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Margaret Hamilton

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## The Race for Invisibility

### Will our kids live in the age of invisibility?

If you could choose a superpower what would it be? Would you choose flying? Or maybe super human strength? Or how about being able to be invisible?

While we're still **a long way from flying**, and super human strength is best left to the Hulk, the ability to be invisible may not be so far from reality.

Last year, scientists from the Sanyang Technological University in Singapore **demonstrated a light bending experiment** that has effectively rendered an object invisible.

The trick to invisibility? Creating a small box made of calcite optical crystal, which bends light around objects, making anything placed in the box, disappear. This remarkable breakthrough was originally developed by the University's Professor Baile Zhang just for "fun".

However, he's just one of many teams of scientists around the world racing to crack the idea of a superhero style cloak of invisibility. Just last month, a new breakthrough in nanotechnology has shown that invisibility on a larger scale is on its way too.

Dr Debashis Chanda and his research team at the University of Central Florida have used nanotechnology to create a larger area of 'invisible metamaterial' (and by larger we mean about 10 centimeters), than the Singaporean efforts.

This breakthrough, which used 'nanotransfer' printing, looks very likely to be able to be scaled up to much larger areas, meaning that something like a fighter jet could be made undetectable.

This is where the excitement about cloaks of invisibility gets a little less exciting, and a little more potentially worrying. Funding for Dr Chanda's and other projects in this area primarily come from military sources. The implication being that whichever country wins the **race for invisibility** is the one that could hold the upper hand in future conflicts.

So, while it doesn't look like anyone will be selling Harry Potter style cloaks of invisibility anytime soon, invisibility as a concept on a large scale looks set to be a concept of the very near future.

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Hands up if you'd like a cloak of invisibility?

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**A LITTLE ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

MARGARET is a mama, writer, artist and bad dancer. She lives in the inner-city suburbs of Sydney with her partner and her young son, the Little Lion. [Read more >](#)

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