The possibility to share such a crucial piece of infrastructure across the whole Free desktop in the future, plus the fact that if done right this would be useful to and appreciated by the wider development community beyond KDEPIM, gave new weight to the idea of a client/server design. It would provide an integration point in the form of a protocol or IPC mechanism rather than a library that would need to be linked against, thus opening the door to other toolkits, languages, and paradigms. This scenario of a shared PIM server between KDE and GNOME also seemed more and more realistic in light of the emergence of the DBUS stack as a cross-desktop and cross-platform IPC and desktop bus system, which was at the time actively being adopted by both desktop projects and shared via the Freedesktop.org coordination site.

In an additional interesting instance of cross-project pollination, some developers from the PostgreSQL database project were also present at the conference that year and happened to participate in some of the discussions around this topic. They were interested in it from the perspective of the efficient management of, access to, and ability to query into a large amount of data with a lot of structure, such as the user's email, events, and contacts. They felt that their expertise and the software they were building could become an important part of such a system. They brought up many interesting aspects related to handling searches efficiently and designing the system with type extensibility in mind, but also related to more operational concerns, such as how to back up such a system and how to ensure its data integrity and robustness.

A few months later, at the annual meeting in Osnabrueck, Germany, the concept of a PIM data server was brought forward again, this time with some additional backing by those working on email. This group had been among those who were more skeptical of the idea the year before and most conscious of the possible performance impact and added complexity.# The added perspective beyond the KDE project, the fact that the alternative solutions suggested the year before had not been realised or even tried, and the ever-increasing pressure on the team to address the skeletons in their closet eventually prompted the opponents to rethink their position and seriously consider this disruptive change.

This was helped considerably by a nontechnical aspect that had crystallized through many conversations among the developers over the course of the previous year. It had become clear to the group that their biggest problem was the lack of new developers coming into the project, and that that was largely due to the unwieldy and not-very-pleasant-to-work-on libraries and applications that made up the project. There was quite some fear that the current developers would not be able to contribute forever, and that they would not be able to pass on what they had learned to the next generation and keep the project alive. The solution, it was felt, was to focus as much attention and energy as possible on encoding the combined experience and knowledge of those currently working on KDEPIM into something that would be the basis for the next generation of contributors and upon which others in the KDE project and beyond could build better PIM tools. The goal would be to produce something in the process that would

http://pim.kde.org/development/meetings/osnabrueck4/overview.php