

**CASE STUDY****Delivering a Custom Visual Tool Control Storage Solution for University of Exeter and Drake Tooling****OUR CLIENT**

Established in 1976, Drake Tooling & Abrasives Ltd supply the precision engineering market with abrasives and cutting tools, and a complete technical back-up. Today the business is one of the South West's leading Engineering Distributors, offering a wide range of products and services including the very best in abrasives, cutting tools and measuring equipment.

**THE PROJECT**

Drake were delivering a project for University of Exeter, providing the furniture, tooling and equipment for an innovative new space which would enable students to prototype their engineering ideas. This would be a world-class facility, providing students with an opportunity to test and develop their manufacturing and engineering skills.

The space has been designed with 30 tool benches and a maximum capacity of 60 students. This meant that up to 500 students a week could be using the space, and the 1,500 tools that were included in the specification of the new space.

**AT A GLANCE****Challenges**

- Quick Turnaround
- Original shadow board plans not viable
- 1,500 individual tools

**Result**

- 4-week turnaround
- Pro-active design support
- Future inventory opportunities with KIT software



The process flowed well and was easy and painless.

Coplan came up with ideas when we found snags and delivered prototypes on-time which worked very well.

**Jo Duffin**  
University of Exeter



“We were really impressed with the sales process and always felt listened to when discussing what we wanted. The team took the tools away before even quoting, they listened and kept things moving. The project didn’t stagnate or ‘stick for weeks...’ and most importantly everything was delivered on-time”

JO DUFFIN, PROJECT  
MANAGER

## THE CHALLENGE

At an earlier design stage it was intended to store tools on the wall spaces using traditional tool shadow boards, but with 1,500 tools there wasn’t sufficient wall space. An alternative visual control solution was needed which meant that the tools would be stored in drawers instead.

Although the team at Drake Tooling had previous experience subcontracting this sort of work, they hadn’t been impressed with the result and were concerned that they would struggle to find a suitable supplier for this high-profile project. When we were recommended by their furniture supplier, they were keen to get in touch to discuss the challenge.

## THE SOLUTION

We worked alongside Drake Tooling to develop and supply a custom visual tool control solution, using a design approach which would ensure it was easy to identify any missing equipment. Using a single collection of tools supplied by the client, we digitised each individual tooling profile and created design layouts for the University to review. These designs were reviewed and refined, before we then produced a set of samples for testing. These were designed with a blue foam base and a black foam upper layer – the two contrasting colours making it easy to identify missing tools.

Once the final designs were approved, we produced the 120 custom foam inserts that would be needed to store all the individual hand tools. It took four weeks from initial design to completion of the project – a delivery timeline that impressed all of the project stakeholders.

## THE RESULT

Both the University and Drake Tooling were very impressed with our proactive approach, which allowed us to deliver a full solution quickly and effectively. In addition to providing the foam storage, we also included our KIT inventory software solution, providing added value and unlocking potential for a smarter inventory solution

Both our client and the University are now keen to work with us on new projects, including the opportunity to digitally publish information about tools, instructions and risk assessment documentation through our KIT platform to any web-enabled device used by the staff or students.

## COPLAN

### About Us

Over the years we have built excellent relationships with some of the world’s most prestigious engineering and manufacturing companies – to ensure that their equipment is protected and housed correctly and, just as importantly, that it is visually apparent if not returned.

The introduction of Tool Access Control and auditing solutions has seen us become recognised as a turn-key solution provider ensuring that equipment is protected and can be fully audited and traced.

Our tool controls solutions are designed to help our customers achieve the same levels of quality and continual improvement. We currently control and protect more than £40 billion of tools and assets.

