The purpose of this paper is to argue that as fans, individuals create personal and collective meaning out of and subsequently internalize the online social and communal fan practices of television, band, and film fandoms into the construction of their narrative identity. The micro-blogging site Tumblr is examined as a means through which the individual’s resulting narrative identity is constructed. Viewing Tumblr practices such as reading and interaction with fanfiction or liveblogging fandom events as synonymous with fan practices, the paper explores how the participatory nature of Tumblr fandom consistently works to build and secure the individual fan’s identity construction, claiming, and assertion. Tumblr and the systematic management of a blog becomes tantamount to the individual self’s creation and management of a narrative identity.

To explore the development of narrative identity, the paper examines the fan practices involved in three of the top fandoms on Tumblr: the British-Irish band One Direction, the CW’s long-running Supernatural, and the series Harry Potter. Through the lens of these fandoms and the fan practices undertaken in order to secure belonging, the construction of a narrative identity is interdependent and intertwined with the extent of the individual’s engagement with fan practices. Through a process of online presentation, the interface of Tumblr allows its users to create and interact, thereby establishing their own online identities and constructing a narrative through personal reflection and social interaction. Through the fan’s participation in fan practice, the fan self attempts to create a coherent story, one that establishes a part of their narrative identity as a fan.