

## Panels my approach



As every cockpitbuilder will learn, there are several solutions for the production of the panels. It depends on the craftsmanship and the tools you have on hand what you can make. One of the first questions you have to answer is; what do you want to make. Is it a replica of the real thing and you will show Lockheed Martin it can be done better. Or do you aim at a working simulator not exactly as the real one but affordable and a pleasure to make.

As we have seen recently some very gifted builders jumping out of this hobby, I think it is a question worth thinking over.

Look honestly at your skills and the money you can spend without running into a divorce. Besides the making of the panels from scratch you can also consider in buying these things, there are several guys out there making beautiful sets.

For me, when I started this crazy journey, I had two major boundaries the money part and the fact I have no building experience.

The panels I made don't cost a lot of money, and I can tell it is fun you can tell the speak less visitors you made everything yourself.

And with a little luck in finding some useful parts you will also be able to build an ICP like the one on the next picture for only \$30,--. Yes this knowledge brings a smile on my face every time I look at it.



The way I made my panels.

Well I decided to use the beautiful cockpit layouts, as you can find them on the site of Martin "Pegasus" Schmitt.



At: [HTTP://www. Xflight.de](http://www.Xflight.de)

I copy the panel I want to make and print it at 103%, then you will have the real size of the panel you want to make.

Corel Draw is the program I used to make my panels. So I started to draw a rectangle shape in Corel at the real size of the panel. Import the copied part into this rectangle and you can start building your own panel on top of the imported one.

For I wanted to make my panels on a Plexiglas background, so I'm able to add some backlight later on, I choose a bold lettertype so the light can shine through more easy.

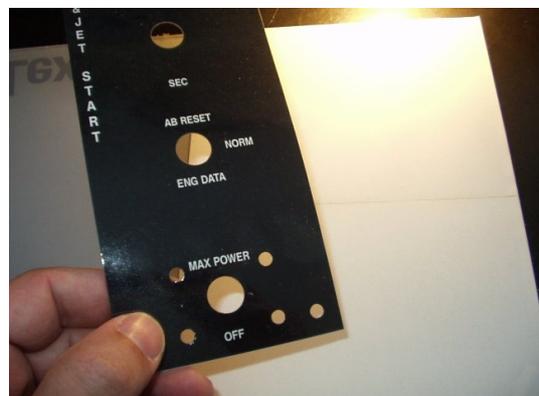
One of my quests was to make it as cheap as possible. Don't get me wrong, there does not exist a way to build a cheap working cockpit. But hey, there is nothing wrong in trying it.

The rotaries I decided to use in my project were the ones you can turn in twelve different positions. (Then you can buy a lot of the same, saves some money) The only drawback is, you have to rebuild the layout on the panel and in some cases there is a click of the rotaries between two positions on the panel. Well, knowing what the cost saving part was I can live with that.

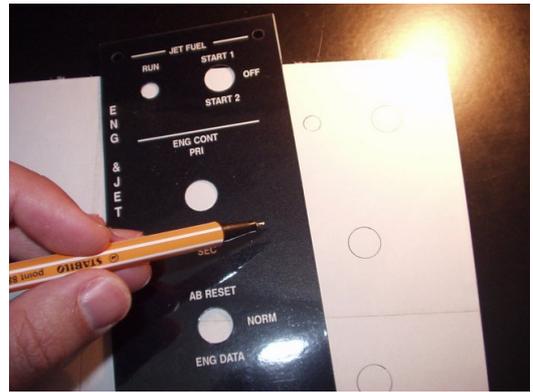
So after finishing the layout in Corel Draw I print it on glossy photo paper.

After that I put it through a hot laminator.

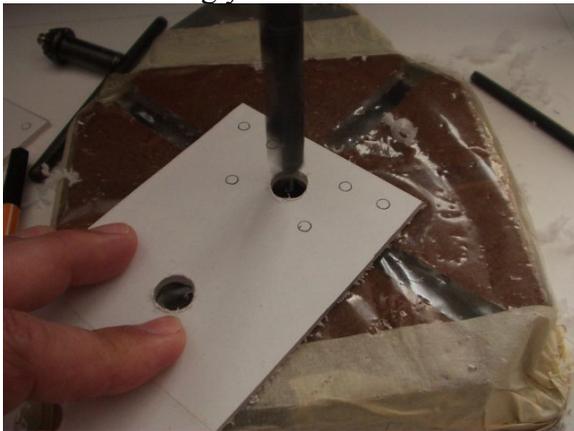
Then use a sharp hollow punch to make the holes.



After that, take a piece of plexiglas and glue some paper on it, or use some labels.  
Then it is easy to draw the holes and the shape of the panel on the plexiglas.



After the drawing you can drill the holes and saw the shape .



Remove the paper from the panel and glue the printed part on the top of it. I use spray for that.



When pressed and dried, it looks like the picture on the left

Just paint the edges of the glass black (some paint used for plastic models works great), so no light will shine through.  
Then you can start adding the knobs and switches to the panels.



As always I keep asking all the others in this loony hobby, make some little pdf's with the pictures you make on the road, and share them with others.

They can make improvements and so we can build our dreams faster and maybe cheaper.

(Hopefully I will be able to publish my panel layouts on my website in November 2006.

And of course they will be for free.

But feel free to give a little donation for my time and effort I put into this)

Keep them flying,

Rien "HAMMER" Heideveld

[HTTP://www.f16simulator.nl](http://www.f16simulator.nl)