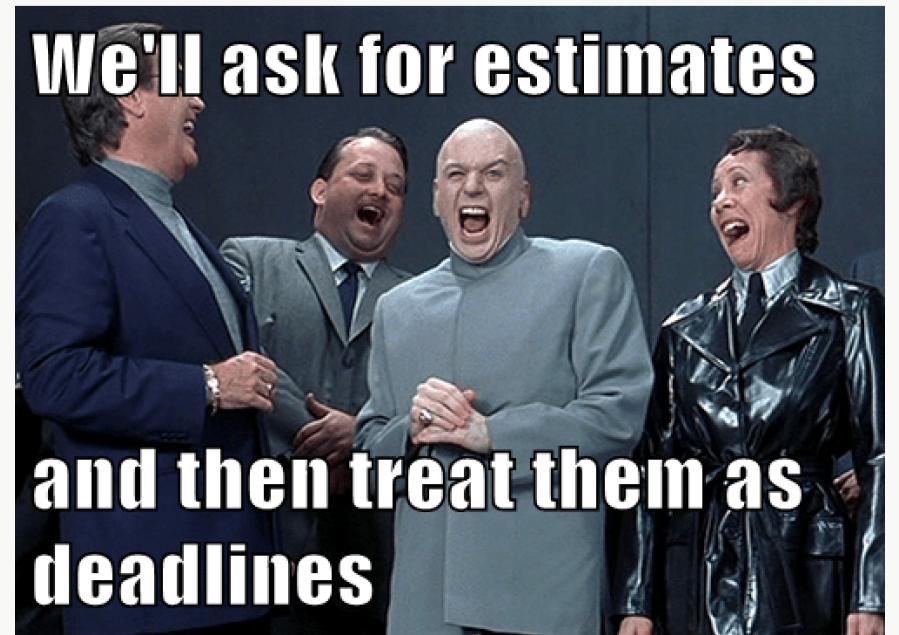
# MOTIVATIONS

- Databases for everyone
- Promote independence
- More and better contributions
- Optimization of Support
- Don't break the bank



**DATABASES = HARD  
SOFTWARE = HARD  
DESIGN = HARD**

- Technical, complex, costly
- Error 404: Design culture not found
- Rapid software dev. ≠ Rapid UX dev.



While we develop growth strategies in-product,  
what else could we do **now**?

Imagine assembling this...

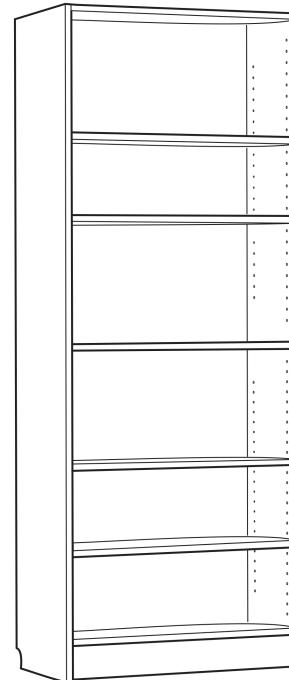


By only guessing



With documentation, we  
can promote the adoption  
and good use of products.

# BILLY



**IKEA**  
Design and Quality  
IKEA of Sweden

With databases, even if you're an expert,  
you must keep the documentation tab open.

INSTALL



DEVELOP



UPKEEP





# **DOCUMENTATION DESIGN RATIONALE**

## **DEFINE A STRATEGY**

Who's reading our documentation?

How can it help them and us achieve our goals?

How do we know if it is helping?



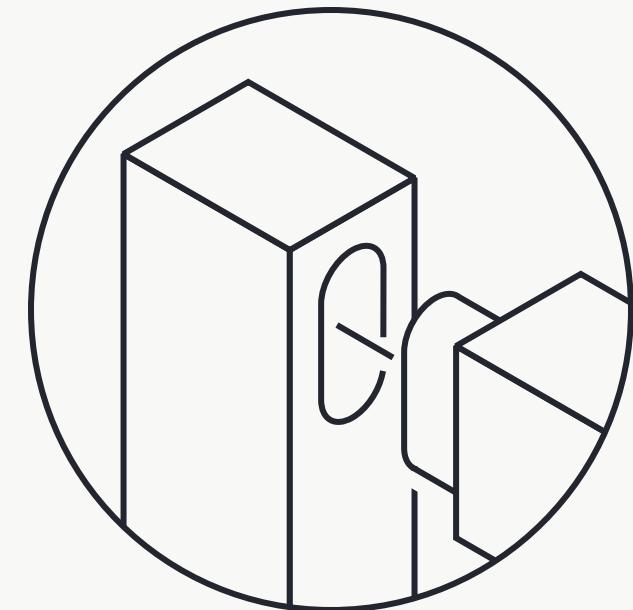
We want documentation to reach out to more **developers** interested in open-source databases for their applications so that adoption increases through more **installations**, proper **retention**, and evident **ease of use**.

## **ESTABLISH CO-OWNERSHIP**

Who could help?

Where's the knowledge?

Who could share responsibilities?

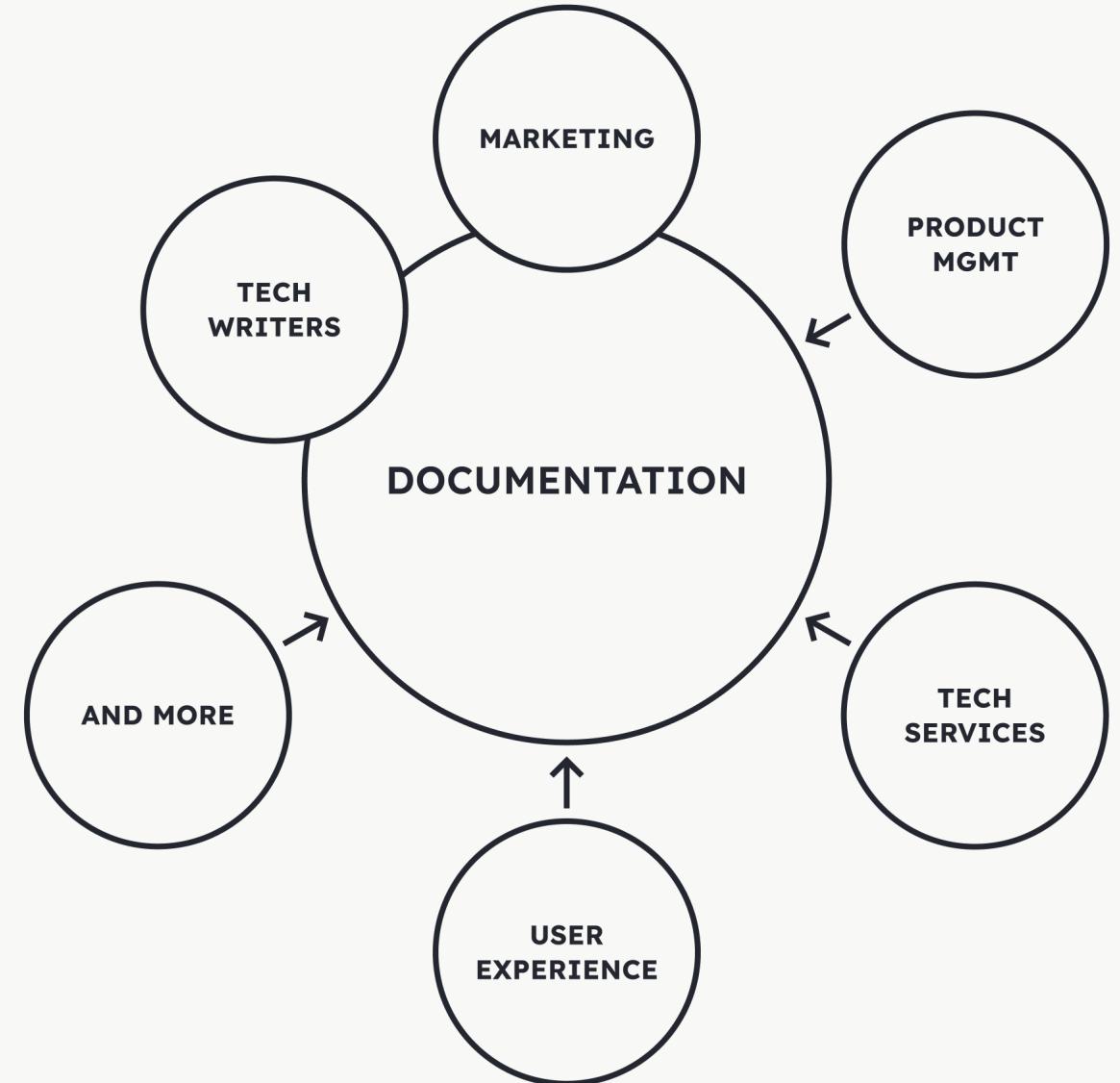


## **Kept**

- Creation of content • Management
- Data analysis

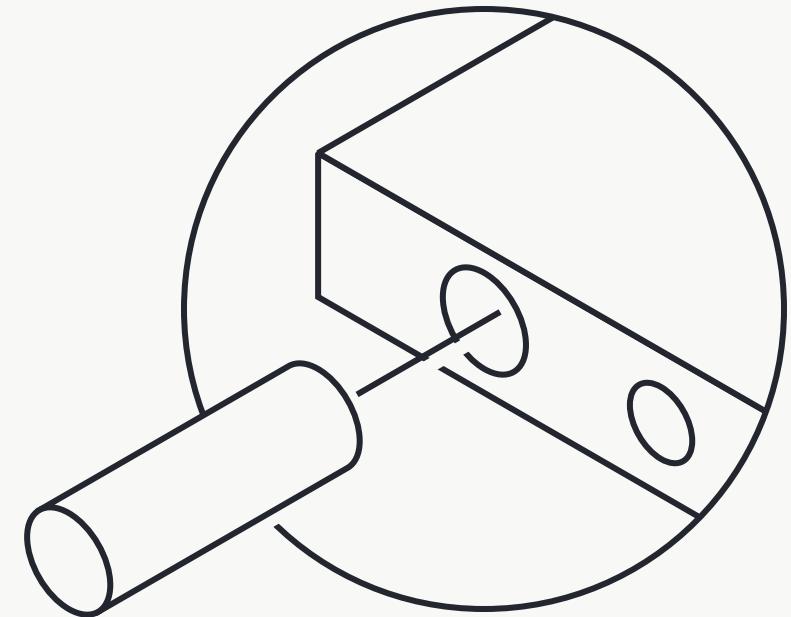
## **Added**

- Speed • Visibility • Openness
- User's POV • Horizontal communication
- New methods • New tools



## **BOOST CLARITY**

Is the content accessible to people?  
Does it provide intuitive access to their needs?  
Are there untapped opportunities?





0:00 / 0:11



MATERIAL FOR MKDOCS

# Tweaked

- Applied readable fonts
- Added spacing
- Increased chromatic contrast
- Increased reading contrast (headings Vs. running text blocks)
- On-brand re-styling

## BEFORE

The screenshot shows the 'Percona Operator for MySQL 0.6.0 (2023-09-05)' documentation page. The header includes the Percona logo, title, a 'Search' bar, and a navigation bar with links like 'About', 'Installation', 'How to', 'Backup and Restore', 'Security', 'Storage Engines', 'Troubleshoot', 'Reference', and 'Installing PMM'. The main content area has a dark blue background with white text. It features a sidebar with sections like 'Welcome', 'Features', 'Quickstart guides', 'Installation', 'Configuration and Management', 'Troubleshooting', 'Reference', and 'Release Notes'. The main content includes a 'Highlights' section with bullet points about Smart Upgrade functionality and HAProxy load balancer support, and 'New features' and 'Improvements' sections with lists of specific bug fixes and improvements.

## AFTER

The screenshot shows the 'Latest Release 8.0.33-25' documentation page. The header includes the Percona logo, title, a 'Search' bar, and a navigation bar with links like 'About', 'Installation', 'How to', 'Backup and Restore', 'Security', 'Storage Engines', 'Troubleshoot', 'Reference', and 'Installing PMM'. The main content area has a light blue background with dark blue text. It features a sidebar with sections like 'About', 'Features', 'Release Notes', and 'Latest Release 8.0.33-25'. The main content includes a 'New features' section with a bullet point about the addition of the `clone_exclude_plugins_list` variable, and a 'Bug fixes' section with a list of specific issues fixed, such as PS-8188, PS-8647, and PS-8719.

# Added

- Guidelines and resources to place icons, buttons, dividers, and tabs
- Guidelines to flag critical bits of content and decision-making points

## BEFORE

The screenshot shows a documentation page for the Percona Operator for MySQL. The top navigation bar includes links for 'About', 'Installation', 'How to', 'Backup and Restore', 'Security', 'Storage Engines', 'Troubleshoot', 'Reference', and 'Installing PMM'. A search bar and a user profile icon are also present. The main content area features a title 'Install Percona Server for MySQL on Google Kubernetes Engine (GKE)'. Below the title is a 'Prerequisites' section, followed by a 'Create and configure the GKE cluster' section containing a code block for gcloud commands. A 'Note' section at the bottom contains a note about running commands in Cloud Shell or local shell.

## AFTER

The screenshot shows a documentation page for Percona Server for MySQL. The top navigation bar includes links for 'About', 'Installation', 'How to', 'Backup and Restore', 'Security', 'Storage Engines', 'Troubleshoot', 'Reference', and 'Installing PMM'. A search bar and a user profile icon are also present. The main content area features a title 'Quickstart Guides'. Below the title is a 'Table of contents' sidebar with sections like 'Installation', 'Quickstart Guides', 'Install via apt', 'Install via yum', 'Kubernetes', 'Docker', 'Manual Download', 'Post-installation tips', 'Upgrade', and 'Downgrade'. A large callout box highlights the 'Package Manager' link under 'Quickstart Guides'. Another callout box below it provides instructions for Ubuntu/Debian users. The 'Install via apt' section contains a code block for sudo apt update and sudo apt install curl.

# Extended

- New custom components
- Use of more out-of-the-box components

The screenshot shows a documentation page for "Uninstall". The top navigation bar includes links for About, Installation (which is underlined), How to, Backup and Restore, Security, Storage Engines, Troubleshoot, Reference, and Installing PMM. A search bar and a user profile icon are also present.

The main content area has a sidebar on the left with links: Installation, Quickstart Guides, Install via apt, Installation guide, Run/Stop, apt Pinning, Uninstall (which is bolded), Install via yum, Kubernetes, Docker, Manual Download, Post-installation tips, Upgrade, and Downgrade. Two arrows point from the "Uninstall" link in the sidebar to the "Get expert help" section at the bottom right.

The "Get expert help" section contains the following text:

Either remove the packages.  
\$ sudo apt remove percona-server\

This will leave the data files (databases, tables, logs, configuration, etc.) behind. If you don't need them, you must remove them manually.

Or purge the packages and delete data files.  
\$ sudo apt purge percona-server\

**Warning:** This command removes all the packages and deletes all the data files (databases, tables, logs, and so on.).

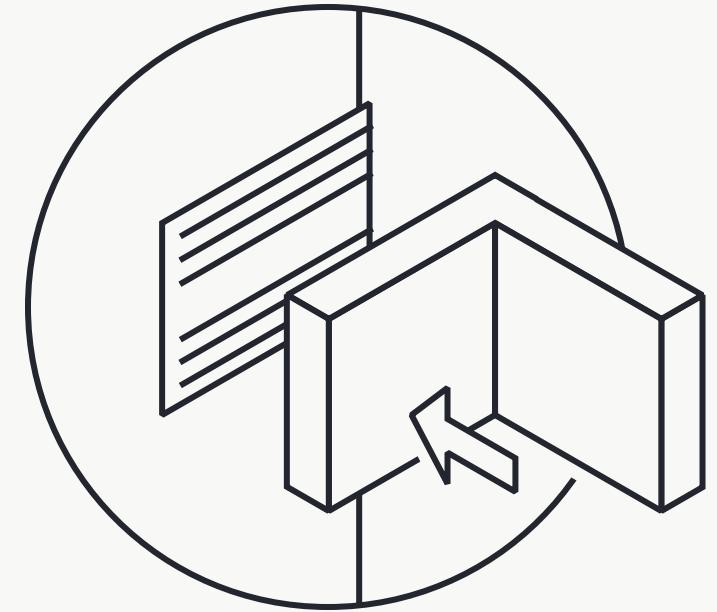
At the bottom of the page, there is a "Was this page helpful?" section with up and downvote icons, and a footer with copyright information and a Material for MkDocs link.

# **IMPROVE THE USER EXPERIENCE**

What can we do for people?

How might we anticipate their needs?

How can we make them succeed?



# Invested in

- Understanding people's needs
- Experimenting
- Creating guidelines
- Forming quickstart guides
- Visual prominence for what matters the most

The screenshot shows a navigation bar with links for About, Installation (which is selected), How to, Backup and Restore, Security, Storage Engines, Troubleshoot, Reference, and Installing PMM. Below the navigation is a search bar and a user profile icon.

The main content area has a sidebar with links to Installation, Quickstart Guides, Install via apt, Installation guide (which is expanded to show Run/Stop, apt Pinning, Uninstall, Install via yum, Kubernetes, Docker, Manual Download, Post-installation tips, Upgrade, and Downgrade), and a 'Table of Contents' link.

The main content area starts with a note about updating apt repositories and installing curl. It then provides a command to download the percona-release package:

```
$ sudo apt update  
$ sudo apt install curl
```

It continues with instructions for each step of the installation process:

- 1 The first step is downloading the `percona-release` repository package:  

```
$ curl -O https://repo.percona.com/apt/percona-release_latest.generic_all.deb
```
- 2 Install the downloaded package with `apt` as root or with `sudo`, and then refresh the local cache to update the package information:  

```
$ sudo apt install gnupg2 lsb-release ./percona-release_latest.generic_all.deb  
$ sudo apt update
```
- 3 Use `percona-release` to set up the repository for the Percona Server for MySQL 8.0 version:  

```
$ sudo percona-release setup ps80
```
- 4 Install the server package with the `percona-release` command:  

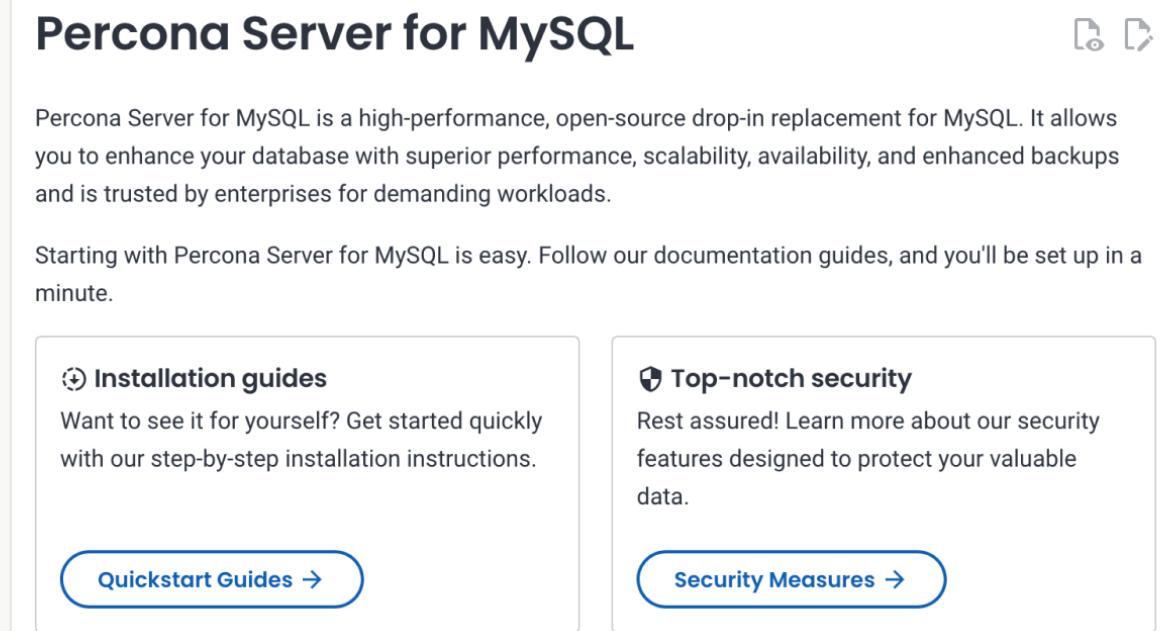
```
$ sudo apt install percona-server-server
```
- 5 It should now be installed! Percona Server runs automatically after installation. To control the

On the right side of the page, there are several collapsed sections with icons and the text "Install the".

We crafted journeys and woven them together so we could guide people into **discovering the value** of our software.



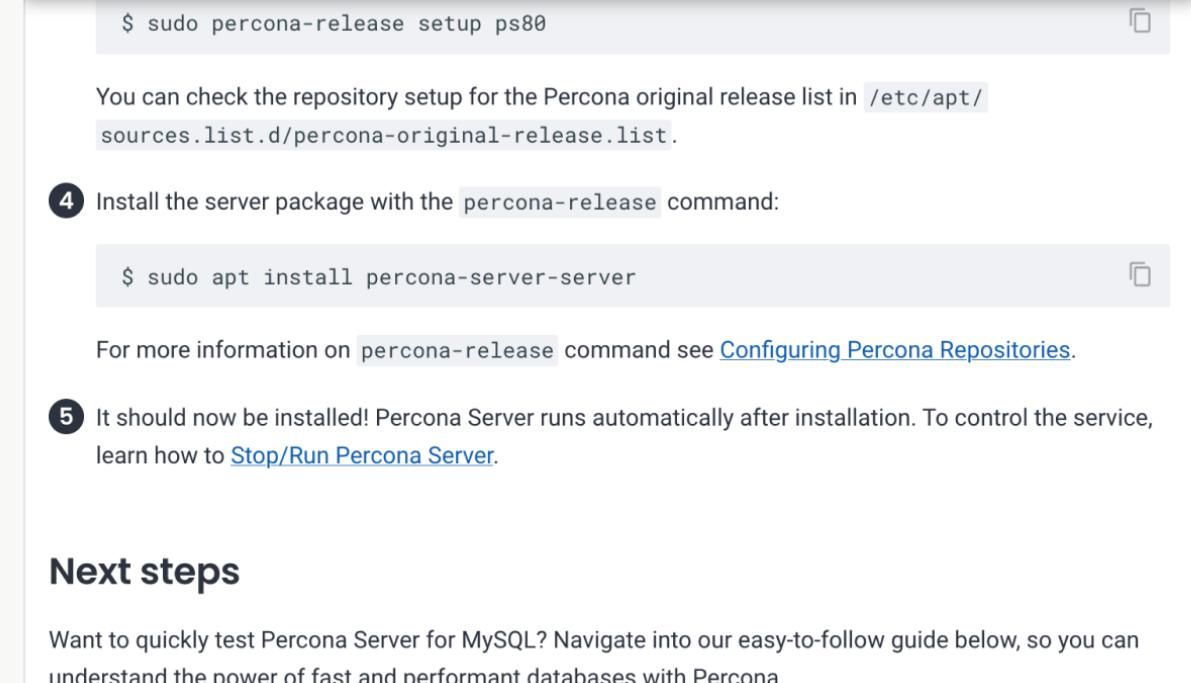
The screenshot shows the Percona Server for MySQL homepage. The header has a dark blue bar with the text "Percona Server for MySQL" and a search icon. Below the header, the main title "Percona Server for MySQL" is displayed in large, bold, black font. A brief description follows: "Percona Server for MySQL is a high-performance, open-source drop-in replacement for MySQL. It allows you to enhance your database with superior performance, scalability, availability, and enhanced backups and is trusted by enterprises for demanding workloads." Below this, a section titled "Starting with Percona Server for MySQL is easy. Follow our documentation guides, and you'll be set up in a minute." is shown. At the bottom, there are two columns of cards: "Installation guides" (with a "Quickstart Guides →" button) and "Top-notch security" (with a "Security Measures →" button).



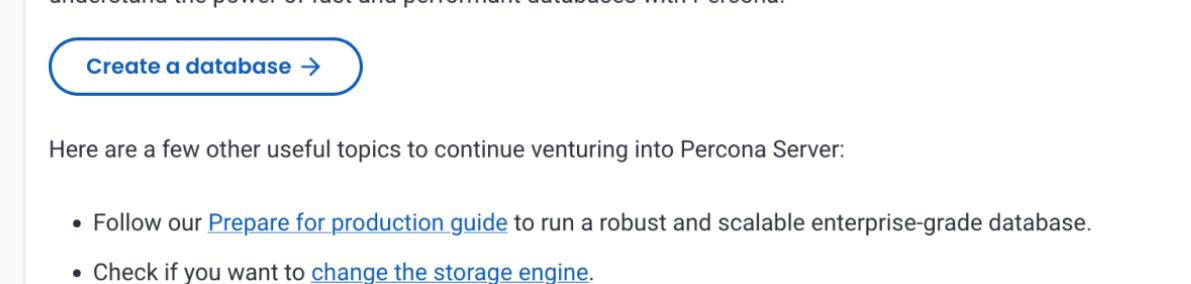
This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the Percona Server for MySQL homepage with its main content and two columns of cards.



The screenshot shows the "Quickstart Guides" page. The header has a dark blue bar with the text "Quickstart Guides" and a search icon. Below the header, a command-line interface (CLI) box contains the text "\$ sudo percona-release setup ps80". A note below it says, "You can check the repository setup for the Percona original release list in /etc/apt/sources.list.d/percona-original-release.list." A numbered list item "4" is followed by the text "Install the server package with the percona-release command:" and a CLI box containing "\$ sudo apt install percona-server-server". Below this, a note says "For more information on percona-release command see [Configuring Percona Repositories](#)".



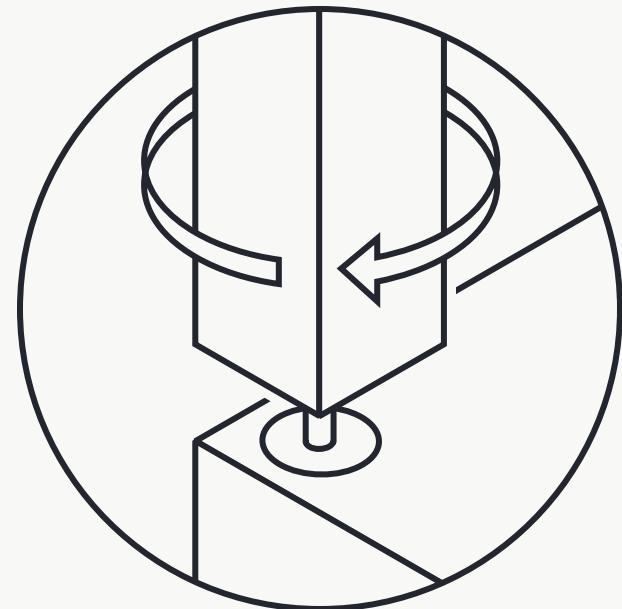
This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the "Quickstart Guides" page with its CLI examples and notes.

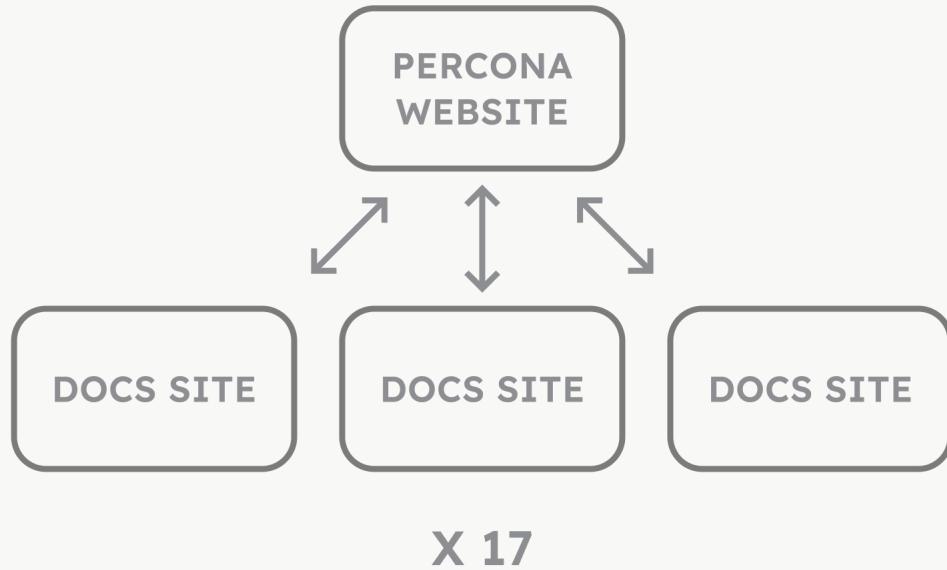


The screenshot shows the "Quickstart Guides" page continuing from the previous one. A section titled "Next steps" is present, with the text "Want to quickly test Percona Server for MySQL? Navigate into our easy-to-follow guide below, so you can understand the power of fast and performant databases with Percona." Below this, a button labeled "Create a database →" is shown. Further down, a section titled "Here are a few other useful topics to continue venturing into Percona Server:" lists two bullet points: "Follow our [Prepare for production guide](#) to run a robust and scalable enterprise-grade database." and "Check if you want to [change the storage engine](#)."

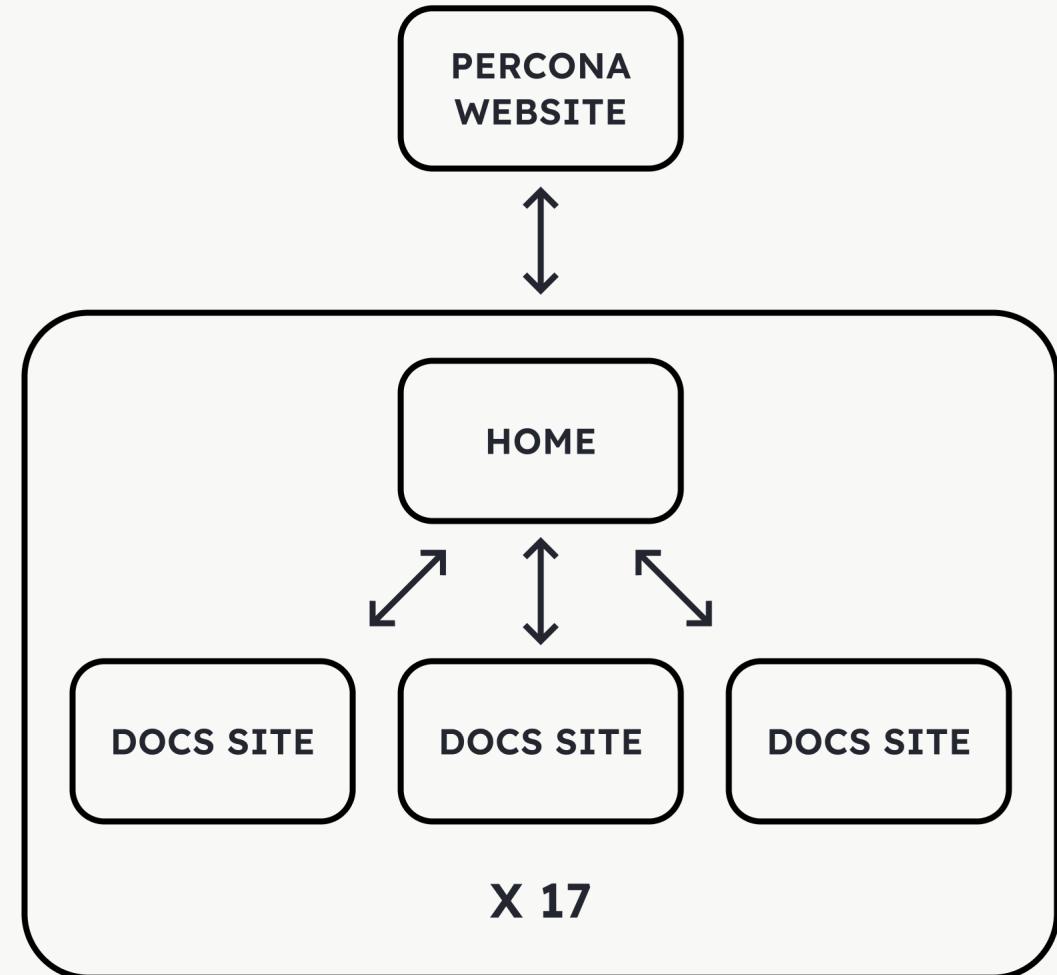
## **UNIFY THE EXPERIENCE**

Imagine using the documentation.  
How does it look? How might we improve it?  
Does it feel whole and credible?





X 17



X 17

▶ 0:00 / 0:29



## OVERVIEW

- Defined a strategy for the documentation
- Established the co-ownership
- Made it clearer and accessible
- Improved the user experience
- Unified documentation websites' experience

## TO DO

- How users are experiencing
- Review outdated content
- Weed out inconsistencies
- Add practical examples/recipes



# THANK YOU!

**Re-thinking product adoption through documentation design**

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Rendered with [Marp](#) and [Lexend](#)