Consistency is not essential to fluent reading.
Neology®

This typeface has been designed to demonstrate a hypothesis:

Consistency in letter form and style is not essential to fluent reading
Two harmonized styles, geometric (art deco) and grotesque, have been combined in one font.
Two harmonized styles, geometric (art deco) and grotesque, have been combined in one font, which chooses the glyph for each text character from either subset, in a pseudo-random manner.
How to Use the Fonts

Neology

1. Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex!
The default sets every other character in the alternate glyph (plus no repeats within five characters).

Neology

2. Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex!
By introducing one extra character at the beginning (here, a period), everything shifts one unit and glyphs alternate accordingly.

Neology Deco

3. Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex!
The Deco setting is achieved by deselecting “Contextual Alternates” in the OpenType menu, or with a Neology Deco font.

Neology Grotesque

4. Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex!
The Grotesque setting is achieved by selecting “Stylistic Set 1” in a Neology font, or with a Neology Grotesque font.
Compare Neology’s readability with that of its constituent styles.
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Neology

It is tempting to think of reading as two independent processes that occur concurrently: (1) the utilitarian task of decoding text, to which is attached (2) an aesthetic veneer of style that conveys meta qualities, positioning the document in its own niche within the vast edifice of culture and commerce.

But there are other, functional reasons for type style. Each face is also a formally engineered system with its own visual syntax and vocabulary, a unique strategy for crafting letters to flow and fit in myriad combinations, in which any sequence exhibits optimal readability. Thus it becomes apparent that in many respects, for type design, aesthetics IS function.

There is speculation that, given the physical nature of eye and alphabet, and the measurability of reading speed, an ideal font architecture may be computed. Such one-size-fits-all ideology is at odds with humanity.
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THE DESIGN AXIS IN TYPEFACE FAMILIES
Neology addresses several recent Shinntype themes

The physiology of reading
Scientific research into the nature of reading invariably utilizes default fonts. But if research is to have any bearing on typography, new faces must be created with variants designed explicitly to test hypotheses—thereby isolating typographic qualities rather than confounding them amongst the many different attributes of different typefaces.

The premise of Neology is that the reader processes only as much detail of a glyph as is necessary to decode it. Because the fovea subtends a tiny angle of vision in each saccadic rest, only three or four glyphs are observed concurrently with any acuity. It matters not that details of a letter may vary between saccades, because if such differences do not occur in the same visual grab, they will not register; for memory and analysis would be required to make such a distinction.

Pseudo-random contextuality
With the introduction of OpenType, the Contextual Alternates feature was used to encode the joining conventions of calligraphy, for which it was devised.

However, other uses have emerged, one of which is to create a pseudo-random effect simulating the pleasantly organic quality of casual lettering and writing.

Shinn has designed two such faces, Duffy Script and Fontesque Pro. In Duffy there are four sets of glyphs for each character, but the code in Fontesque Pro was refined to work with just two, as the same letter never occurs more than twice in succession in any language. This is the code used for Neology.

The design axis in type families
The standard design axes within a typeface family are weight, slant, and horizontal scale, to which may be added optical scaling. Megafamilies have gone further, with serif and sans serif defined as related styles. Shinn has explored yet other design axes in various types:

- Handsome. A handwriting typeface rendered in half a dozen nib styles.
- Panoptica. More of an alphabet than a typeface, by virtue of its “unicase plus monowidth” premise. Almost any type style may be rendered in the Panoptic mode. Shinntype has published seven.
- Sense and Sensibility. Located on an axis close to the extremes of geometric and humanist, this sans serif superfamily is the precursor to Neology.

To create the Neology effect, Sense and Sensibility were at first combined, but this method was dismissed as ad hoc and lacking in rigor. Instead, the two components of Neology were designed from scratch in styles that specifically engage its raison d’être, harmonized in weight, contrast and vertical proportion, with the conceit extending throughout the complete character set. However, about half the glyphs are common: only those characters which exhibit categoric structural differences between the classic grotesque and geometric forms (e.g. Helvetica and Futura, see right) have been provided with alternates, mere variation in proportion not being considered especially relevant to the business of character recognition.
The Neology fonts may be converted to either of their constituent styles; to Deco by deseleting the Contextual Alternates feature, and to Grotesque by applying Stylistic Set 1.

The Deco and Grotesque styles are also available as separate fonts, each containing only a single set of glyphs.
Two sizes of figures

The default figures are three-quarter height, for mixed case use. For figures that are cap height and weight, select “all caps”. Monetary symbols follow the same arrangement.

$3B $3b

Tabular & proportional figures

The default figures are tabular; their “one” has a baseline crossbar, which is removed for the proportional version.

1100→1100

Minus & arrows

Minus and en-dash have identical glyphs. Arrows are aligned with dashes, and have the same thickness, enabling extension.

lag→lag

egg→egg

999→999

Doubles

According to the theory behind Neology, doubled letters with differing glyphs can disrupt reading. But does the typographer wish to avoid this situation or let it stand? Either is possible: the default differentiates, hence “egg” or “egg”. Stylistic Set 2 will negate this, doubling the glyph, hence “egg” or “egg”; similarly, this feature will homogenize multiple repeated figures, e.g. “9999” > “9999”.

(Hi-fi)

(HI-FI)

All-cap marks

Several characters are provided with raised versions for all-cap setting.

Extra symbols

Could come in handy.

lag→lag

‘Normal’ alternates

In the Deco fonts, Stylistic Set 1 replaces a with α, as in Futura.

In the Grotesque fonts, Stylistic Set 1 replaces l with l, and g with g, for the classic grotesque letter forms found in Helvetica, Univers, etc.

Extra symbols

Could come in handy.
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
KLmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 1a
@$/€£%*.,’"!?"
SUPPORTS
ALL EUROPEAN LANGUAGES THAT USE THE LATIN SCRIPT
Neology supports at least forty languages, including all European languages that use the Latin script.
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<td>LEFT → RIGHT</td>
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