

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

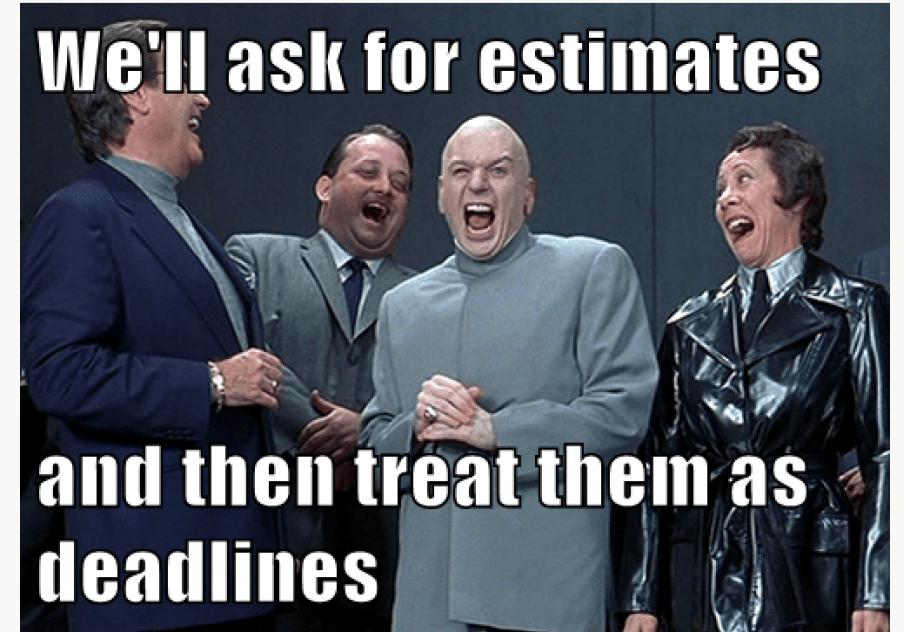


**DATABASES = HARD
SOFTWARE = HARD
DESIGN = HARD**

Technical, complex, costly

Error 404: Design culture not found

Rapid software ≠ Rapid UX



**We'll ask for estimates
and then treat them as
deadlines**

While we create something better in-product,
what else could we do **now**?

Imagine assembling this...

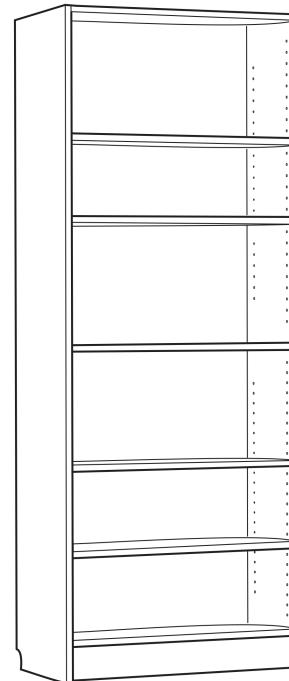


By only guessing



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.

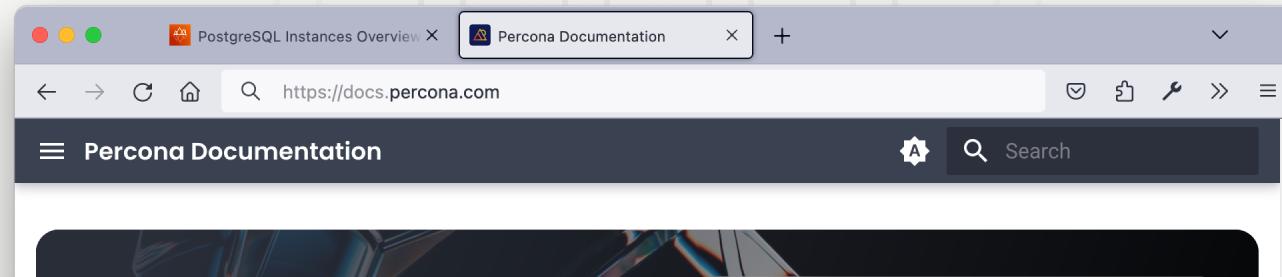
INSTALL



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?



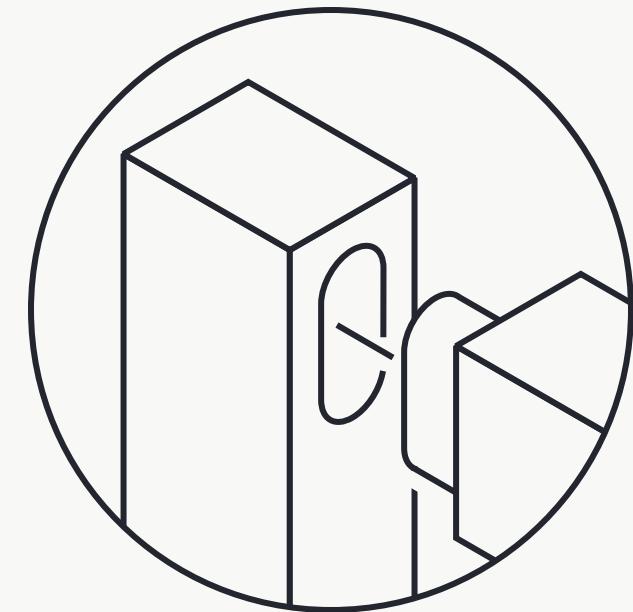
We want documentation to reach out to more **developers** interested in open-source databases for their applications so that adoption increases through more **installations**, proper **retention**, and evident **ease of use**.

ESTABLISH CO-OWNERSHIP

Who could help?

Where's the knowledge?

Who could share responsibilities?

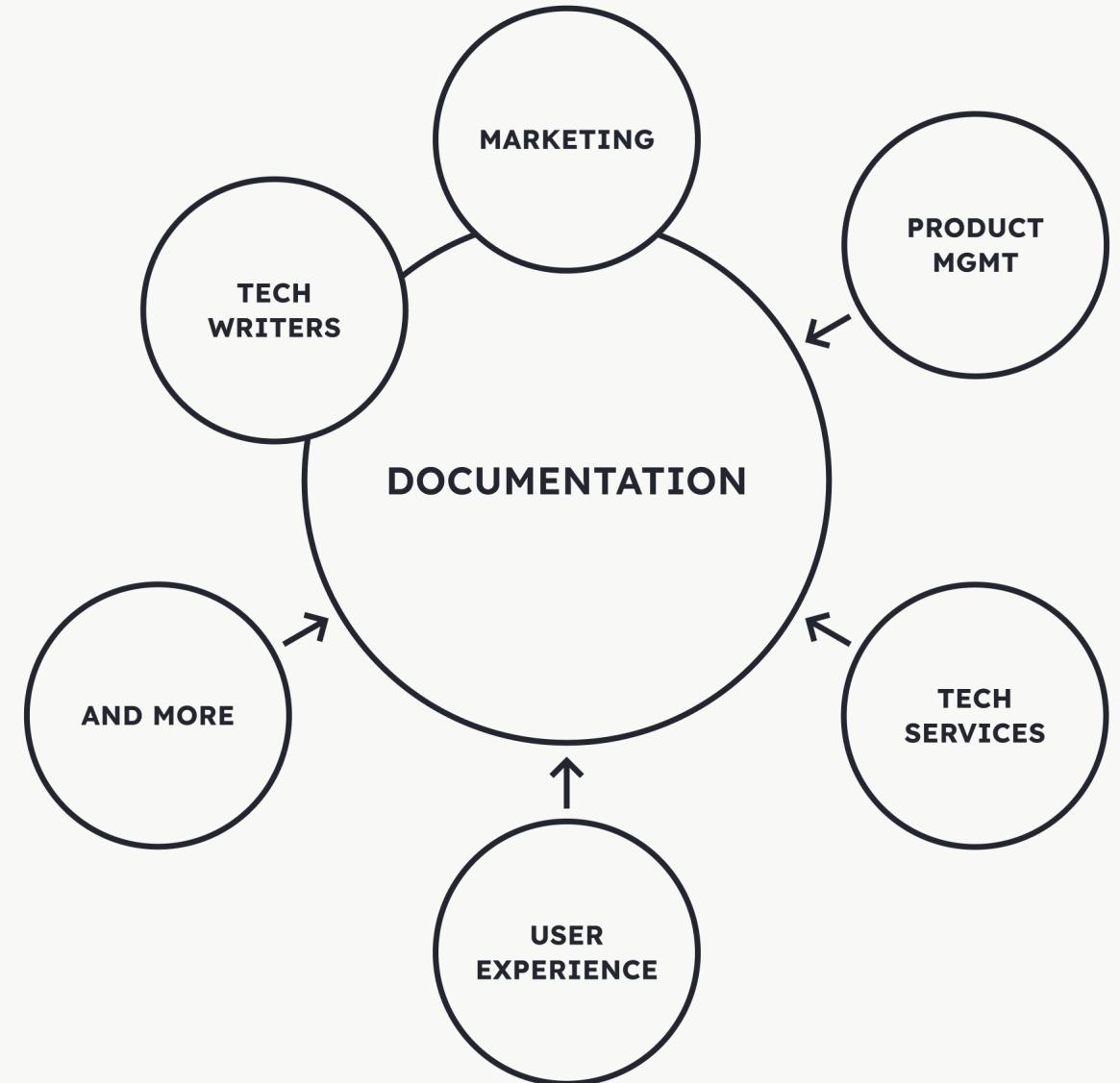


Kept

- Creation of content • Management
- Data analysis

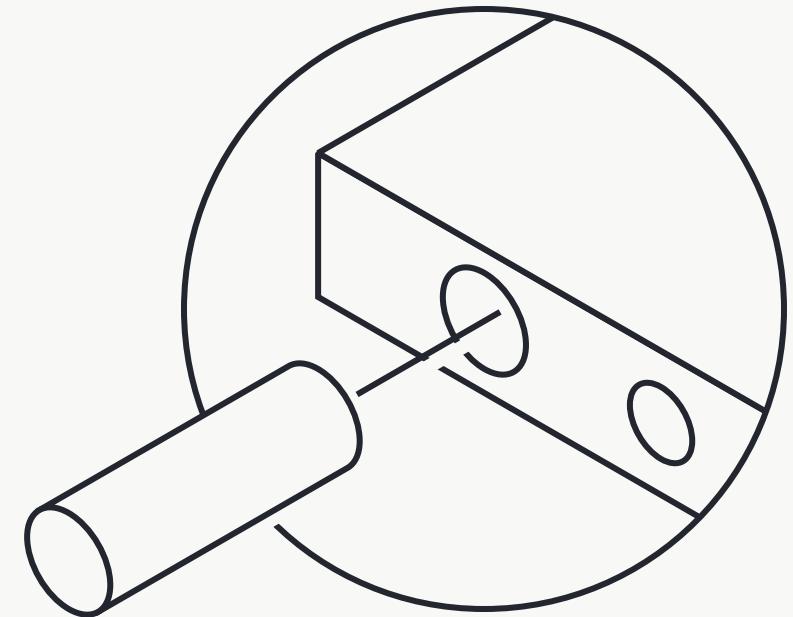
Added

- 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?



```
<video width="858" height="483" autoplay controls mute loop src="../img/docs-  
design/old.mp4"></video>
```



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 with instructions for using Google Cloud Shell or a local shell. A 'Create and configure the GKE cluster' section follows, with a note about using the gcloud tool and a command-line example. A 'Note' box contains a warning about running commands in the Cloud Shell or local shell. The right sidebar contains a 'Table of contents' with links to 'Prerequisites', 'Create and configure the GKE cluster', 'Install the Operator and deploy your MySQL cluster', 'Verifying the cluster operation', 'Troubleshooting', and 'Removing the GKE cluster'.

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 'Quickstart Guides' section with a list of installation methods: 'Install via apt', 'Install via yum', 'Kubernetes', 'Docker', 'Manual Download', 'Post-installation tips', 'Upgrade', and 'Downgrade'. A note for Ubuntu and Debian users is provided. A 'Package Manager' section highlights 'apt' and 'yum' with corresponding icons. The right sidebar contains a 'Table of contents' with links to 'Install via apt', 'Install via yum', 'Kubernetes', 'Docker', and 'Manual Download'. A large arrow points from the 'Before' screenshot to the 'After' screenshot, indicating the transition from the operator-based documentation to the standard Percona Server documentation.

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.).

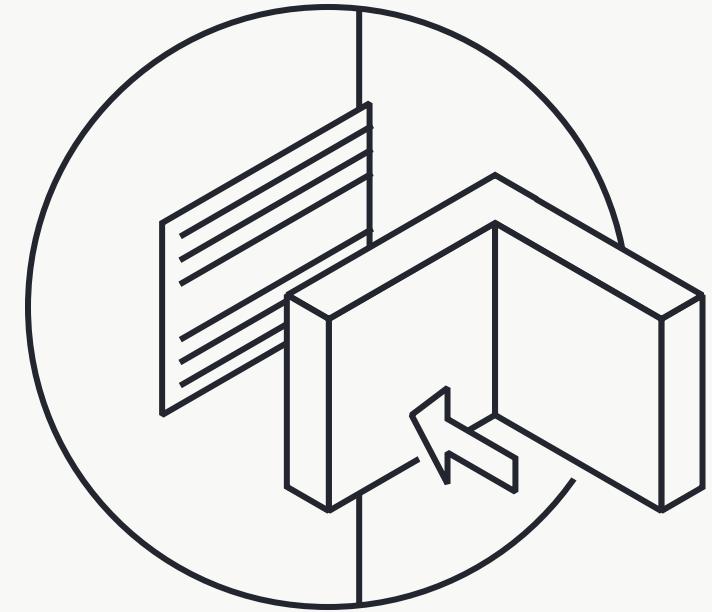
At the bottom of the page, there is a "Was this page helpful?" section with up and downvote icons, and a footer with copyright information and a Material for MkDocs link.

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:

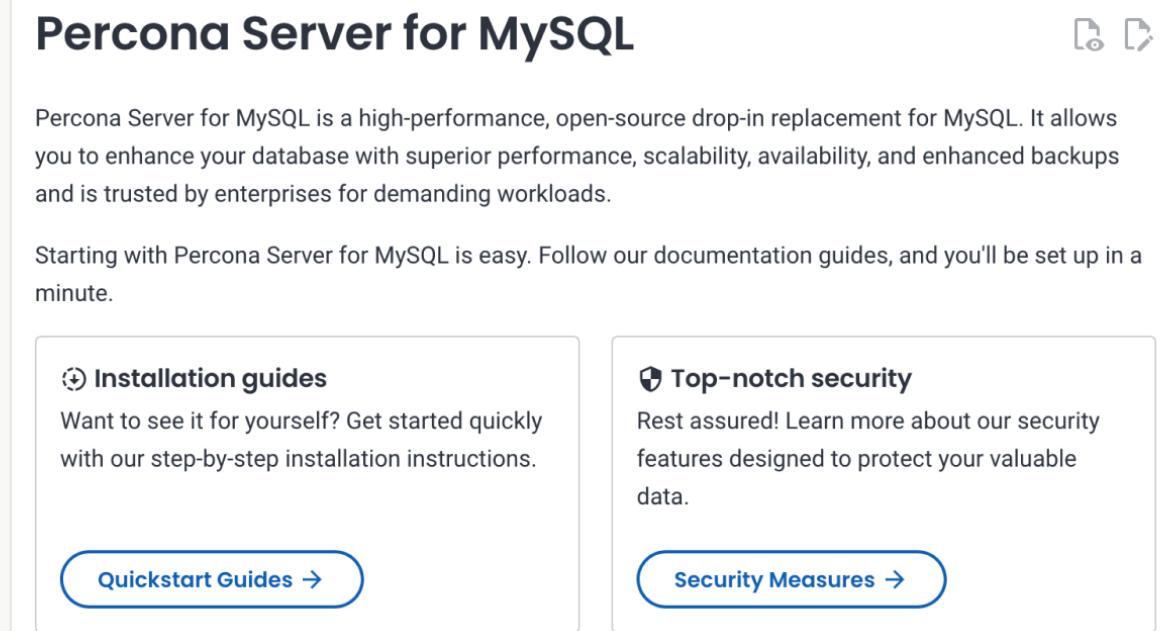
```
$ sudo apt install percona-server-server
```
- 5 It should now be installed! Percona Server runs automatically after installation. To control the

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

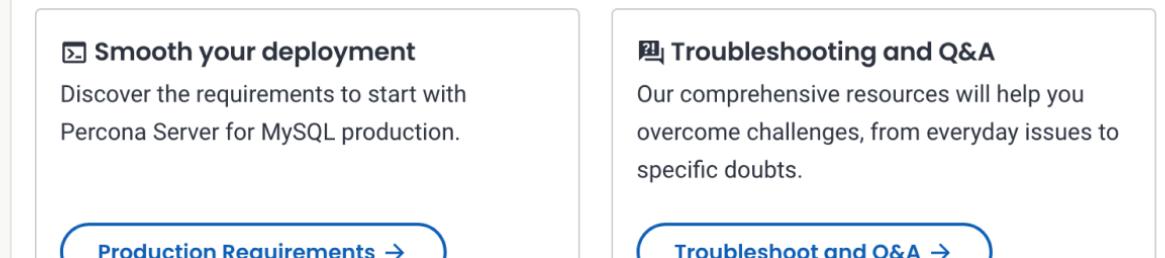
We crafted journeys and woven them together so we could guide people into **discovering the value** of our software.



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).



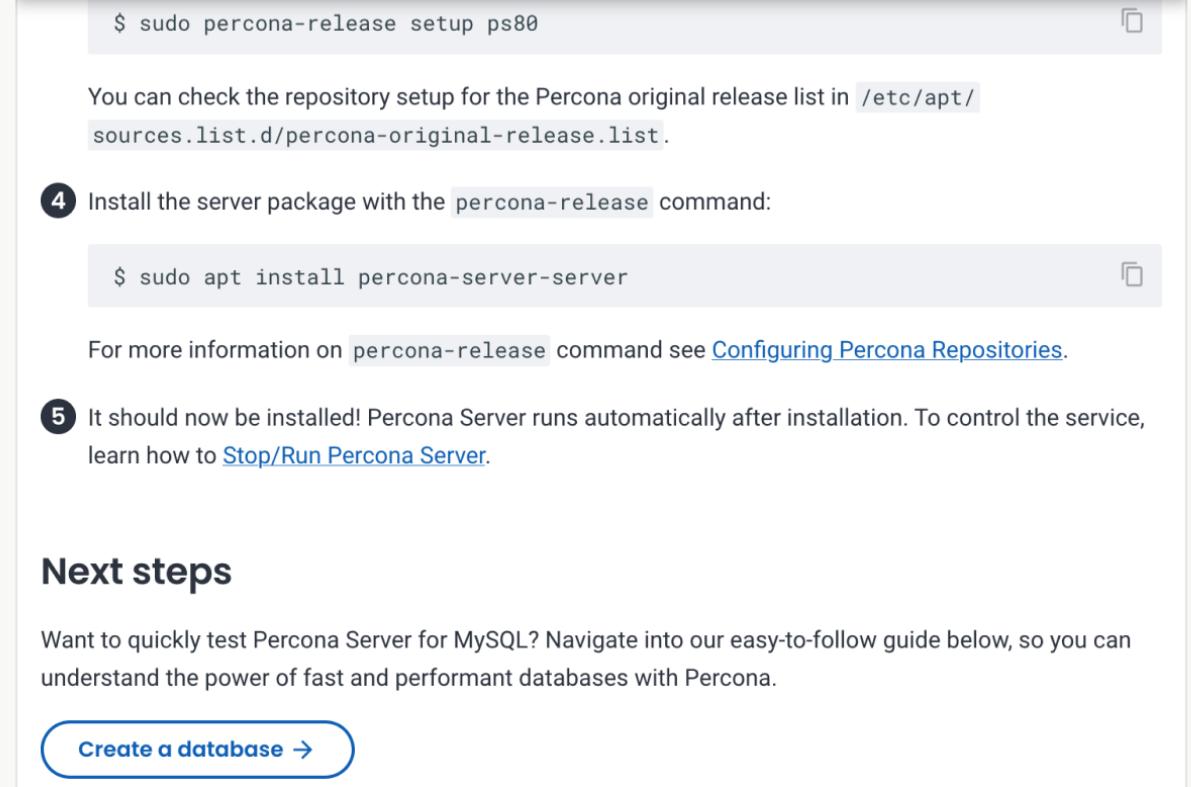
This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the Percona Server for MySQL homepage. It features the same dark blue header, main title, and descriptive text. The "Starting with Percona Server for MySQL is easy. Follow our documentation guides, and you'll be set up in a minute." section is present. At the bottom, there are two columns of cards: "Smooth your deployment" (with a "Production Requirements →" button) and "Troubleshooting and Q&A" (with a "Troubleshoot and Q&A →" button).



This screenshot is identical to the ones above, showing the Percona Server for MySQL homepage. It features the same dark blue header, main title, and descriptive text. The "Starting with Percona Server for MySQL is easy. Follow our documentation guides, and you'll be set up in a minute." section is present. At the bottom, there are two columns of cards: "Smooth your deployment" (with a "Production Requirements →" button) and "Troubleshooting and Q&A" (with a "Troubleshoot and Q&A →" button).



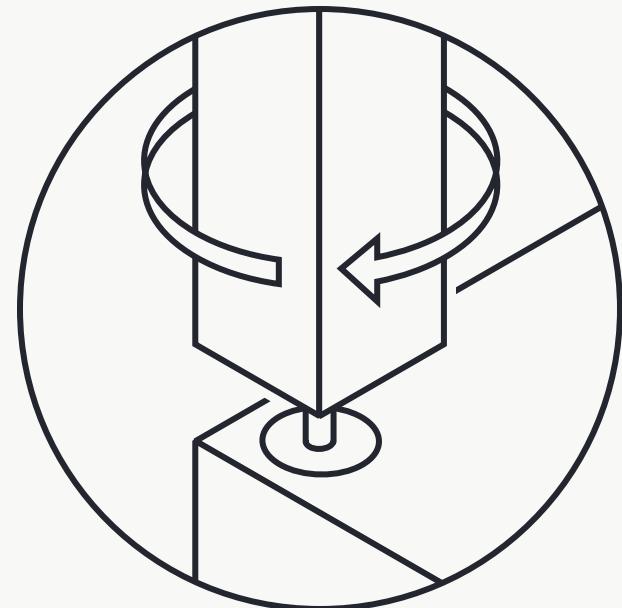
The screenshot shows the "Quickstart Guides" page. The header has a dark blue bar with the text "Quickstart Guides" and a search icon. Below the header, a command-line interface (CLI) window shows the command "\$ sudo percona-release setup ps80". A note below it says: "You can check the repository setup for the Percona original release list in /etc/apt/sources.list.d/percona-original-release.list." Below this, a numbered list item 4 is shown: "Install the server package with the percona-release command:" followed by the CLI command "\$ sudo apt install percona-server-server". A note below it says: "For more information on percona-release command see [Configuring Percona Repositories](#)." Another numbered list item 5 is shown: "It should now be installed! Percona Server runs automatically after installation. To control the service, learn how to [Stop/Run Percona Server](#)."

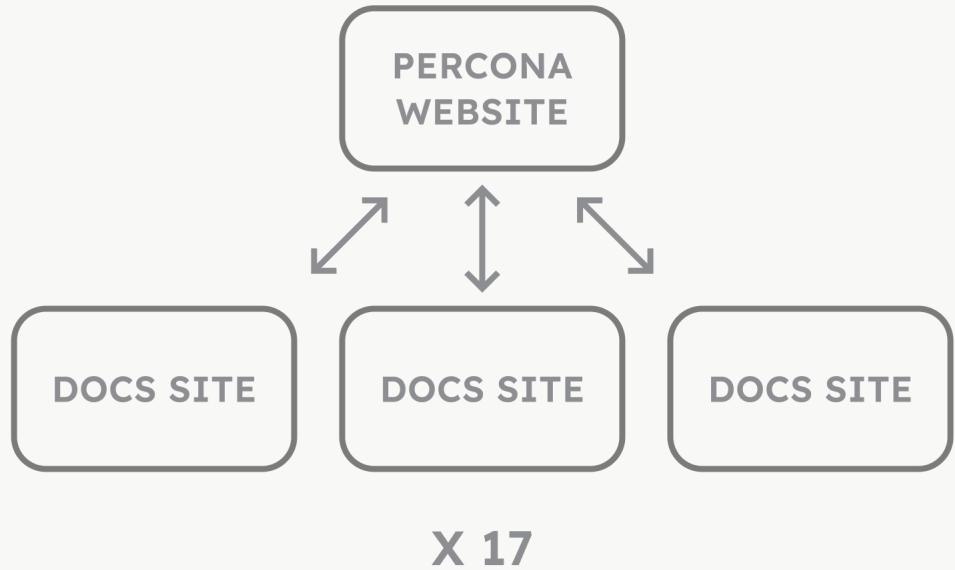


This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the "Quickstart Guides" page. It features the same dark blue header, CLI window, notes, numbered list items 4 and 5, and the "Next steps" section. The "Next steps" section includes a button labeled "Create a database →" and a note: "Here are a few other useful topics to continue venturing into Percona Server:". Below this, a bulleted list provides additional resources: "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](#)".

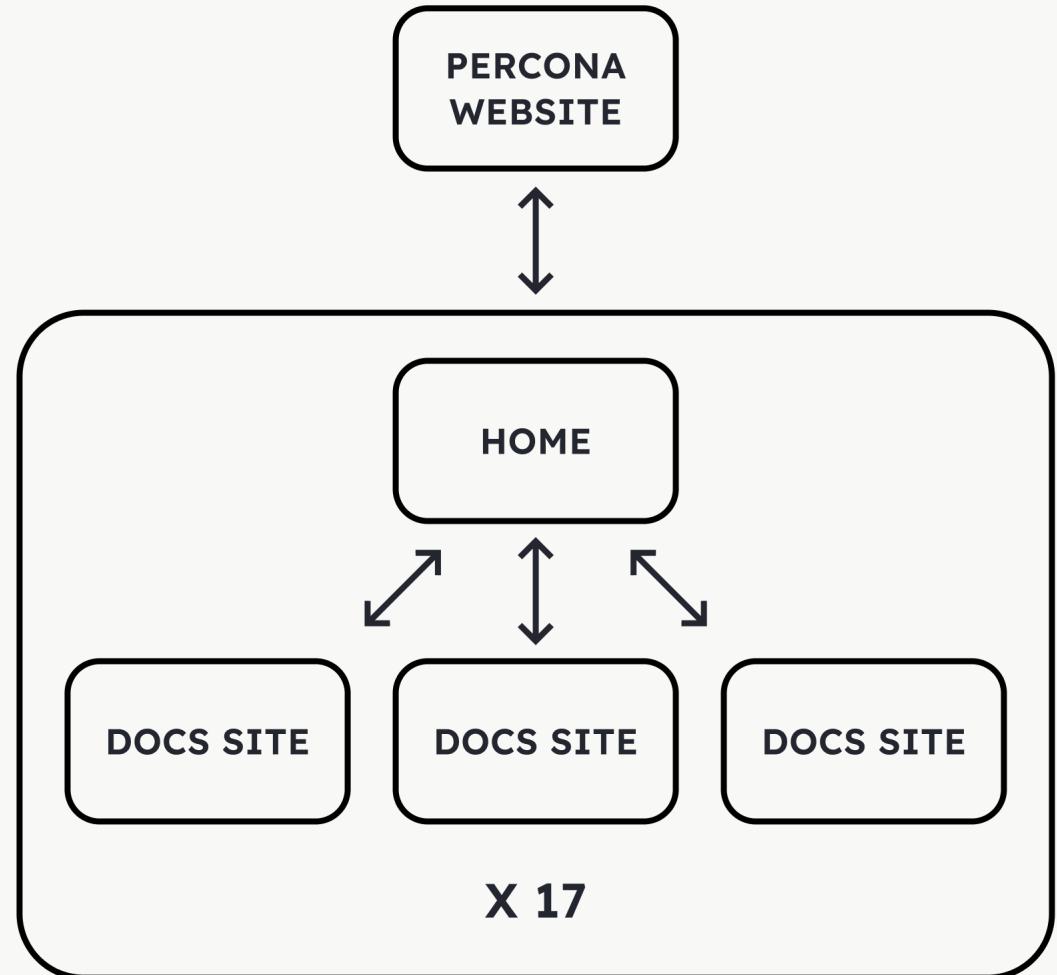
UNIFY THE EXPERIENCE

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





X 17



X 17

```
<video width="1120" height="630" autoplay controls mute loop src="../img/docs-  
design/home.mp4"></video>
```

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](#)